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The improvement of commercial education in the secondary public schools

Oscar Howard Parrish

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THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMERCIAL EDUCATION
IN THE SECONDARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Submitted To The Graduate Faculty
Of The University of Richmond In Candidacy
For The Degree Of
Master Of Science
in Education

Department of Education
By
Oscar Howard Parrish

University of Richmond
June, 1941
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INTRODUCTION

The history of commercial education reveals that when business subjects were first added to the secondary school curriculum, they were offered to students who were not interested in going to college or were financially unable to do so, and to those who lacked the ability to pursue college courses. Principals were very anxious to show large enrollment figures and ready to admit new subjects if these subjects would help to keep boys and girls in school. It was believed that such subjects would better prepare students to secure and hold a job.

In many sections of the country the taxpayers demanded a more practical type of education. This demand led to our present vocational courses. It is interesting to note that commercial subjects were among the first to be introduced after the college preparatory subjects. At the very beginning the purpose of these courses was training for employment in the business world. We still consider this to be the dominant purpose.
The following have come to be the main objectives of the secondary school commercial courses:

1. To train definitely for employment in one or more positions in business offices.
2. To convey information and to train in skills which may have a personal-use value.
3. To build a background of economic understanding which will be beneficial to the individual and to society.
4. To train for good citizenship in the business community.

In most instances the public schools have not realized these objectives and have not offered to those interested a sufficiently wide variety of training for students of different abilities.

The following pages attempt to set forth suggestions whereby these objectives may be more adequately realized today:

1. Adequate surveys to determine business personnel needs, types of office equipment necessary, and the present conditions within the schools.
2. Adequate instruction in the mechanized units of office work are especially needed.
3. An adequate guidance program should be established to select students who can profit by these opportunities.

Of course the ultimate realization of these objectives must lie in the full cooperation and interchange of ideas by the two agencies most concerned, the school and business. When they work hand in hand and know each other's needs and limitations, pupils can be fitted to the proper places in the society which they enter for the purpose of earning a livelihood.
Our schools should be asking themselves such questions as these:

How are our graduates getting along?
What has happened to the boy or girl who dropped out of school before the term was over?

Have we any idea as to just what the employer wants in the way of an employee?

Does the employer know what he wants in the way of an employee?

Are we training the student to cope with present-day situations?

If we are to answer such questions as these, a very comprehensive and cumulative research program should be put into motion. There are many local, state, and federal surveys being made from time to time and the available facts must be considered when tabulating results of this kind.

Since a school is sending many of its students into

1Occupational Research - Some Basic Considerations for Secondary Education, Lester J. Schloerb; The Balance Sheet, October, 1940, p. 54.
the community it serves, the conclusions from local surveys should not be influenced too much by the state and national studies.

The results of such a survey would lead to definite answers to the following questions:

1. Are we ready to recognize the need for a basic core curriculum?
2. Do we need a wide range of flexible electives?
3. Should the schools offer a full schedule of extra-curricular activities suitable to all secondary schools?
4. Do the schools need an up-to-date record system, a well rounded personnel program, and a continuous survey program to provide last minute data on vocational and educational trends?
5. Is the business world ready to help fill the gap between the school and the job?
6. Is it practical for the student to work part time and attend school part time?

Three methods could be used to check business on such questions as above:

1. Personal contact with employers, or by sending out questionnaires through the mail.

2. Cooperation with the private, and public placement agencies; i.e., getting data as to requirements, trends, etc.

3. Cooperation with professional groups who are interested in the educational phase of their profession.

With such a research plan we could very definitely determine the current trends and prepare accordingly.

Most employment statistics indicate that the schools are training more "white collar" workers than business can possibly accommodate. This term "white collar" covers a multitude of positions. It is, of course, possible to break this classification down. For instance, stenography is one type of "white collar" work, and we are, no doubt, training far more stenographers than business will be able to absorb.

Due to our form of democratic life, it is almost impossible to prevent anyone from studying his chosen vocation, no matter how ill-fitted he may be to
pursue the course profitably. There should be, however, a wide selection of subjects and training in this "white collar" field.

In January, 1938, the Chicago schools found that over 10 per cent of the students were taking shorthand, while less than 4 per cent of the placements required a knowledge of the subject. Another interesting fact brought out in this survey was that most students who trained in merchandising and sales-work were able to get positions almost immediately. It was most interesting to note that those students who trained for office appliance machine work found jobs immediately.

The growth in the manufacture and distribution of business machines must be met by a parallel growth in school facilities for training operators of these machines. The public schools could and should do more to train our young people for this line of work. We should train the student to handle not only one machine but many kinds of machines.

Unemployment compensation regulations and other laws governing employment and wage scales make it

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3Schloerb, Lester J., "Occupational Research," The Balance Sheet, October, 1940, pp. 54-57.
who are accurate in the handling of figures. This requirement does not mean that the graduate must be a master in the field. It implies that he shall be able to handle simple mathematical problems of a general nature—addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and interest. These abilities are in universal demand. A study of employees in business offices of Richmond reveals a serious lack of training in these fundamentals.

A survey of what individual traits the employer expects in his employees would in all probability reveal the following needs: (1) courtesy, (2) dependability, (3) leadership, (4) emotional stability, (5) social adaptability, and (6) a functional ability in a particular position.

As teachers we must learn how to develop, or at least encourage, in our students these character traits so essential to a well rounded graduate. Most research studies indicate that employers are looking for such personalities and it is up to the schools to set up class and extra-curricular activities which may help to bring out these qualities. As individuals, teachers might well remember the words of Saint
Benedict, "A good example is better than twenty sermons."

Statistics indicate that the age of entering employment is moving upward. For the past few years the employer has been looking for a much older student than heretofore. In a survey made by the Chicago schools in 1938, it was found that persons under twenty-one years of age usually had an average of two years employment. With this information available does it not seem reasonable that the age of vocational training be moved up also? It is quite evident that we must soon provide junior vocational colleges and special trade classes of a post graduate nature.

Employers should not expect the beginner to react to situations in the same manner as does an experienced person. A survey as to just what they do expect from a beginner might help us to prepare the student better to meet the employer's expectations. If these demands are too high, the schools might so inform the employer. In fact the employer must be made to realize that he has some responsibility in connection with the training of the student.


Ibid. Also The University of Chicago Conference on Business Education - 1941.
Schools and business should cooperate in making annual surveys. By such surveys we could keep up with occupational trends and revise our curriculum and methods in accordance with the demands and needs of the business world in general.

A very interesting and instructive survey of this type has just been completed in Richmond, Virginia, under the auspices of the Accounting Department of the John Marshall High School. More than 125 different businesses were sent a copy of the questionnaire shown on the following page.

Answers were received from approximately sixty per cent of the employers thus questioned. From the standpoint of number of employees represented by the houses answering, the answers were particularly gratifying, the larger companies being especially cooperative in giving detailed and complete replies.

