

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Correspondents: Sidney B. Simon
Robert L. Putnam

On Values . . .

Amherst, Massachusetts

Dear Editor:

I would like to congratulate William Van Til for his excellent editorial, "In a Time of Value Crises."¹

He made the "confronter" and the "confronted" come alive as real people, and his insights and wisdom make our future hope-

ful. Yes, we must "continuously reconstruct our experiences, however traumatic," and go into the future with hope.

Van Til with his informed intelligence illuminates that unpredictable time ahead. I warmly thank him for that.

SIDNEY B. SIMON

Professor of Humanistic Education, University of Massachusetts

. . . and Nongrading

Pierre, South Dakota

Dear Editor:

The article "Nongradedness: Relevant Research for Decision Making"² was read with great interest. However, it is very disturbing that the results of achievement tests seemed to be the major criterion used to judge and justify the nongraded concept.

Research documents the fact that in schools across our nation, many children are failing to learn because they have a negative

self-image. Discouragement has been referred to as a "cold-blooded" killer. It is one of the primary causes of all the deficiencies and failures of children.

The chronological age, lockstep movement of youth through a predetermined rigid curriculum—the graded structure—is the major culprit and contributor to discouragement and a negative self-image. Keeping discouragement and negative self-image to a minimum would seem to be the major criterion for justifying the nongraded concept.

ROBERT L. PUTNAM

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¹ William Van Til. "In a Time of Value Crises." *Educational Leadership* 30 (1): 3-5; October 1972.

² Bob F. Steere. "Nongradedness: Relevant Research for Decision Making." *Educational Leadership* 29 (8): 709-11; May 1972.

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