

THE ROLE OF CLERICAL OFFICE PRACTICE IN THE
GENERAL BUSINESS CURRICULUM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	3
Procedures	3
Limitations	4
Definition of Terms	4
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON OBJECTIVES OF CLERICAL OFFICE PRACTICE	6
General Education Objectives	6
Objectives of Business Education	9
Objectives of Clerical Office Practice	11
Content of Clerical Office Practice	13
III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE ROLE OF CLERICAL OFFICE PRACTICE IN THE CURRICULUM	20
What Should Be the Primary Function of Business Education in the School?	21
Should the Secondary School Provide Specific Skill Training?	23
Should the Secondary School Business Education Department Provide Business Training for More than One Occupational Area?	25
Should Vocational Business Training in the Secondary School be Only for the Lower Level of Office and Selling Positions?	26
Clerical Practice in the Curriculum	27
Can the School Train Clerks?	28
Current Trends In Clerical Office Practice	32
IV. ATTITUDES OF GRADUATES IN THE CLERICAL OFFICE PRACTICE COURSE	34
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	37
Summary	37
Conclusions	38
Recommendations	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY	39

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Business education is any type of education which has for its primary purpose the preparation of people to fill business positions or to understand better the economic system.¹

Business education in the secondary school is a special area of instruction that deals directly with relationships, attitudes, skills and knowledges necessary to understand and adjust efficiently to the social and economic system. Colvin held that:

The business curriculum, at secondary levels, has one aim--to prepare students for office work and vocational competency. Although vocational competency is the chief aim in business education, it is no longer the only aim . . . attitudes, skills knowledges and technically trained personnel have been added.²

The economy of the nation has grown to an unprecedented level, and the demand for efficient handling of information has reached unparalleled heights.

Clerical and kindred occupations provide employment for roughly one-third of all women who work in offices.

The 1958 Handbook of Women Workers listed 20,627,000 as the total number of women employed in the United States; in clerical and kindred

¹ Nolan, C. A., and Hayden, Carlos K., Principles and Problems of Business Education, p. 23.

² Colvin, A. O., "A Statement of Objectives," American Educational Yearbook, p. 3.

work the number of women employed was 6,241,000. Thus 30.3 percent of the women employed were occupationally classified as clerical and kindred workers.³

With such a vast number of positions available to women, it would seem important that preparation programs be as efficient as possible. The clerical program should be flexible, adaptable, and constantly changing. The business teachers in the total business education program should be in a position to constantly utilize all available resources in developing a functional program of operation. Business organizations are conducting educational programs within their own organizations because of the acute need for adequately prepared clerical workers.

Collins defined the position of the secondary program in determining its functions when he stated that "the percentage of clerical office workers are coming from high school graduates, and colleges and universities do not plan to contribute to this labor force."⁴

The high school graduate is the connecting link between many schools and businesses, with employees obtaining positions as a result of training in theoretical concepts rather than in the operational concepts used in business. The teaching of business fundamentals is vital to business education, and the student is the resource.

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Darst, Marian, "Employment Trends of Importance to the General Clerical Teacher," Business Education Forum, Nov. 1959, p. 24.

4

Collins, L. M., "The Clerical Worker of the Future," American Business Yearbook, Vol. 16., 1959, p.84.

Statement of the Problem

Experience in the general training and teaching in this subject area and conferences held in connection with this study revealed that there is a potential need for trained personnel in the clerical field. In order to gain an understanding of the tremendous growth in business education it would seem logical that the problem be summated in the following question: What is the role of Clerical Office Practice in the area of the General Business curriculum?

Procedures

To answer the question the writer used the following procedures in conducting the investigation: (1) An analysis of periodicals, professional magazines, trade and house organs, textbooks, reports, research results, particularly literature in the area of clerical practice, to determine the viewpoint of authorities on the role of the course in the curriculum. (2) Interviews with professional leaders in the field of business education to determine their viewpoint on the role of the course in the curriculum. (3) Interviews with graduates of the secondary schools who had taken a course in clerical training and as a result of the interviews sought their opinions regarding the value and occupational use of the subject.

Limitations

There were three limitations. The review of literature was restricted to the Montana State College Library and the Bozeman Public Library. Consultations were held with members of the Montana State College Business Education Department faculty to check on trends and to validate what the literature disclosed. Interviews were restricted to graduates of Manhattan High School employed in the Gallatin Valley area.

Definition of terms

Office Practice is the more general term which refers to a course familiarizing the student with office procedures and problems. It may vary in its content from community to community depending upon the preparation the student needs to accomplish the work expected of him in offices in which he will be working.

Office practice techniques is the more specific training which includes the skills and knowledges necessary to perform certain duties required of an office worker. The duties include such non-secretarial and non-bookkeeping duties as filing, operation of adding and calculating machines, collating, manifolding, and typewriting.

Clerical practice is defined as office activities other than stenography and accounting.

Occupational Intelligence includes such abilities as knowing how to handle unusual situations in the office, locating and using varied sources of information, and knowing the WHY as well as the HOW of the job.