A study of the answers received indicate that the Richmond Public Schools are furnishing training for less than one-half of the present types of positions being held in Richmond business offices. The answers also indicate that there is a great need for training in Business English, the use of office
QUESTIONNAIRE AND INFORMATION SHEET

COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT - JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL - RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

[Blank lines]

[Blank lines]

A. Background:

[Blank lines]

B. General Information:

[Blank lines]

C. Experience:

[Blank lines]

D. Personal Information:

[Blank lines]

E. References:

[Blank lines]

[Signature]
machines, commercial arithmetic, and general office practice.

An analysis of the replies to Question I (Courses which would be of the most value to the student for business) show that Richmond business firms approve of the following courses and suggest that they be added to the present commercial curriculum in the order listed:

1st: Business English
2nd: Office Machines
3rd: Commercial Arithmetic
4th: General Office Practice
5th: Economics
6th: Commercial Law
7th: Filing

The answers to Question II (number and kind of office machines you use) indicate that the machines listed in the Questionnaire were in general use throughout Richmond.

The following table indicates the answers to Question III (percentage of employees performing various types of work in Richmond business offices):
TABLE I

Percentage Of Employees Performing Various Types of Work In Richmond Business Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Clerical</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Machines</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filing</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Richmond Public Schools offer training in only 46% of the work now being done in Richmond business offices.

85% of the answers stated that it was the duty of the public schools to give training in office machine work.

70% did not think that too much emphasis was being put on the teaching of Shorthand, Typewriting, and Bookkeeping to the exclusion of other subjects.

86% expressed a willingness to cooperate in a plan to provide opportunities for part time student employment in order to give them the benefit of practical experience.
33% thought that Richmond should have a Director of Business Education in order to bring about closer cooperation between the school and business.

This brief summary of the findings of the Richmond Commercial Survey gives an idea of the vital information which can be secured in this manner. In addition to the factual replies on the forms supplied, a great number of business houses wrote long and detailed letters. These not only indicated the deep interest business has in the secondary education of its future employees but they supplied the school with splendid contacts with business men of the city.

Since the survey findings have been summarized as a whole, let us now analyze the work of one of Richmond's large business offices. From table II(a) one can see that the Richmond Public Schools are not preparing their commercial students for the greater portion of the office work available. Table II(a) is not an exception, because it will be noted that the Richmond Survey indicates that only 46% of the office jobs are trained for in the schools. How long will this condition be allowed to exist?

The lack of business training is made even more convincing if we analyze the facts as presented in table III.
### TABLE III
Percentage Of Office Work, By Departments, In One Of Richmond's Large Business Offices For Which The Schools Do And Do Not Offer Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office Departments</th>
<th>Percentage of Work For Which The Schools Offer Training: Bookkeeping</th>
<th>Typewriting</th>
<th>Shorthand</th>
<th>Percentage of Work For Which The Schools Do Not Offer Training: General Office Practice</th>
<th>Office Machines</th>
<th>Filing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Department</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting Department</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Vice-Pres. &amp; Gen. Mgr.</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Department - 1</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Department - 2</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Department</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Department - 1</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Department - 2</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claim Department</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One course in Office Practice for 20 students and one in Commercial Law for 34 pupils was offered in Thomas Jefferson High School in the session 1940-'41.*
This tends to bring to the front the fact that something must be done to revise our present program of inaction. We still talk about the facts as indicated above, but that is just about as far as some of our present day educators are allowed to go.

It should be noted that all the machines listed in table II(b) are adaptable to the classroom. It should not be overlooked that there are many makes of machines and that this fact should be taken into consideration when furnishing an office machines classroom.

The information referred to in tables II(a), II(b) and III represents a company employing approximately twelve hundred office employees and paying over $3,600,000.00 annually in salaries.

It is interesting to note that this particular company, in answering part one of the questionnaire, rated the subjects in order of their importance as follows:

1. Office Machines 4. General Office Practice
3. Filing 6. Economics
7. Commercial Law
This questionnaire, no doubt, gives a vivid picture of how business men here in Richmond feel in regard to what is being done in the way of commercial training and what could and should be done.

The section of the questionnaire headed "Suggestions" brought forth many constructive comments. The following are representative:

"We think that unquestionably typewriting, shorthand, and bookkeeping are the main subjects, however, other subjects would round out the fitness of the student. After all there are doubtless some students who probably would not make stenographers or bookkeepers, but who would make good filing clerks, operators of duplicating equipment as well as adding machines, calculating machines, etc."

"I feel that any pupil who is taught to use the calculating or billing machine can necessarily acquire the knowledge needed to operate most of the simpler equipment. The ability to handle some of the generally used office equipment is always a desirable accomplishment for any employee, and often is a deciding factor in making a selection."

"We believe that there is a growing demand for machine bookkeepers, and machine operators for payroll and statistical work."

"I think that a graduate of high school should be as completely prepared as possible to enter the commercial world."
Training on office machines is helpful to students who aspire to any form of office work after leaving school. Typewriters, adding machines, duplicating machines, bookkeeping machines, and calculating machines are, we suppose, in the order named those to the operation of which high school boys and girls who enter office work are most likely to be assigned.

We have always been forced to train our machine operators, however, we would much prefer employing operators already trained. We have noticed particularly an almost universal inability of the average clerical worker to prepare business reports or express himself properly in business correspondence or otherwise.

One of the most important factors in considering an applicant for clerical work is good penmanship. I feel that our schools have failed to produce good penman.

Frankly, we will get a high school graduate who writes a very poor hand, spells indifferently and makes many errors in arithmetic.

Teach the student the following essentials: neatness, detail work and responsibility, filing of tax returns, business English, commercial arithmetic, and above all else dependability.

Part time training should be helpful. Most employers first have to teach the graduate how to work, how to follow instructions, and how to budget their time. These things are no longer taught at home and apparently not at school. Maybe a joint school-business program might help.
"To train a student to fit her for immediate value to an employer - a business course should be given taking in the practical as well as the theory. Business class rooms should undergo a great change. Instead of students at a desk, the classes should be equipped exactly as an office, with telephones, filing cases, adding, calculating, and dictating machines. This could be arranged for the last year, after the student had learned the typewriter keyboard, shorthand, and the fundamentals."

"A year or so is required to train the average high school graduate before he is worth anything to any business organization."

"If a Director of Business Education is to act as a 'go-between' business and the schools, I agree 100% that the school needs such a director. The teachers cannot keep abreast with the tremendous changes that come about in business, and many of the things (in my opinion) that are currently taught to pupils are antiquated at the start. Further, it is highly essential that pupils be taught work manually and mentally."

The following statements are typical of those desiring a Director of Business Education in the schools of the City of Richmond:

"Progressive step."
"Very good idea."
"Would be helpful."
"It would be a step in the right direction."
"Absolutely yes."
"Believe this a good idea and that it would prove very beneficial."

The importance of such a position within the
school system can not be overestimated. It is essential that the two high schools in the City of Richmond have a Director in order to solve the many problems confronting the commercial departments of the two schools.

Since business men have expressed their views on commercial courses which should be offered in Richmond, it is now in order to survey the commercial situation as it exists in the two high schools. It can be said, without fear of contradiction, that the commercial curriculum is obsolete in many respects and wholly inadequate for training the present day student.

