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aids to learning. They still regard the student who achieves high examination grades as capable if not brilliant, in the face of studies such as James Coleman's indicating that grades have little correlation with intellectual ability or creativity.

Other empirical data--in fact an overwhelming amount of it--show that grades lack predictability as indicators of adult accomplishment, although, as we have seen, they are used egregiously by employers and graduate schools to route graduating students into various status levels. For example, a study of the career achievements of former medical students showed no correlation between academic grades and income, the usual measure in our society of a doctor's professional success.

The negative effects of formal examinations and grading on the learning process appear to be overwhelming and unmitigated. Graded examinations put a premium on received knowledge, especially factual information, and disproportionately reward students who respond with this type of knowledge. Professors may claim to test the understanding of principles and ideas rather than the recall of facts, but more often than not such alleged "understanding" is mere parroting of the professor's lectures.

In any case examinations set up to test learning of complex material are likely to be ambiguous and statistically unreliable for grading purposes. Even memory tests of purely factual matter are difficult for the untrained professor to construct. Multiple-choice tests apparently are the most reliable for this purpose, but they require skill and experience in construction and their contribution to the learning process is minimal. Grading of examinations other than standardized objective tests is likely to be capric-

ious and idiosyncratic. Educational psychologists concur that the same person grading essay tests over a long period is likely to be inconsistent, as are several people grading the same test simultaneously.

In most formal examination situations, there is little or no feedback to the student. Examination papers may not be returned, and when they are the teacher's comments are usually few, brief, and trivial. Since the professor often has dozens of papers to read and grade, even with the best intentions he rarely has time to write an intelligent, detailed critique helpful to the student.

I believe along with Paul Goodman that the student who conceives of learning as meaningful and legitimate needs no artificial competition for grades to motivate him. On the contrary, learning is probably most effective in a context of mutual trust and cooperation, in which ideas are tossed about without fear or favor between two or more people. Such interpersonal exchange of thought is certain to be corroded and debased when the student views his professor as an inquisitor and his fellow students as competitors for tawdry rewards. Feedback, probably the most important contribution of evaluation to learning, is most certain to abound in non-competitive circumstances such as informal oral dialogues between student and teacher or group discussions in which the student's ideas and interpretations are tested against the informed reactions of other participants. Even written examinations, including objective tests of facts, may contribute to learning if the unpressured instructor furnishes the student with extended comments and corrections and does not coerce or punish him with a grade. Programmed instruction may also be useful in some situations.

The kind of evaluation I

would like to see at the university would include some or all of the following elements:

1. There should be ungraded courses or learning sequences in which evaluation is student-centered, unstructured, non-competitive, and continuous. This can be best achieved in the individual or small group tutorial and the seminar. Some of the evaluative techniques might be a record, or log, of the learning process kept by the student himself; essays or research papers read and criticized by the teacher or fellow students; informal, ungraded quizzes emphasizing constructive criticism by the teacher; and teacher-student dialogues or group discussions.
2. For those students who expressly request a more formal type of graded evaluation, oral or written examinations given by experts in their fields of study from outside the university could be arranged. These examinations by impartial persons unconnected with the university would prevent the alienation that inevitably occurs when the classroom teacher also acts as an inquisitor and an agent of other interests, such as employers and military recruiters, in a process of selective and punitive evaluation.
3. In place of or in addition to the foregoing kind of formal examination the student may wish to take one of the standardized achievement tests given by such organizations as the Educational Testing Service of New York City and the Service for Admission to College and University (SACU) in Ottawa. These are available in practically every university discipline, are required in any event by many graduate schools, are as statistically reliable as a test can ever be, and are wholly independent of the university.
4. Recommendations and evaluations of students by faculty members for prospective employers or graduate school admission should be drafted

after discussion with the student, the draft should be read by the student, and the letter should not be sent without his permission.

5. When there is graded evaluation of an examination requested by the student, the grade should be kept strictly confidential and be released only upon the request of the student or with his approval.

Which university in Canada will take the lead to abolish root and branch the psychologically baneful and educationally useless system of mandatory course grades and all the stupid and harmful bureaucratic paraphernalia associated with them?