While the main objective of the study was to determine the place clerical office practice holds in the area of the General Business Curriculum, the first part of the problem was a classification of the suggested activities, methods, and techniques for teaching clerical practice in the secondary schools. The findings of this review appear in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON OBJECTIVES OF CLERICAL OFFICE PRACTICE

The writing of authorities in the fields of allied business practices, educators in business fields, industrialists, and management personnel were reviewed to determine the status of office practice in the curriculum. Many teachers have felt that some writers have idealistic approaches to clerical practice, and on the other hand the opposite position may be assumed that the program may be a "watering down" course or a "dumping ground" for academic misfits. Due to the divergence of views, it has been the intent of the writer to use authorities on clerical practice to determine and analyze what course content standards were used.

In this chapter the topics, objectives of clerical practice, and the course content and qualities to be developed for occupational competency have been treated separately to develop continuity in integrating these skills and knowledges with realistic office assignments and duties. The first of these, objectives of general education and business, is presented in the following section.

General Objectives of the Secondary School

The first step taken in the study was to determine the factors and aims of general education. For the purpose of this study, education has been considered as an adjustment of the individual to his environment, as contrasted with physical growth, with emphasis on those phases of education that can, need to be, or should be learned in school.

The 1958 Annual Report of the Carnegie Corporation of New York stated:

Most Americans honor education, few understand its larger purposes. The aims of education has too often been shallow, constricted, and lacking in reach or perspective. Education exists in the United States to develop citizens who will be able to participate effectively in a democratic society and make decisions. The secondary school in America must provide youth with experiences that continuously increase the personal, social, and vocational competencies needed in our society. Education must be kept in some reasonable balance for realization of goals.⁵

That real educational growth consists of realization of educational ideas and ideals, was pointed out by Lomax.⁶ Enterline stated⁷ that the aims of all education are promotion and development of common understandings of American democratic ideas and ideals. Business education as a phase of general education contributes to economic competency and social-economic understanding, providing a type of training that will aid in the abolishment of economic illiteracy. Turille stated⁸ that a cultured individual has a well-rounded personality.

⁵
Annual Report Carnegie Foundation for Effective Education Bulletin, Monograph No. 100, South-Western Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio., p. 100.

⁶
Lomax, Paul S., "What is a Sound Philosophy of Business Education," National Council for Business Education, New York, 1957, p.17.

⁷
Enterline, H. G., "Trends of Thought in Business Education," Monograph No. 72., South-Western Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, March, 1949, p. 6.

⁸
Turille, Stephen J., Principles and Methods in Business Education, McClure Printing Company, 1949, p. 2.

Business education supplements but does not supplant other areas of secondary education. It complements and serves as a valuable adjunct to general education objectives.

The Seven Cardinal Principles in Secondary Education⁹ included (1) health, (2) command of fundamental processes, (3) worthy home membership, (4) worthy use of leisure time, (5) vocations, (6) economic, and (7) civic developments. In 1952, the National Education Association commented on certain policies in American secondary education and recommended that the objectives of secondary schools provide students with ideas, habits, and skills to enable them to become occupationally competent.

All youth needs to develop salable skills and those understandings and attitudes that make the worker an intelligent and productive participant in economic life. To this end, most youth needs supervised work experience as well as education in skills and knowledges of their occupation.¹⁰

As long as education is compulsory, and young people are required to remain in school to age sixteen or longer, the secondary school should take into account students who terminate their secondary education at high school graduation.

⁹ United States Bureau of Education, Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, Bulletin 35. p. 9

¹⁰ Education for All American Youth, p. 225.

The Educational Policies Commission¹¹ stated: the secondary school should take account of the fact that most students, except those planning to enter higher educational institutions, need to get and hold jobs immediately upon leaving school. These students should be provided with the information and training necessary for initial entrance into fields of occupation.

Objectives of Business Education

Tonne, Popham, and Freeman¹² stated that business education separates into two major types: (1) training in the phases of business that concern organized society, and (2) specialized instruction for wage earners in specialized occupations. The first major purpose of business education is non-technical and involves: (1) education for intelligent consumers, (2) training for specific skills. (3) occupational competency employing the usable skills, (4) attainment of occupational intelligence as an aspect of social adaptability.

The four purposes of education defined by the Education Policies Commission¹³ are (1) self-realization, (2) human relationship, (3) economic efficiency, and (4) civic responsibility.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 125.

¹² Tonne, Herbert A., Popham, Estelle L., and Freeman, Herbert M., Methods of Teaching Business Subjects, p. 3.

¹³ Education for All American Youth, p. 225

Tonne¹⁴ applied the four purposes of secondary education to the field of business education as follows:

1. Self-Realization: Development of the individual in accordance with his potentialities.
2. Human Relationship: Development of ability to work cooperatively.
3. Economic Efficiency: Development of satisfaction of good workmanship.
4. Civic Responsibility: Development of business courses to help develop educated citizens who are economically literate.

Tonne¹⁵ stated further that business education should contribute most to the development of economic efficiency. The student should visualize his position in the total occupational picture. He should prepare and plan his economic outlook of advancement and progress for basic economic stability. Tonne listed nine points relating to economic efficiency which contribute stability to occupational competency.

1. Work: The educated producer knows the satisfaction of good workmanship.
2. Occupational Information: The educated producer understands the requirements and the opportunities for various jobs.
3. Occupational Choice: The educated producer succeeds in his chosen vocation.
4. Occupational Efficiency: The educated producer maintains and improves his efficiency.
5. Occupational Appreciation: The educated consumer plans the social values of his work.

¹⁴Tonne, Herbert A., Principles of Business Education, 1961, Third Edition, pp. 39-41

¹⁵Ibid. p. 42.