In order to point out what is meant by the above statement, we have only to refer to the commercial curriculum and enrollment at John Marshall High School:

**TABLE IV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled In Commercial Courses</th>
<th>John Marshall High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td>654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This represents 1720 students, out of an active enrollment of 2892, taking three commercial subjects.

At Thomas Jefferson High School the situation is about the same except for two additional classes.
The condition is as follows:

TABLE V

Number Of Students Enrolled In Commercial Courses
Thomas Jefferson High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Law</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Practice</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>799</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This represents 799 students taking five commercial subjects out of an active enrollment of 2100.

The selection of subjects to individual abilities and placement possibilities is entirely too limited.
A city the size of Richmond could and should provide its youth of high school age with a broader subject field to select from and modern equipment to put
certain phases of theory into actual practice.

A Director of Business Education in Richmond would not only have to re-vamp the commercial departments as to subjects, equipment, part-time employment, etc., but would have to revise grade-placement in order to provide business education at such grade levels as the child's interest and ability to generalize warrant.

It is of particular interest to note that after a survey of the Thomas Jefferson High School, Richmond, Virginia, by a committee of distinguished educators, it was found to be lacking in many of the fields this thesis has endeavored to point out.

The following comments from the report are self-explanatory:

(1) The guidance service is inferior, or 18 points below the median for the Southern Association and 49 points below that for very large schools.

(2) The curriculum was found to be 20 points below the median of the Southern Association schools and 45 points below that of the very large group. The teaching staff is not properly organized for curriculum development.

(3) The program of vocational business education should be thoroughly reorganized after a careful study of the demands of the Richmond community for various kinds of business and commercial services.
(4) The committee listed as "urgent needs" of the school more physical equipment, a more adequate record system, coordination and consolidation of control and direction of the total guidance service, enlargement and centralization of the placement function.

(5) The committee feels that an investigation of the guidance service is imperative and urgent.

(6) The committee is of the opinion that the low spots in the general evaluation of the school, viz., the curriculum and guidance, are in a measure due to low ratings with reference to supervision of instruction.

This survey of Thomas Jefferson High School established some interesting facts. To substantiate these local findings, let us now refer to a survey of Business Education in the Public High Schools of the State of Virginia made by the Department of Commerce of Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Virginia, during the school year 1939-'40. The table listed below is self-explanatory.6

### Table VI

Office Equipment, Exclusive of Typewriters, in Commercial Departments in High Schools in Virginia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Equipment</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculating</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimeograph</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Filing Equipment:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Size</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miniature Size</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

This table No. VI reveals the extent of the lack of mechanical equipment in most of the commercial departments. For example, more than 40 percent of the schools did not have even so commonplace a device as the mimeograph. Nearly 80 percent did not have an adding machine. Eighty-five percent did not have any filing equipment. If one of the primary aims of business education is to prepare pupils for positions in business offices, it is easy to imagine how inadequate the training must be where there is little or no opportunity for pupils to become acquainted with the operation of those office machines and devices that are to be found in every office large enough to justify the employment of clerical help.

This particular survey made by the Department of Commerce of Mary Washington College brought out the following facts in addition to those already listed:

(1) "Twenty-eight out of every 100 students in the 183 largest schools in the State were enrolled in a commercial curriculum. And of the pupils pursuing the commercial curriculum, about 31 per cent were boys and about 69 per cent were girls."

(2) "Of the total number of pupils enrolled in business subjects about 57 per cent were enrolled in the commercial curriculum, while the remainder, about 43 per cent, were taking one or more subjects as electives."

(3) The following subjects were offered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bookkeeping</th>
<th>Economics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td>Office &amp; Sec. Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td>Business Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Bus. Training</td>
<td>Business English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Arithmetic</td>
<td>Spelling &amp; Penmanship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Law</td>
<td>Credit Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed Script</td>
<td>Commercial Geography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the subjects listed were offered the last two years in high school. Junior Business Training is always offered in the second year.

Let us now consider some facts about the teaching of English, one of the most important business subjects in the commercial curriculum. This discussion would be incomplete if these facts and figures were not presented.

"A prominent high school system in the United States graduates 1,900 young people from its commercial department each year, and yet the principal of that school acknowledges that probably not more than nineteen, or only 1%, can hold stenographic positions because of defective English."7

Business English or properly modified regular English courses should enable students to speak, write and understand English as it is used in the business world today. It is possible to acquire this body of knowledge through allied business subjects. However, there is no substitute for the properly prepared Business English Course.

The letter of application will tend to bring out the point in question. It is appalling to

note the business graduates who can not write acceptable letters of this type. Most students applying for a position confront this task at one time or another. It is needless to say that a letter of this nature is important. In many instances it is the controlling factor in securing or failing to secure the position.

A student may be ever so good at bookkeeping, filing, etc., but if he is unable to sell his services and abilities by letter he is seldom given the opportunity to try out for the position in question. The letter of application is therefore, an introduction of the prospective employee and should be given careful study.

To stress the importance of this phase of the work, it is interesting to note the following findings, in brief, of an analysis of four hundred letters of application:

1. Of the replies received from 10 employment managers of large organizations, three stated that all the applicants were given interviews, seven stated that interviews were granted to writers of 'best' letters only.

2. Seven employment managers suggested that the form of the letter, the English used, and its originality were important. One manager said that the application letter must be clever to get attention; another manager mentioned originality as being important; a third manager stated that style was important but not originality.

3. One reply indicated that 90 per cent of the letters of application received were discarded because of lack of information or because of poor construction; another reply suggested that all letters were discarded that were too aggressive or lacked facts; and a third reply stated that all letters containing imperfections of any kind were discarded.

4. Of the 400 letters analyzed, 18 were one-half page in length; 224 were one page long; 61 were one page with a supplement; 78 were two pages long; and 19 were three pages or longer.

5. Fifty-eight letters were of the indented style; 59 were block style; 202 were semi-block style, correctly set up; and 81 were semi-block style, incorrectly set up.

6. Among the errors found were the following:

- 8 letter omitted the applicant's address.
- 3 letters were not signed.
- 4 letters had signatures in pencil.
- 5 letters had typewritten signatures only.
- 20 letters contained no paragraph divisions.
- 5 letters omitted the complimentary closing.

7. The following salutations were used:

- "My dear Sir" 3
- "Dear Sir" 144
- "My dear Mr. (Name)" 2
- "Dear Mr. (Name)" 102
- "Gentlemen" 114
- Incorrect salutations 35
8. As complimentary closings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complimentary Closing</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yours very truly</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very truly yours</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yours truly</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very respectively</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very sincerely</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very earnestly</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omitted altogether</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. The following stereotype phrases were used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hoping to hear from you soon</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at an early date</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at your earliest convenience</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kindly</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. The errors in punctuation that appeared were fairly numerous.

Much other evidence could be given to support the contention that surveys serve desirable purposes. However, unless we use these facts to remedy such conditions then our efforts will have been in vain.

