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Freshman Orientation

Freshman orientation is like the weather; lots of people talk about it but not many people talk to you about it. But, everybody has different ideas on what kind he would like. We need not kid ourselves. What makes an MIT freshman is not having spent a fifteen minute talk from his faculty advisor; it is rather the feeling he experiences after his first 8:01 exam or after his first D at midterm. Since this is the time of the year when changes, if there are to be any, are to get planned, we submit our thoughts for consideration.

One wonders whether the present freshman advisory system is adequate to offer advice to those freshmen who have obtained advanced placement. Certainly counseling time is so limited that it would be more appreciated if only one were to offer advice to those freshmen who, by the cutoff scores of any non-technical and much of the technical material to be mastered at MIT is presented in essay and book form, and much of the traditional development of the curriculum, and social science is due to the difficulty with which this type of material is read and understood.

It would be extremely interesting to test the undergraduates at Tech for reading speed and comprehension. Difficulty in humanities and problems of science comprehension might be found the same as those students have in achieving a high degree of comprehension. One such problem is selection of relevant detail in a mass of formalism or a lengthy book, the problem of perceiving the forest and the trees.

A logical solution to reading problems is a reading course, mandatory for students below specific levels of reading rate and comprehension. Though there are undoubtedly many rapid readers, the Reading Dynamics Institute comes particularly well-recommended. Teaching a new method of reading, not simply speedup techniques, the RDI has a highly vocal and impressive former student, Stephen P. Kaufman '63, which I think at precisely the eleventh week would mean that the freshman will come to registration day feeling a more secure part of MIT than he can ever hope to achieve with the present system.

Read This Slowly

The suggestion made in a recent letter to The Tech regarding a rapid reading course for MIT students is one in which I have a great deal of interest. The bulk of non-technical and much of the technical material to be mastered at MIT is presented in essay and book form, and much of the traditional development of the curriculum, and social science is due to the difficulty with which this type of material is read and understood.

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