6. Personal Economics: The educated consumer plans the economics of his own life.
7. Consumer Judgment: The educated consumer develops standards of guiding his expenditures.
8. Efficiency in Buying: The educated consumer is an informed and skillful buyer.
9. Consumer Protection: The educated consumer takes appropriate measures to safeguard his interest.¹⁶

Under the present industrial and economic system, one of the major purposes of business education is to train youth for proper social, economic, and occupational adjustment. Crank stated:

One of the most important goals of education today is the developing of the student toward the ability to think and to use rational judgments in making decisions and solving problems. The subject matter that is used in teaching students to think may be material in any area of learning. The content is not so important as the processes that are developed in learning.¹⁷

Objectives of Clerical Office Practice

The objectives of office practice instruction were considered in relation to the general field of business education. Purposes vary according to community needs. Felter presented the basic objectives in clerical practice in the following manner:

1. To provide the student with basic knowledge required in all types of business, such as business organizations, business forms, rules for filing, telephone and telegraph services, mailing information, kinds of equipment, letter styles, and the use of business reference books.

¹⁶

Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁷ Crank, Frank L., Business Education Forum, March, 1960, Vol. 14, No. 6: Editorial

2. To provide the student with basic skills required of beginners doing general clerical work including adequate speed and accuracy in typewriting, ability to file cards and correspondence efficiently, skill in using duplicators, the telephone, and a variety of adding and calculating machines, some skill in operating a transcribing machine.
3. To provide an acquaintanceship with a wide variety of additional machines and equipment so that their uses, similarities and differences will be known.
4. To provide and assist each student to improve in basic English: spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary, ability to read and follow directions, and to write legibly and accurately.
5. To help each student to improve in ability to do basic business arithmetic and record keeping functions.
6. To develop skill in checking and editing work.
7. To provide experience in working in an office atmosphere so as to bridge the gap between the classroom and business.
8. To provide as much work experience as possible so as to develop the need for absolute accuracy, completeness, resourcefulness, and pride in accomplishment.
9. To help the student grow in good habits of work, and to maintain an attractive appearance and pleasing personality.
10. To help them prepare for getting and holding a job successfully.¹⁸

Office practice enables the student to analyze his strengths and weaknesses and be realistic concerning economic and occupational job expectancy. Yearian supported these concepts in the following statement.

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Felter, Emma K., "How the Clerical Program helps the Student, the School, and the Community," National Business Education Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 2., 1958, p. 3.

One of the areas of business education needing immediate attention is that of a realistic appraisal of the effect of automation on educational progress. Such an appraisal may very well challenge business education and students to meet modern day office situations.¹⁹

A complete picture of the work of the clerical employee should provide not only the details of the kind of work which may be expected, but a general view of the experience through which he may eventually move.

Content of Clerical Office Practice Course

The information revealed in a review of literature and curriculum outlines from many localities that the common content of the office practice course involved the following items:

1. Typewriting and preparation for duplication
2. Filing
3. Recordkeeping
4. Handling the telephone
5. Operating adding-calculating machines
6. Operating miscellaneous office machines
7. Non-specialized activities

Clerical typewriting is any kind of typewriting performed in the business office by clerks whose duties and work are not of a stenographic nature.

¹⁹ Yearian, Theodore, "Clerical Practice Faces a Challenge," Business Education Forum, Feb., 1960, p. 5.

Hayden stated:

The demand for clerk-typists has reached an all-time high. The growth, expansion, and changes in office procedures have created this demand. Today, many office workers typewrite. It is estimated that approximately seventy-five percent of all beginning office workers use the typewriter.²⁰

Automation has created new demands for clerk-typists. The operation of typewriter-keyboard machines in producing electronic and punched tape is an essential part of integrated data processing. One contributing factor has been the development and great use of the telephone, radio, telegraph, teletype, and private wires by business, eliminating many written communications.²¹ Salser stated that typing for electronics will require a new kind of typist and a different kind of training with clear emphasis on accuracy, and that there will be no need for the kind of typewriting being taught at present.

The basic skill of typewriting is usually defined as facility in using the keyboard by touch and in manipulating the machine. The classification of typewriting includes a number of common office applications of basic typewriting skill. In the review of literature, it was ascertained that office workers prepared stencils, master sheets for liquid duplicators, and plates for offset machines. The typewriter, pen and ink, or pencil were tools used for the preparation of such work. The final process of producing the finished work on a duplicating

²⁰ Hayden, Carlos K., "Typewriting in the Office Clerical Course," Business Education Forum, XII, No. 2, Nov., 1957, p. 24.

²¹ Salser, Carl W., "What the Electronic Age Can Mean to Business Education," National Business Education Quarterly, XXVI, No. 2, 1957, p. 50.

machine was usually found to be the responsibility of a specialized duplication department, which in large businesses is commonly a unit apart from other office organization. The fact that in office work preparation of duplication is more closely related to the typewriting skill than to the operation of the duplication machine caused it to be classified with typewriting in the curriculum pattern. Potter's study²² showed that one half of the total hours of work performed by both experienced and inexperienced general clerical employees was spent in typewriting and one-specialized work. Stockman²³ reported that employees listed typewriting as the most useful study in school. In an article, "What to Expect of Office Beginners," Haskell²⁴ held that because accuracy is more important than speed, the new applicant for a typing job should really know the top row of keys on the machine. Rosen summarized these views in this statement:

Clerical typewriting is an integration of typewriting and clerical office practice in a realistic office typewriting situation . . . the clerical typist must be a master of number typing. Number drill and simple typed tabulations involving numbers should be used frequently.²⁵

²² Potter, Thelma M., "An Analysis of the Work of General Clerical Employees," Dec., 1945, Business Education Forum, p.20

²³ Stockman, Edgar, "An Integrated Office Practice Course of Study for Secondary Schools," New York University Press, 1940

²⁴ Haskell, Frances L., "What to Expect of Office Beginners," The Journal of Business Education, XXXI, Dec., 1950, p. 167.