In partial answer to the above, we should heed to the remarks of our State Superintendent, Dr. Sidney B. Hall:

Secondary education is just passing from infancy into youth. Only its academic phases are full grown. The new secondary school will devote 90% of its efforts to vocational education and about 10% to the dominant program of the past. This change will call for:

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1. New facilities in shops and laboratories.

2. New organization and methods in making use of the environment for highly specialized trades and giving work experience.

3. A rapid and widespread development of Night School and Part-time schools enrolling many thousands of youth of fourteen to twenty-four years of age who have left the regular full time all day schools.

4. A program of adult education to re-educate for new work those whose vocations are made obsolete through invention and the changes in our manner of living.

Division superintendents and trustees must get a vision of school plant and organization for the secondary school that will educate the 90% of society's workers in the trades as well as the 10% who have a chance to enter the professions or secure white collar jobs.

The declining school population as a practical problem can be forgotten, but the theoretical predictions by non-educators has offered the occasion for educators to rethink conditions and locate the new areas of growth and plan for them.

Facts such as presented in this chapter, translated into action, will tend to revolutionize the traditional procedure in many of our schools.
ADEQUATE INSTRUCTION IN THE MECHANIZED UNITS OF OFFICE WORK

Business education should be based on situations that prevail in business and government offices today, and are likely to prevail in the near future.

During the past few years one of the most outstanding developments in the business world has been the rapid growth in the use of the office machines. At first only the typewriter was used extensively. Today we have a number of machines used for all sorts of work. In fact, we have reached the stage where machines are considered vital to the efficient conduct of business.

Schools have trained thousands of students for typing jobs and have thereby rendered helpful service to employers. In order to do this it was necessary to equip the classrooms with typewriters. Our present problems are similar. Employers are demanding that applicants be better trained in the operation of figuring machines, and secondary schools must be ready to meet this demand. Since office machines are necessary to reproduce actual
business conditions in the classroom, the school has no alternative but to install the needed equipment. In this way only can office machine instruction be made practical.

The majority of business schools have adopted Burroughs listing, figuring, bookkeeping or billing machines because they are so widely used in business and governmental offices. However, before any school sets up an office machine instruction course it would be advisable to make a survey of the business machines used in the business houses of the community it serves. This survey should indicate which makes of machine would be most desirable for that particular school.

As an indication of the urgent need of training in office machines it may be well to glance at a report made by a large nationally-known manufacturer. This firm states that the office force of one of its large units performed work as follows:

- 12% typists
- 50% figuring machines
- 38% general clerical

1 A Manual In Curriculum Construction, Burroughs Adding Machine Company, p. 3.
2 Ibid, p. 6.
Does this not represent a typical condition throughout the country, thus showing the need for more emphases on figure machine training? In fact the need is so pressing, and so few schools have met it, that several manufacturers have established schools to train the users of their particular office machines. Among others, Burroughs Adding Machine Company and the Felt and Tarrant Manufacturing Company have established such schools. It is interesting to note that they have been successful in placing their graduates.\(^3\)

Many of the large business firms and banks find it necessary to organize their own classes of machine instruction.\(^4\) High school graduates who meet their educational and personality requirements are given a job pending successful completion of special courses. Large business firms can afford this type of training, for their employees, but small businesses who want trained workers can not provide the necessary instruction.

The average high school graduate, therefore, who wishes to go into business must attend some business

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\(^3\) Considerations for a Course in Clerical Practice and Office Machines, Earl P. Strong, College of Commerce, State University of Iowa.

\(^4\) Ibid.
school or college in order to learn the fundamentals of modern business practice. Where training is not available in the secondary school the financial burden of acquiring this training is placed upon the high school graduate. This is in addition to the extra time required. Also the psychological effect on the graduate when he finds himself ill-prepared for the business world is very unfortunate.

There are a number of reasons for encouraging clerical and office machine instruction in secondary schools. Here are a few of them:

1. Surveys prove that in the average business office office machine and clerical positions are more numerous than either bookkeeping or secretarial positions. With this information at hand how can the secondary school continue to justify the offering to so large a number of students of only the old traditional courses in bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting? Many of the students trained in these traditional courses find it impossible to secure positions because their training is obsolete. To remedy this

5Considerations for a Course in Clerical Practice and Office Machines, Earl P. Strong. College of Commerce, State University of Iowa.
situation the commercial training in the secondary school must be brought up to date. And to bring it up to date office machine instruction and general office practice must be included in the curriculum. These subjects, today, can be better justified than can the teaching of bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting.

2. Employers are demanding better trained employees. The public schools are being supported by the taxpayers' money, and if the taxpayers desire this type of instruction they will be willing to pay for it. Mr. Earl P. Strong, Director of Business Education, Public Schools of Washington, D. C., states that a commercial program should have a three-fold purpose, namely:

"(a) to train students in the various phases of business which necessarily concern every individual in society, (b) to train in a purely vocational way those students who are adapted to skilled and technical types, and (c) to institute a guidance program which will point out the employment possibilities in commercial occupations." 6

6 Considerations for a Course in Clerical Practice and Office Machines, Earl P. Strong, College of Commerce, State University of Iowa.
It is a pity that we talk and write so much about these Utopian plans and do so little toward putting them into practice.

3. The employer should not have to train the commercial graduate for normal requirements. The secondary school should do this. After all, the consumer pays the bill, so why should not the responsibility of such training be placed upon the secondary school?

The cost of this type of instruction is not unreasonable. By using the rotation plan of instruction, a minimum quantity of equipment would give the maximum results.

One manufacturer\(^7\) lists the following practical benefits derived from instruction in office machines:

1. General machine knowledge enables students to progress faster toward their goals.
2. Vocational machine training provides direct preparation for specific jobs - the most important training objectives.
3. Integrated office practice, using

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\(^7\)Instruction Projects in Office Machines, Burroughs Adding Machine Company, p. 24.
machines provides pre-employment experience in correlated work and assures quicker orientation on the job.

4. Commercial teacher training schools which offer machine practice and methods courses attract larger enrollments.

5. Interest in business college courses is increased by use of machines and discussion of application material. Old subjects take on new importance and motivation is stimulated. Fewer failures and drop-outs occur.

6. Teaching problems in many courses are simplified by using machine projects to fill unavoidable 'holes' in the schedule or to overcome plateaus in the learning process.

7. Curriculum time is often saved in bookkeeping and statistical laboratories and mathematical classrooms. Machines contain correct answers quickly and save time for mastering principles or performing more problems.

8. The reputation of the school is enhanced when its equipment and training keep pace with modern business needs. Business men,
taxpayers, and parents generally, approve practical machine programs.

A course of this nature should be definitely vocational, that is, the primary purpose should be to train the student for office jobs involving the use of various office machines and appliances. The greater part of the course should be for the purpose of developing technical skill in handling many kinds and makes of office machines. In addition, the student should be taught occupational facts about the various jobs so that he may have an intelligent perspective with reference to his chosen vocation.

Each machine has its definite place in business. The student, therefore, should be introduced to the various kinds of office machines in common use so that he may understand their various uses in business. It should be pointed out to him at the very beginning that certain qualifications are needed for the proper and efficient operation of every machine. The student should study these requirements as well as the advantages offered by each different machine.