²⁵ Rosen, Seymour, "What is Clerical Typewriting?" Twentieth Yearbook, New York University, 1950, p. 23.

The first publication that used an office approach to clerical typewriting was written in 1950 by Agnew.²⁶ The production of duplicate copies is a necessity in business offices. This implies greater use of carbon paper, one-time carbon, or no-carbon forms²⁷ for duplicate copies in training clerk-typists. Basic typewriting training can be the same for all typists, but the use of the typewriter and the typewriting ability is the most used skill of office workers.

Filing is traditionally a part of business education. Filing units are included in clerical programs. (1) The units in filing include such topics as the historical development of correspondence filing methods, indexing, and filing routine. (2) The systems used in most businesses. (3) Emphasis is placed on correspondence files and on alphabetic arrangement of names. The duties involved in filing include the following:

The filing clerk arranges and files records, correspondence, and other materials systematically and performs considerable clerical duties related to the files such as inserting additional data on file records, making up reports and supplying information from file data.

Performs other clerical duties in connection with filing, reads, classifies, indexes, and records such materials as correspondence, . . . using card file information.²⁸

On the secondary level the student is taught only routine work in

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Agnew, Peter L., Typewriting Office Practice, South-Western Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1950

27

This refers to National Cash Register no-carbon paper for duplicating copies, chemically treated paper.

28

Dictionary of Occupational Titles, 1959, Part IV.

filing, the process of alphabetizing materials in methodical order.

Tonne²⁹ stated that far too much of the usual high school instruction in filing has been devoted to alphabetizing. Sorting, coding, indexing, cross-referencing, and a fundamental understanding of the nature and purpose of file records are more important.

Recordkeeping is the general content of clerical bookkeeping with activities performed in an office and in merchandising concerns. Reading, writing and the fundamental processes of arithmetic are included in the course. Personal and social-use recordkeeping activities are an important part of clerical recordkeeping. The subject matter of recordkeeping includes all the recordative processes, beginning with business transactions and business papers. Business transactions involving cash are more easily understood because all students have had some experience in receiving and paying cash. The preparation of deposit tickets involves practical procedures in counting, wrapping, and identifying various denominations of coins and currency. The practical use of a rubber stamp endorsement, deposit tickets, and bank reconciliation sheets, and the mastery of simple income tax forms should be the goal of every student. Good skills in clerical recordkeeping are based on an understanding of the need for practice in preparing accurate business forms.

Sales clerks in retail trade need recordkeeping. Because a large number of business students become retail salesclerks an understanding of

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Tonne, Herbert A., Principles of Business Education, p.328.

the clerical and selling duties of the retail salesclerk should be included in the course. Sales clerks in retail trade are by far the largest group of sales workers, representing more than sixty percent of the total number of salespeople.³⁰ Knowing the correct usage of the telephone and the instruction of dialing is included in the curriculum. The use of the Teletrainer,³¹ a system of communications is an aid for students in clerical training.

Operating adding-calculating machines includes work on the different types of adding-machines and calculating machines which may be used in business offices. They are (1) adding-listing machine with ten-key keyboards; (2) adding-listing machines with full-bank or selective keyboards; (3) rotary driving calculators, such as the Monroe Calculator or the Marchant machine; (4) key-driven calculators, such as Burroughs Calculator or the comptometer, and (5) simple statement or posting machines.

The activities which are performed on the adding-calculating machines are numerous, but they may be reduced to some application of the fundamental process of arithmetic--addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The classification of adding-calculating machines was limited to the fundamental processes as applied to each type of machine.

Miscellaneous office machines include duplicating machines, manifold machines, mailing machines, transcribing machines, tabulator machines, switchboard and teletype machines.

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Recordkeeping 1-2 For High Schools, Curriculum Bulletin, 1954-55, Series No. 9, Board of Education, City of New York, 1955, pp. 40-59

31

Teletrainer Goes to School, Bell Telephone Company, New York City, New York.

Non-specialized clerical work is non-machine work commonly labeled "general clerical duties." The activities were placed into the following nine classifications according to the type of work involved: (1) checking, (2) classifying and sorting, (3) collating and stapling, (4) filling in forms by hand, (5) folding machine operations, (6) ordering supplies, (7) sealing envelopes, (8) clerical replacement relief, (9) stuffing envelopes, and (10) handling of mail.

CHAPTER III

THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE ROLE
OF CLERICAL OFFICE PRACTICE
IN THE CURRICULUM

A review of literature revealed that the following questions were being debated and discussed by business leaders and business educators.

1. What should be the primary function of business education in the high school?
2. Should the secondary school provide specific skill training?
3. Should the secondary school provide business training for more than one occupational area?
4. Should vocational business training in the secondary school be only for the lower level of office and selling positions?

Business education has been undergoing numerous changes in the effort to make adjustment to the changes taking place in the world and in education in general. Gulick³² stated that it is understood that vocational preparation for the larger number of persons who do not go to schools or colleges after leaving high school is a part of the responsibility of the secondary school. Russell³³ stated that business is properly regarded as one of the vocations for which the secondary school can prepare.

³² Gulick, J., Education for American Life, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938, p. 22

³³ Russell, John Dale, and associates, Vocational Education Staff Study, The Advisory Committee on Education, Washington, D. C., 1938, pp. 192-193

With regard to the value of clerical office practice most business educators agreed that clerical office practice is a vocational business subject taught at the secondary level, and treated as part of the general business course curriculum. Yearian stated:

Clerical office practice is part of the business curriculum and though this practice is not old in the same sense as the "Three Horseman,"--bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting, however, in the matter of a few years it has won a place for itself as a synthesizing course in the secondary business department . . . Many agree that it is a course for senior students only--to be taken as close as possible to "job time."³⁴

The questions posed at the beginning of the chapter are reviewed in sequence.

What Should be the Primary Function of Business Education in the School?

There are business educators that contend that the primary function of business education is to contribute to the development of all students by providing a broad general business program. This group emphasized the development of economic understandings necessary to live in a democratic society rather than vocational preparation. They also contend that a good general education is the best vocational preparation that high school students can receive.

³⁴Yearian, Theodore, "Office Practice--Versatility in Action," Business Education Forum, Feb., 1959. Vol. XIII, No. 5, p. 4.

Hanna expressed this view with the following statement.

It is my opinion that the secondary school business curriculum does not have two equally important functions. It has but one major function and that is to provide a program of prevocational and vocational training. That is why our business curriculum exists in the secondary school . . . To assume otherwise is simply not being realistic and is not consistent with currently accepted views of educational administrators . . . It is not consistent with group thinking in education as documented in such reports as "Education for All Youth" or the "Harvard Report."

I believe that there is a great deal of business information that every secondary school student should possess. We as business teachers are concerned with seeing that such information becomes a part of the education of all students, but in so far as it is common to the needs of all secondary school students then it becomes an element of general education and not business education. As a part of general education it becomes a function of the business education department carrying a business education copyright.³⁵

The middle-of-the road group contended that the function of clerical office practice is neither totally general education or vocational education but that both functions are fundamental or basic in importance to the subject. Studebaker illustrated this view in this manner:

. . . business education in the secondary school should consist of two major and distinctive phases, each characterized by its respective fundamental purposes and functions. They are (1) Vocational Business Training, which pertains specifically to job training, and (2) Consumer Business Education, which is non-vocational. These two major phases of secondary-school business education are in many respects interdependent, and each is concerned with the total education of the student.³⁶

³⁵ Hanna, J. Marshall, "A Program for Social Business Education," The Journal of Business Education, 22:13, Feb. 1948

³⁶ Studebaker, John W., "Business Education at the Secondary School Level," The American Business Education Yearbook, 1944, p. 91.

A similar point of view was expressed in the Eighth Yearbook of The National Business Teachers Association, as follows:

Historically, business education has been thought of as being entirely vocational in nature. While this occupational function is often thought of as the peculiar contribution of business education to society, it is not, by any means, the sole contribution. An equally important function is that of developing economic literacy and of providing exploratory experiences and basic business information for all students . . . This type of business education has been variously called social business, prevocational business, socio-economic, general business, personal-use business . . . and consumer business education.³⁷

From these statements the conclusion could probably be drawn that business education is both vocational education and general education. Enterline³⁸ commented that vocational education is one of the phases of the entire education program. Business education contributes to both the vocational objectives and to the economic efficiency objectives of general education.

Should the Secondary School Provide Specific Skill Training?

Current literature in business education revealed differing views on the question: Should the secondary school provide specific skill training in the business curriculum? Some business educators contended that the major emphasis should be upon providing the student with specific skills,

³⁷"The Principles of Business Education," Eighth Yearbook of the National Business Teachers Association, 1942, p. 7.

³⁸Enterline, H. G., "Trends of Thought in Business Education," Monograph, No. 72, South-Western Publishing Co., March 1949, p. 5.

knowledges, and abilities needed for specific jobs in business. This type of program would be dependent upon a complete job analysis of various jobs in the community. The responsibility of the program would rest with educators in the community and their function would be to prepare the student immediately for employment upon termination from formal school. The student would qualify as a worker with little or no additional training. Enterline³⁹ stated the place of vocational business education, in the secondary school program was to provide students, those not going on to college, the means of earning a livelihood, and that the secondary school has a responsibility to offer vocational business courses as well as to provide other types of vocational training.

Other educators in business expressed views that it is not the responsibility of the secondary school to provide specific vocational training but that it is the function of the school to provide occupational training; that is, training for any one of a variety of jobs within the same general field.

Nolan stated his views in the following words:

The problem which faces business education . . . revolves around the number of workers needed by business, training required for initial employment, distribution of workers among the various business occupations, and training to move from one occupation to another. Economic conditions, mechanizations of the office, scientific management, and improved office procedures require continuous adjustments . . . to meet the needs of the student business must make full use of the community as a laboratory for business training.⁴⁰

³⁹ Enterline, H. G., "Trends of Thought in Business Education," Monograph, No. 72., p. 5.