The department in charge of this type of program should interview each student who desires to enroll.
The personnel of such a course should be very carefully selected. The emphasis in such a course would be placed on training the student for the job, not merely on having him take another academic class for credit. It should be understood that the office machine course would not be a "dumping" ground for students of low mentality or for misfits in general.

Students who have maintained a satisfactory average in their classes, especially in bookkeeping and stenography, could very profitably pursue this course which would greatly broaden their knowledge of office practices. On the other hand many students of the highest caliber do not care for bookkeeping or stenography. Therefore it would never do to make these two subjects a prerequisite to the course in office machines. If the student has an average of eighty or better and is able to present certain requirements of ability and personality, he should be given an opportunity to pursue the course. We must not overlook the fact that machine operators have many opportunities to advance, nor should we forget that the course is in no way dependent upon bookkeeping, typewriting, or shorthand.

In the selection of students for this type of
course it is essential that at least four abilities be tested. Otherwise the student is likely to begin a course for which he is poorly equipped. These are the abilities which should be examined:

1. **Perceptual ability.** The student should have good eyesight in order to interpret properly written matter - words, numbers, etc.

2. **Mental ability.** The student should have the power to formulate correct decisions and handle matters intelligently when they arise.

3. **Learning ability.** The student must be able to adjust himself to the required training, and above all else possess the ability to add, multiply, divide, spell, punctuate, etc., correctly.

4. **Manipulation ability.** The student should be able to work skillfully with hands and fingers in order to handle properly the many papers, cards, machines, or other appliances.

There is a great deal of testing material available which the schools could use to discover these abilities. However, this is a subject within itself and would well repay further study.

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8Program of Office Machines Instruction, Public Schools of the District of Columbia, Sept. 20, 1940.
There is a great deal of merit to the philosophy:

"Though the tests now available do not measure everything which we would like to measure, let us endeavor to measure accurately that which we can measure."9

With this information on file the department should be able to advise the student intelligently. The student should readily see the necessity of such an examination before being allowed to enroll in a course of this nature.

While on the subject of prerequisites, it is interesting to note that the Department of Business Education of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia suggests the following prerequisites for their office machine course:10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Machine</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adding Machine</td>
<td>Course in commercial arithmetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculating Machine</td>
<td>Course in commercial arithmetic. Advanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribing Machine</td>
<td>Typewriting—speed of not less than 40 words per minute and high accuracy. Must pass a thorough test in grammar, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and letter arrangement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Program of Office Machines Instruction, Public Schools of the District of Columbia, September 20, 1940.
Mach!ne Preregui;ites

Duplicating Machines

Typewriting—speed of not less than 35 words per minute and high accuracy.

Posting and Bookkeeping Machines

Typewriting—speed of not less than 35 words per minute and high accuracy.
Bookkeeping—at least one year.

Varityping Machine

Typewriting—speed of not less than 40 words per minute and high accuracy.

If these prerequisites are adhered to strictly, the pupils taking the office machines course will have a good background and will be a superior group of students. As a result, the machine operators trained should be of acceptable quality.

Because of the criticisms offered by employers in regard to poor handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and inability to solve simple arithmetic problems, some attention will need to be given to these fundamentals. Experiments on how to make this review most effective will probably be necessary.

A course in office machine instruction should be developed on a combined lecture and laboratory plan. Let us examine these two phases separately.
I. Lecture and discussion. During this period the instructor and students discuss the following points:

1. What are the duties of the operator?
2. What are the minimum educational requirements?
3. What is the nature of the work?
4. Does the position demand executive ability?
5. How much mathematics should one have?
6. Is a knowledge of English essential?
7. Is the work hard on the eyes?
8. Is one's physical strength a matter of importance?
9. What are the chances of being placed after the course is completed?
10. How should the graduate of the course seek employment?
11. Are the chances of promotion good?
12. What are the hours of employment and what is the general salary scale?
13. How wide is the field? Local? National?
14. Is it possible that future legislation may affect the position?
15. How does this vocation affect one's social standing?
16. What are the facts concerning occupational data on each machine?
17. What special reports and surveys pertaining to local use of the machine have been made or can be made?

18. General vocational information.

II. Laboratory Practice and Instruction. The purpose of the first semester would be to acquaint the student with a working knowledge of each machine, to give him an appreciation of the type of work to be performed, and to familiarize him with the general office appliances and routine. This would be an individual practice program on a "rotation" basis. The laboratory, of course, would be equipped with the various machines most commonly used in business offices for bookkeeping, stenographic, and clerical work. There would be practice projects to provide general familiarity with the operation and use of the various machines used in the course.

By using the rotation plan it would be possible to start with a limited number of machines and thus require a very small investment. The instruction procedure is very easy to handle. The teacher should introduce each unit with a short but thorough demonstration. After this demonstration each student operates the machine with the aid of manuals, job
sheets, or practice sets. When the student completes this operation he then rotates to the next machine. Students should be allowed to help each other quietly since practice is the objective, and in doing this they gain valuable experience. This type training provides the ideal situation according to John Dewey who states, "The only adequate training for occupations is training through occupations."\(^{11}\) This method of having students help each other gives the instructor more time to supervise where he is most needed.

After completing the prescribed course in office machines the student should be able to operate most business machines without having to go through a routine training period or an instruction course of a lengthy nature. The instructor should stress occupational efficiency from time to time in order to keep the student keyed up to the proper level of proficiency. It would also be advisable to call to the student's attention the fact that specialization has many advantages and that he will be expected to select a machine best suited to his individual qualifications and adaptability. However, he should never select any particular

machine for intense training until he has had a chance to operate each different type of instrument and thereby learn their various possibilities.

A semester rotation schedule could be drawn up in a number of ways. For instance, in the majority of courses it takes twice as much practice on calculators as it does on bookkeeping machines.\(^\text{12}\) Considering these two machines as a classroom unit, the following practice schedule could be followed by three students. The number of machines, the number of students and the length of the course would naturally alter the schedule in question. The illustration below covers an 18 weeks course.\(^\text{13}\)

( the figure 1 indicates calculators )
( the figure 2 indicates bookkeeping machines )

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>WEEKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 1 1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would appear logical to develop schedules to take care of bookkeeping, stenographic, and clerical.


\(^{13}\)\textit{Ibid}, p. 6.
machine practice courses giving special attention to such groups as: calculating, listing and figuring, bookkeeping and accounting, computing and billing, in order to train students for the various vocational possibilities.

To carry out a satisfactory program of office machine practice the following equipment would be desirable:

Comptometers
Calculating Machines
Adding Machines
Adding and Listing Machines
Bookkeeping Machines
Billing Machines
Billing and Bookkeeping Machines
Mimeograph Machines
Rotary Ditto Machines
Multigraph Machines
Dictating, Transcribing, and Shaving Machines
Addressing Machines
Electric Typewriters
Special Typewriters
Varityper Composing Machines
Machines of a miscellaneous nature
Equipment as indicated above is very costly and, of course, could not be obtained at once by many schools. Their acquisition, however, should be the aim of every commercial department in the country. Securing them would be gradual and according to the needs of the local community. The instructor would have to stress the fact that the machines are costly, very delicate in their adjustments, and should not be considered by the students as "playthings".