⁴⁰ Nolan, C. A., and Hayden, Carlos K., Principles and Problems of Business Education, 1958, p. 16.

Hanna summarized the latter view with the statement:

. . . business training should be aimed at the acquisition of specific skills . . . skills needed for specific type of job. Consistent with this view, the business department would make a detailed analysis of the office positions in the employment community served by the school.⁴¹

Eyster contended⁴² that job training phases are important, but a type of training should be given that parallels job preparation. He also stated that skills alone are not sufficient; the student must have knowledges of how business operates. There is no need for job preparation training within a community that has no job offerings; community demand for employ-ability should meet job analysis surveys.

Should the Secondary School Business Education Department
Provide Business Training for More than One
Occupation Area?

Business educators generally believed that the high school student should be provided with specialized training in more than one subject area. They were not in agreement as to how the solution could be worked satisfactorily as students are required to be in school a specified number of hours, and the school curriculum requirements maintain a specified number of hours each semester for required courses. Vocational training in the business educational program is considered an elective course.

⁴¹ Hanna, J. Marshall, "Concerning the Objectives of Business Education," Seventh Yearbook of the National Business Teachers Association, 1941, p. 171.

⁴² Eyster, Elvin S., "New Responsibilities in Business Education," The American Business Education, 3:13, Oct., 1946

Should Vocational Business Training in the Secondary
School be only for the Lower Level of Office
and Selling Positions?

The issue of the level of office practice training in the secondary schools is of basic importance to the business education program because the position held in every community has a direct bearing on the specific objectives of the business education program in that community.

Some educators believed that only the lower level of store and office positions are open to the high school graduate; therefore the program should be concerned only with providing training for such jobs as clerical and sales. Van Derveer stated:

There is considerable question as to the need for clerical training for the able student; let her take stenography and secretarial training. There is no question of the need for clerical training for the less able students--those who cannot cope with the academic program or with stenographic training. Such programs are being developed successfully in Philadelphia, in New York, and in many other places. They are to be highly commended. As they continue to be developed, let us create a spirit that will tend to overcome the inferiority many of the students of clerical training naturally possess because they have been near-failures in many other types of learnings. Business needs the service many of them can provide, let us make them proud to prepare to offer those services.⁴³

Wells stated⁴⁴ that the secondary school is not justified in giving training which is overly narrow and specific in ability level, and that in the high school it will become increasingly important to develop in students the skills and abilities that will be of value in a whole series of related occupations, rather than in a limited aspect.

⁴³ Van Derveer, Elizabeth, "Observation and Comment," The Journal of Business Education, 24:11, Feb., 1949

⁴⁴ Wells, Agnes Ray, A Survey of Basic Business Education in Ohio, Ohio State University Press, 1947, pp. 28-31

She held that if there is to be a separate clerical training program, it should be designed to meet the needs and interest of all students desiring to prepare for clerical work irrespective of their abilities.

Clerical Practice in the Curriculum

Tonne⁴⁵ stated there are more than five million clerical workers in the United States--far more than the number of bookkeepers and stenographers combined. Clerical occupations are those occupations that include one or more of the duties assigned to office and store workers who do not specialize in bookkeeping, stenography, or management.⁴⁶

⁴⁷Kirk has been quoted as holding that the objectives that should be included in a general clerical major are: (1) Knowledge of business organization as it applies directly to each major department of a business. (2) Knowledge of the use made of business forms in each department. (3) Adequate practice in recording business forms. (4) Increased knowledge of business terms and their spelling. (5) Improvement in the quality and speed of handwriting. (6) Facility in the operation of office machines. (7) Improvement in speed and accuracy in making calculations.

To provide the clerical training in high school for vocational needs, a two-year major beginning in the eleventh year is required; in vocational schools more specific training in the use and operation of office machines can be provided because of the longer school day.

⁴⁵Tonne, Herbert A., Principles of Business Education, Third Edition p. 317.

⁴⁶Ibid. p. 317.

⁴⁷Ibid. p. 314. First Edition

In the period after World War II there was a considerable increase in clerical workers of all types.⁴⁸ During the war period these types of workers were kept at a minimum, but after the war there was a need for a better control of workers and a more careful treatment of new ones. Because of the release of people from industrial work, there was an increase in clerical workers. This made an effective program of clerical training all the more important.

Can the School Train Clerks?

Tonne⁴⁹ believed that this question of whether schools can train clerks could not be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No". Because of the numerous combinations of duties assigned to clerks, it is impossible for the school to give complete and specific training on a pre-employment basis. Thousands of opportunities develop each year in various clerical occupations requiring little or no specific training, and thousands of more or less specially trained applicants apply each year for such positions. If the secondary school gives too highly specialized training, the chances are greatly reduced of matching the specifically trained person with a job requiring his specific abilities. In most general clerical opportunities, specific knowledge and skill requirements are few, while personality requirements are rather high. The prospective employer, places more emphasis on personal qualifications and less on special training. Mere intelligence is not by any means the sole criterion; stability, accuracy, dexterity, and willingness to remain at routine work may be equally, and at times even more, important.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 316.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 319.

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Meehan was quoted by Tonne as believing that:

Clerical practice is too often only designed for the student who lacks ability to master either shorthand or bookkeeping. Too often this person lacks the intelligence to be employed, or if employed, to be advanced, in an office position. The course itself often overlaps the secretarial practice course and the office practice course. A term of filing, a term at calculating machines, duplicating machines, transcribing machines, and possibly bookkeeping machines are usually included in the course . . . There is a vast difference between the clerical practice taught in school and the abilities needed by the general office worker on the job.