Machines also help in the teaching of business arithmetic. They not only improve the teaching procedures and learning attitudes, but actually make the classroom appear business-like. One instructor has the following to say:14


"Interest in the subject is enhanced right from the start. Students like to work with machines and see how easy it is to get the right answers. They can work more problems too, and gain the experience of solving more business situations because the machines save time. Another thing is that the students are more self-reliant and business-like because there is a calculator on every desk — more like a business office.

"An example of what I mean by improving their learning process is in using decimals and percentages. This is
always one of the most important pro-
cesses and the decimal construction
of the machine and its operation
helps make them decimal-minded. Prov-
ing is simpler, too, and accuracy is
easier to obtain. It is easy to teach
because we can tell what everyone is
doing at a glance about the room.

Our course in 'Calculating Machine
Business Arithmetic' is required of
all business students in the eleventh
year. It is really a foundational
course. Many who take it elect to
continue in calculating machine
courses until a vocational skill is
attained. We think this is the right
way.

This is not only true of arithmetic, but of other
courses as well.
AN ADEQUATE GUIDANCE PROGRAM

For many years leaders in business education have been saying that if commercial education is to function vocationally or socially we must organize a practical guidance program. However, as Mark Twain said, "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it". This has certainly been the case with guidance in business education.

There is still much confusion among educators as to what should constitute a guidance program. It is generally agreed that human beings, particularly young people, are inexperienced and incapable of solving many of life's problems successfully without the aid of experienced and understanding counselors. The whole direction of any guidance program should be toward self-guidance on the part of the individual, so that when a problem presents itself in school or later life, the individual may be capable of thinking the problem through and of arriving at the best possible solution.

Our present day concept of the teacher is entirely different from that of the past. The teacher
of today recognizes in theory and practice that secondary education must plan as definitely for the development of desirable attitudes and ideals as for instruction in organized knowledge. The student must not only be exposed to the subject matter, but must have an opportunity to think about his experiences in a somewhat detached and impartial way. Students do not proceed far in acquiring organized knowledge without attitudes favorable to the process of acquisition, and it is gratifying to know that educators are becoming increasingly conscious of this fact. In a very recent survey of student opinion, it was found that attitudes and ideals greatly influence the degree of motivation and accomplishment on the part of the student.

In the 1934 Year Book of the Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, the three-fold social responsibilities of business education were given as follows:

1. To develop a social understanding of the job;
2. To develop those social understandings, attitudes, and ideals that make for effective participation in community and group life;

3. And to develop those economic understandings which make an individual an intelligent producer and consumer of economic goods and services."

From the above, we readily draw the conclusion that the present day instructor must not only teach theory in the classroom, but must make available various contacts with business. These contacts will enable the student to put into practice some of the technical knowledge acquired and thus give him actual experience in his chosen vocation.

In addition to being efficient in his line of work, the student must be able to adjust himself to his surroundings. It is pathetic to find a skilled, conscientious student unable to adjust his attitudes to the business and social worlds he is to enter in later life. The youth of today, emerging from school or college with a desire to live a good and useful
life, finds himself baffled by the absence of opportunities to live it, and is uncertain as to what it is and whether it actually exists. In other words, the effort of secondary and higher education to build up in youth acceptable social attitudes is bound to be futile if the student is allowed to leave school prepared for a society of cooperation and brotherly love only to find himself in a world organized on the principle of competition and the exploitation of the weak.

The unfortunate condition may be helped, and in many instances eliminated, by a sound guidance program whereby the student is allowed to come into personal contact with actual business, even though it may be for a short period of time. As a result of such a plan, the student is helped to bridge the gap between the school and the job.

The commercial education programs in the public schools are being supported by both the parents and taxpayers alike, because they are of the opinion that this type of education is going to serve the students advantageously. The students, as well as the parents, generally believe that upon the
completion of the required commercial courses, the graduates are prepared to accept and capably fill positions along the lines of their vocational training.

The unfortunate part about this belief is that many students are enrolled in the business education classes without the necessary abilities, interests, and capacities to succeed in the occupation for which they have decided to prepare themselves. Add to this the fact that the schools, as well as business itself, have not determined the kind of workers needed or even so much as tried to ascertain by research the number of employees required annually in each vocation. Since supply and demand, to a large extent, govern the wages paid, we are defeating the purpose of business education when we knowingly train more stenographers, and bookkeepers than business can normally absorb.

There is probably no other department as full of misfits (vocationally speaking) as the commercial department. Those who can not spell, punctuate, nor syllabicate take up the shorthand teacher's time, divert her attention from more capable students, and
keep many apt students from enrolling in the subject due to crowded conditions. Others, who can not handle figures accurately, whose handwriting is not legible, and who are unable to grasp the meaning of a business problem after it has been thoroughly explained, make up a good portion of the bookkeeping enrollment. It is not necessary to give other examples, because every commercial teacher knows what could be said in this connection.

The question before us is, what are the causes which have led us into situations such as those described above. If we understand the causes, we have a fair chance of correcting the evil and thus avoiding a repetition from year to year.

There are many reasons for the absence of an adequate guidance program in most schools:¹

Large Departments. It is a known fact that "bigness" attracts attention, so the larger a department, the greater its influence. Many departments are built up at the expense of the

study offers a very limited choice of courses. If the classes were available, they would supply a place for the various misfits in many of our present commercial courses and at the same time provide a much needed training in the less crowded fields of business education. However, until we have the other courses toward which pupils may be guided, what else is there to do but let the boys and girls flock into the "holy-three" classes, continue in these subjects until they become indifferent toward the work and toward everything pertaining to education and eventually drop out of school. Either this, or else we must allow the accepted standards of achievement to drop to lower levels of attainment.

Theory vs. Practice. It is often stated, and truly so, that commercial instructors are teachers of subjects instead of trainers of future business men and women. Many teachers establish their own requirements for the passing of a subject, and it is quite natural that these standards vary from one extreme to the other. The standard is said to fluctuate with the quality of the student;
that is, if the student has a high intelligent quotient, then the standard is high, but if the student has a low intelligent quotient, the standard is frequently adjusted to the ability of the student. It is quite obvious that this method is unsatisfactory and that a more logical system of grading should be established – one acceptable to commercial education and to the business world alike. The present variable rubber stamp method is subject to harsh criticism because of the variable quality of diplomas. However, this condition is by no means limited to the commercial students alone, since it is more or less general in the field of secondary education.

Such a method of grading is unfair to the student and grossly misleading to the business world. In other words, the graduate receives his diploma under false standards, but does not realize this and wonders why he is rejected time and time again when applying for a position. Even if the graduate

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is employed, his chances for success are mitigated by the fact that his training in school has not fitted him for vocational efficiency. This leads to the conclusion that there must be too much disparity between the school requirements and those of business proper.

The teachers are not altogether to blame for the existence of such deplorable conditions, because many of them are forced to try to train misfits in their subjects since no other subjects are available in the commercial curriculum. Under such conditions, what else is there to do but proceed along the road of least resistance?

It is interesting to note the general trend of secondary education over the past ten years. The trend has been toward soft pedagogy carried to the extreme. This extreme was advocated by most of the administrators and instilled into the teachers until they actually believed in it. This philosophy is now meeting with disfavor from educational and business centers alike. What, then, can be done to equip properly and to train efficiently the commercial students if the teachers and schools
are not properly equipped to cope with the present day situation? It is essential that the schools provide practical courses and training for the many misfits, and make a re-statement of their aims, standards, and their philosophy, otherwise the institutions stand liable for condemnation by those leaving with diplomas, but ill-prepared to pursue a profitable vocation.

Lack of Responsibility on the Part of Teachers. Too many teachers do not look beyond the subject they teach. Instead of viewing the subject as only a spoke within the wheel of business education, they consider their subject as the hub itself. It is well for instructors to think highly of their subject, but not to the point of belittling the importance of properly related courses. After all, too much stress is put on passing subjects from the rubber stamp standpoint rather than on determining whether or not the boys and girls are potentially capable of being trained for vocations they desire to follow. We all know that the bookkeeping teacher does his part, the shorthand teacher his, and so on, but all the commercial teachers should get
together and decide on the composite job of training that should be done and then try to accomplish the undertaking cooperatively. The outcome of our teaching in terms of vocational placement and success on the job is what counts - too many teachers do not look beyond their classrooms and are not concerned with the outcome of their efforts.

Unless the teachers of commercial education assume this responsibility voluntarily it must be forced upon them. The business departments should train students for practical and available jobs, and be held responsible for the success of their students. By making the departments of business assume this responsibility, it can be said, without fear of contradiction, that a revolution in business education would take place. As a result of this shift of responsibility it would be necessary to guide our students and provide them with a wide choice of subjects in order to eliminate many misfits and to adjust them properly to their respective vocations.

Heterogeneous Nature of Classes. Just as long as vocational and non-vocational students are
allowed to enroll in the same classes and courses so long will this be a good alibi for teachers to fail to do an acceptable job of vocational training. A teacher can not be expected to prepare fifteen students to meet special vocational requirements in a course where fifteen other students are enrolled for school credits only. Therefore, the only way to get satisfactory results is to separate vocational and non-vocational students.

_Lack of Business Experience._ In order to guide anyone along vocational lines, it certainly appears logical that one should have an intimate and comprehensive knowledge of the field in general. There are many instructors teaching in the commercial field who have had little or no actual business experience. Is it any wonder therefore, that students often go to strangers for advice rather than seek answers to their vocational problems within the school? It is certainly true that teachers who have not had actual experience in their fields of learning can not speak with much authority or exert much influence on the boys and girls who seek information pertaining to their chosen vocation.
Placement and Follow-Up Work. Vocational success cannot be claimed until the student has been placed and has proven his ability to produce on the job. In order to be reasonably certain of this it is necessary that the student be given a more life-like business atmosphere within the classroom, and actually engage in some form of vocational training outside of the school itself. By making placement and follow-up work the duty of the vocational department, it is needless to say that the instructor will become more interested in the mistakes that are made by his students, why they are made, and the best possible remedies to apply.

Interference with Old Established Schedules. There are many schools operating today with an antiquated schedule. When any new suggestions or programs are offered the first complaint heard is that it will upset the schedule. Anything worthwhile should be given a chance. New projects should be tried out from time to time, and experiments encouraged. Otherwise we should give up and let some more progressive educators take over.
More Interested in Quantity Rather Than Quality Production. In most schools the administration is interested in the mass production schedule. Until this type of educational philosophy has been modified the teachers are somewhat limited in their attempts to help each student develop individually. Each department should have a committee to check over the student's qualifications, confer with him, and advise him, before definitely signing him up for a subject of professional or vocational nature. Under present conditions no one has time for such guidance. Therefore, we carry from term to term many misfits who could profitably be in another subject, if, of course, we had the other subject and the time to advise.

Secondary schools must provide guidance to meet the changes in business education. Mr. D. D. Lessenberry, Director, Courses in Commercial Education, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, sums up our many guidance problems as follows:

"There are many problems ahead of us. It is not going to be easy to convince ourselves or our school administrators that we must give tests to determine occupational ability patterns and take the time necessary to guide students
into the vocational courses that will fit them for work in which they have a reasonable chance to succeed. It will not be easy to get general acceptance of the fact that relatively few and those of superior intelligence and developed maturity should be guided into stenographic and bookkeeping work. This will mean fewer second year classes in shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping; but it will mean that the students will have greater opportunity to broaden their understanding through the study of social-economic problems; and the school will have an opportunity to give first year bookkeeping and typewriting to all who want to study these subjects for their personal use values. It is not going to be easy to guide great numbers of students of average intelligence into vocational training courses that will develop job wisdom and efficiency in general office and selling work. Yet we must face these problems boldly and we must act courageously. There is work for these high school graduates of ours. There is a place in the world for each of them and a work that each can do. Business can use workers of rather low intelligence if the workers have the necessary personal qualities. The tragedy has been that we have had to try to train stenographers when the level of intelligence was far below that needed for stenographic work. We must check the occupational interests of our students in terms of their occupational abilities. We must identify those who are potentially employable in certain levels of occupation and give the training that will help the student to adjust himself to work requirements.

I believe in business education. I believe it has a rich contribution to make to the general education of all high school students - to the low I. Q. as well as the
near genius. I believe we can train for certain occupational success too. The scope of our materials of instruction is too great for us to continue to train for positions that do not exist while we neglect occupational levels that are open to our graduates."4

In order to get anywhere with this guidance program we must act. Bold and courageous thinking alone will not do the job. Let us stop for a moment and review several arresting statements:

"Business education in America is unique, in its vigor and its lack of guidance."5

"Commercial education has aimed at vaguely defined discipline - indefinite character building, and technical skill for clerkships."6

"The commercial department of the high school has borrowed not alone the technical subjects of the business college, but the very spirit and essence of it. It fails to make technicians rather than thinking people."7

"One out of every eight workers is employed in clerical work. But not more than twelve per cent of office workers can be properly classified.

as bookkeepers or stenographers;
and yet eighty percent of commer-
cial department enrollments are for
the traditional office training sub-
jects of bookkeeping, typewriting,
and shorthand.\(^8\)

"The highly technical commercial
skills that are gained in such
subjects as stenography, bookkeep-
ing, filing, and office practice,
while permanent in some respects,
have a tendency to be elusive and
perishable. To keep them salable,
they must be used constantly ....
Why should we continue to produce
a vast army of graduates who are
not acceptable because of their
immaturity?\(^9\)

The above statements indicate that we have
been aware of our shortcomings in guidance for
years, but as stated in the opening paragraph of
this chapter, we are prone to talk much and to do
little.