Much has been written about whether clerical training should be limited to the less intellectual, or given to all who can profit from the course. Any one who can profit by clerical training should be encouraged to take it, according to Reynolds,⁵¹ who pointed out:

To the degree that (slow learners) can be absorbed into office occupations and hence can be helped by training for such occupations, clerical education should be provided. Some types of machine work some kinds of non-machine clerical work involving form filling in, checking, and record keeping will suit the needs of this group. Not the least valuable outcome of this kind of program in the life-adjustment sense is the feeling of accomplishment that can result to the student. He may for the first time in his life in school learn things, and he may become, as a result, a productive citizen instead of a delinquent--even a potential criminal . . . One word about the difference between the slow learner and the rapid learner--the difference is shown in this terminology--the slow learner does not learn differently--he learns more slowly.⁵¹

The non-academically-minded student often needs supplemental learnings in the fundamental processes and training in the simple skills of the office.

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Ibid. p. 323.

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Reynolds, Helen, "Some Problems in Clerical Education," 38th Annual Schoolmen's Week Proceedings, April, 1951, p. 291.

The clerical program is well suited to provide this training.

⁵²Meehan believed that the course should be offered at different levels with different skill learnings for those of varied ability. Training should be based on careful job analyses of the specific job and taught in terms of the operations needed in these jobs. Training for the non-academic would be justified for the operation of machines.

Many business educators maintained that the only way the needs of high school students for clerical training can be adequately met is by setting up a clerical training program. ⁵³Snyder stated the teaching of clerical office subjects must be adapted to fit the needs of the business community. The business program should be defined as a cooperative program, it should never be defined in narrow terms, or kept within set boundaries of learning. Business methods change and the teaching of business subjects must change and be altered by business teachers if it is to receive the support of the community. ⁵⁴Walker stated the basic skills needed in the clerical practice area are (a) knowing, (b) doing, and (c) being. "Knowing" includes a knowledge of organizations of the business in which one is employed, social competence, and promotional possibilities. "Doing" includes transcribing,

⁵²Meehan, James R., "Profile of an Office Worker," Balance Sheet XXXVIII, April, 1957, pp. 347-349.

⁵³Snyder, Ralph, "A Practical General Clerical Course," Business Education Forum, Feb., 1959, p. 14.

⁵⁴Walker, A. L., "A New Look in Clerical Practice," United Business Education Association Forum, Feb., 1959, p. 38.

typewriting, computing, and the like. "Being" includes personality traits and other factors. According to Walker, office practice is a fertile field in which to apply some of the best business education principles. No other business subject lends itself better to individual differences in abilities and interest.⁵⁵ Office practice provides an opportunity to guide individuals in the corrections of their weaknesses--both skill and opportunity traits.

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Gardner related that a means of effective transition between secondary school termination and job placement is a work-study program in which the student spends part of his time on the job and part in school. The success of this program depends upon the adaption of such programs in the secondary school curriculum. The transitional experience need not be entirely under the auspices of the school.

Business educators agreed there was need for a terminal course in business education, but they were not in agreement as to the objectives, the course content, the method of presentation or the name of the course in the secondary school. When the subject was first taught in the high school it was designed primarily as a finishing course for students of the stenographic field. Several new concepts have developed with the passage of time. The new concepts have produced changes in the content of the course and have affected the name and the objectives.

⁵⁵ Walker, A. L., "A New Look in Clerical Practice," United Business Education Association, Feb., 1959, p. 38.

⁵⁶ Gardner, John W., "From High School to Job," The Education Digest, April, 1961, Vol. XXVI, No. 8, pp. 1-4.

Current Trends In Clerical Office Practice

In order to determine if the trends and issues found in current literature were indicative and pertinent to the local area, a personal interview was held with Barnes, Professor of Business Education at Montana State College. Her general views are summarized in the following paragraphs.

In regard to the question of the secondary school providing specific skill training, Barnes stated that in a small secondary school of fifty students or less, skill training seems too expensive to be in the curriculum. More students would benefit from courses offered in general business and consumer education, than from specific vocational courses. Students need to know social security laws, income tax laws, and implications of consumer buying on credit.

Concerning the question of the secondary school providing business training for more than one occupational area, Barnes held that the trends indicate that the secondary school can provide business training for more than one occupational area if the school and community are large enough to warrant a curriculum of this specific type. Training in the highly specialized fields, such as IBM machine operation would be of little consequence or value to students living in an area where the availability of employment is remote. Vocational training is one of the objectives of business education. Students should receive training that will enable them to become employable in vocational areas.

Pertaining to the question of vocational business training in the secondary school only for the lower level of office and selling positions, according to Barnes, the consensus of opinions among business authorities indicates that vocational education should be available to students at all levels of ability. In order to meet needs of students of lower ability the clerical practice program should be included in the curriculum. Primarily, the clerical office practice course is designed as a vocational laboratory course, and is generally offered at the end of the senior year. Clerical office practice offers a challenge to educators enabling them to teach skill-building techniques to encourage, motivate, and create interest patterns for students to personally utilize the learned-skills as occupational tools.