There are many reasons why we should have a
sound guidance program:

1. Every normal student has a desire to be
successful in whatever undertaking he attempts,
whether it be in or out of school. Many teachers

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\(^8\) Nichols, Frederick G., "Poor School Administration
Results in Futile Attempts to Give Business Training,"
\(^9\) Moore, William L., "Business Education in 1942,"
have followed the very discouraging practice of giving the student such a low grade the first month that regardless of his efforts he would be unable to make a passing grade for the term. It is a mistake to create an unfavorable attitude toward the teacher and the subject the very first month. As a result of an unfavorable attitude, the student gives up and the term is wasted in most cases. Most teachers believe in giving the student a fighting chance for one can never foresee just what the future has in store for a student. And then, too, we all have our off days. In business most of us are given a fair opportunity to adjust ourselves to our new work or environment before we are stamped a failure. Such should always be the case in our schools.

2. Activity periods should be used to help the student bridge the gap between the school and the job. In order to assist the student along certain practical lines, while in school, it might be well to state here what an assistant cashier of one of the largest banks in the country had to say about guidance in the schools.
"Deficiencies of appearance, personality, and manner are sufficiently general as to indicate that the home falls down rather badly in guidance which should take place there. The schools should not have to teach young people the importance of a wholesome appearance, a warm personality, and a respectful manner, but the fact remains that an amazing number of young people just out of school have not yet learned to comb their hair, wash their hands, clean their nails, and press their clothes. The apparent immaturity of personality and the lack of poise in young applicants proves a gross neglect of personal and social development of boys and girls at home and in the schools. It is not uncommon for a young man to walk into the personnel manager's office with his hat on. Some of these youths come in holding a lighted cigarette in their fingers. Whose job is it to correct these things and give the necessary guidance? Personal characteristics such as these should be corrected long before the graduate comes to the employment office. There can be little argument against the contention that this is the parent's job; nevertheless, the fact remains that they are falling down on it and probably will continue to do so. So it seems that the schools that undertake to qualify their students for entrance into a business or profession must, of necessity, take over at least a part of a job that really is not theirs."

3. If we, as teachers, could just pass on to our students some of the attitudes and ideals set

10The National Business Education Quarterly.
up by Mr. Cameron Beck, Manager and Personnel Director of the New York Stock Exchange, then we could consider this a good beginning toward guidance. Mr. Beck, speaking to a meeting of the Virginia Business Education Association made the following statements which should be of interest to commercial teachers and students alike:

"This is a period of sloppy work. Pride in work well done is one of the most important things to be taught young people. The greatest problem of the age is not an economic one. A thing is never done well enough until it can not be done better. Reverence for Home, for God, for Country, are still the foundation stones.

Ignorance is always costly. The youth of the land should be in the schools, not in idleness and ignorance. Go back and tell your students these are the things they need in business and in life.

Work. There is no substitute for it...work. Work to get to the top. It should be put into all the textbooks in America.

The Three R's Are Important. Legible handwriting, included in this, is most important; often it is a deciding factor in choosing an applicant for a job.

Integrity. A high standard of common honor and honesty. It is estimated that seventy-five per cent of the people lie on
application blanks when applying for a job.

Cooperation and Tolerance. Make students understand that they must work with people.

Punctuality. Emphasize the importance of punctuality. 12:31 is not 12:30 on the New York Stock Exchange, or anywhere in business.

Courtesy. An asset that does not cost a cent, but pays big dividends.

Cleanliness. No matter what a boy may have above his neck, he must have a clean collar around it when applying for a job, and when on the job.

Personality. Would you hire yourself?

Two Questions for the Teachers:
How do your students feel toward you?
Are you a teacher with an understanding heart?

Don't forget, a keen intellect and a cold heart form a vicious combination in a teacher.

4. Facts, knowledge, and skills are essential in education of the youth of today, but they do not represent the major purposes for which the schools are maintained. In order to encourage society toward the ongoing process of a better life, so that

Notes taken at the Virginia Business Education Association meeting held in Fredericksburg, Virginia, October 23, 1937. Speaker of the evening, Mr. Cameron Beck, Manager and Personnel Director, New York Stock Exchange.
it may benefit therefrom, the institutions of learning should inculcate worthy attitudes and ideals, develop powers of critical analysis, initiative, and resourcefulness, and encourage habits of conduct that are socially desirable. At this point, the writer should like to list a few thought provoking quotations taken from readings at random. These quotations are of a guidance nature and should certainly influence one's philosophy of life, in fact, it gives one that necessary urge or desire to know life at its best.

"Am I learning to study and think?

Am I getting the knowledge I need most?

Am I learning to enjoy the things most worthwhile?

Am I learning to live, by living now; by acquiring some vital knowledge of the world and its real problems, by actually facing them and beginning to try to solve them now? Or am I postponing life, playing about with its trifles in a thoughtless and unreal academic world?

Am I progressing, standing still, or going backward? Am I growing in the various dimensions of life, on the physical and mental plane, in intellectual breadth, in spiritual depth?"
Am I becoming the kind of person
I want to become, and that I am
capable of becoming, if I am to
know life at its best?

How much am I going to be worth
to others?

Am I realizing education as the
shrine of experience?

If schools are to be the means through which
we learn to live free, democratic lives, then these
educational institutions must be centers of democ-

racy. And as instructors, business or otherwise.
we must be prepared to assist students in form-
ulating correct responses to all vital questions
pertaining to a sound philosophy of life. If we
are able to make a real start on this undertaking,
then we shall have taken a step forward in forming
the right attitudes and ideals of the youth of today
--- the men of tomorrow.
CONCLUSION

It is apparent that courses of study must be maintained in secondary schools which will recognize modern business conditions and which will propose educational content and procedures in accordance with the best thought in the field.

Dr. W. R. Blackler of the California Department of Education has the following to say, "Change is the most constant factor in economic and social life. Constant revision of existing standards, practices, and philosophies is necessary to meet changing conditions. Realization of this need means that the dynamic must replace the static attitudes in social, business, educational, and related fields. Awareness of change needs as its working partners alertness to adopt new improvements and flexibility in applying modern and up-to-date methods and materials.

In the vocational sense, business education is that part of training that prepares the students in business techniques, skills, and knowledge for those positions in which it is reasonable to assume that they may find employment upon completion of the training. The implication is that the type and content of
curricula offerings should be geared to employment requirements; that the training should be directed toward occupational efficiency; that business educators are familiar with the demands of the market for their product; that students are equipped with skills which they can market in a competitive business world; and that technical skill is supplemented by occupational knowledge and information.  

This study has shown that the schools must first determine the personnel needs of business and the types of office equipment most generally in use. It has also shown the necessity of modernizing our commercial curricula to meet the demands of business. It has shown the pressing need for adequate office equipment with which practical instruction may be given in the classroom. Finally it has shown the necessity of developing a comprehensive guidance program.  

In conclusion, let us not forget that the ultimate realization of these objectives lies in the full cooperation and interchange of ideas by the two agencies most concerned, the school and business.  

As educators, we must undertake the task of modernizing the schools for the youth of today --- the men of tomorrow.
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