Generally the views of authorities indicate that the small school is justified in offering courses in clerical office practice if the job opportunities in the area are available, and if the labor market is able to absorb the beginning office worker.

Throughout the research in this study, the clerical office practice course has a place in the secondary school system when the school enrollment exceeds one hundred students.

To determine attitudes of graduates to the course in clerical office practice at Manhattan high school, personal interviews were held with several graduates employed in the Gallatin county area. The results of these interviews are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

ATTITUDES OF GRADUATES IN THE CLERICAL
OFFICE PRACTICE COURSE

To survey the attitudes of graduates and to ascertain the values of clerical office practice in the secondary school curriculum, a series of personal interviews was conducted with twelve high school graduates who were employed in the Gallatin County area. The students had participated in a clerical practice course at the Manhattan High School. The purpose of the survey was to study and analyze student reaction to the following questions and to observe them in actual office situations.

1. Are the learned skills and techniques of clerical office practice usable in your present employment?
2. Is a course in clerical office practice effective to warrant promotional advancement?
3. Is a course of clerical office practice indicative of the type of office work available in the restricted geographical area? (Gallatin County)

A summary of the responses to the questions is presented in the following generalizations:

1. Clerical office practice courses are effective. A full semester of clerical office training could be used advantageously.
2. Learned skills and techniques are usable. Typewriting can be justified as part of the educational program of every student in the secondary school. Clerical office practice is a valuable tool for promotional advancement.
3. Realistic office work differs from classroom projects. Business and clerical programs should be broadened to provide work-experienced programs. Courses in economic development, courses dealing in credit and credit management, savings, investments, avoidance of waste, and sales resistance should be included in the secondary program.

A complete picture of the work of the clerical employee should provide not only the details of the kind of work which he may be expected to do, but also a general view of the total experience through which he may eventually move. The interviews revealed that no more than a high school education is required for clerical workers. None of the businesses require specific business courses as a preliminary to employment but business courses would be advantageous for the employee. (a) Typewriting tests for employment were reported by all students employed. The standards fluctuate according to the supply of typists available. The data secured through the interview indicated there is no specific standardization of employment testing for clerical workers. Each business developing the testing procedures which met the felt need in the particular situation at the particular time. (b) Positions were secured by "word of mouth," local employment agency, and newspaper advertisement. (c) Not all present positions bore a direct relationship to actual classroom experience. Workers with no previous actual office experience were assigned to jobs requiring skills of typewriting, filing, and simple machine operations. After serving an apprenticeship period in this type of work, the employees were then promoted to jobs which required the same skills plus the additional responsibility of more complicated office machines. Lack of specialization and lack of experience in actual job holding necessitated placement in the apprenticeship jobs of typewriting and filing.

It was apparent during visits to various offices in which the graduates were employed that the completion of work facilitated by the use of adding-calculating machines were dependent not only upon the ability to operate the machine but the ability to read both handwritten and typewritten material, to turn over checks, slips of paper, cards, tickets, and to retain number concepts.

The data secured through interviews indicated that if schools in their training programs establish standards indicated by businesses which have not analyzed their work in detail, educators should not limit their standards of achievement by the standards of performance in business, but rather should regard them as minimum aims capable of upward revision.

In conclusion the secondary school should make provision for general clerical training on a vocational basis as one of the differentiated curricula of the business educational program.

1. Clerical office practice offers the student in the small high school additional training of the learned skills and orients him to actual office situations and problems.
2. Clerical office practice has a definite place in the small high school of enrollment over one-hundred students.
3. Clerical office practice should be designed to fit the needs of the student through job analysis and work experience programs.
4. Terminal students benefit from realistic and simulated office practice situations.

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations of this study appear in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study in general were the following:

1. The objectives of the clerical office practice course complemented the objectives of general education, with additional specific goals--the attainment of skills and knowledges required to develop marketable abilities in the clerical field, and the emphasis of those personality traits which help workers succeed in any line of endeavor.
2. The consensus on the types of experiences which should make up the subject matter content of the course included typewriting and preparation for duplication, filing, recordkeeping, handling the telephone, operating adding-calculating and miscellaneous office machines, and non-specialized activities.
3. The clerical office practice course, if properly conducted, proved to be effective in the training of students to fill office positions after graduation.
4. Some authorities held that the institution of a clerical office practice program in the small secondary school would not be an efficient use of tax monies, because of the small demand for personnel trained in the office procedures in the areas where the small schools are located.
5. Graduates held that the clerical office practice training at Manhattan High School proved to include the core of all office work, and that such training better prepared them to obtain employment and to improve their positions after having obtained employment.

Conclusions

As a result of this study several conclusions have been reached.

These are:

1. The clerical office practice course should be a part of every business education program in those secondary schools which are sufficiently large to support the program. In those schools which are not large enough, a course in consumer education should be offered.

2. Such a program in business practices should contribute to the common objectives of all education, as well as emphasizing the goal of economic self-sufficiency.

3. Students who have graduated from comprehensive courses in clerical office practices are in agreement that the course can be of value to them in obtaining a job and in helping them to improve their status in the world of the employed. It should be cautioned that there is no excuse for a poorly conducted course, just as there is no substitute for the properly conducted course.

4. The clerical office practice course should be the last course in the business curriculum--the finishing school for prospective office workers.

Recommendations

It is recommended that further studies be made into the minimum enrollment required before a clerical office practice course can be efficiently and economically implemented in the curriculum.

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