



A current evaluation of the general secretarial curriculum of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School

by Duane Glenn Bowen

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE in Business Education

Montana State University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the General Secretarial Curriculum of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School, Alexandria, Minnesota, to determine if the curriculum is adequately preparing General Secretarial graduates for the business world.

General Secretarial graduates' success was measured by the types of positions held and by the duties and responsibilities performed. Employers' opinions regarding the General Secretarial graduates' capabilities and performance and employers' recommendations for changes in the General Secretarial Curriculum were also used as evaluative measures.

The questionnaire technique was used to survey 106 General Secretarial graduates of 1968, 1969, and 1970. The questionnaire technique was used to survey the 78 employers of these graduates. Responses were received from 95 graduates and 75 employers.

A majority of the General Secretarial graduates indicated that they were employed in positions where they were using their shorthand and machine transcription skills. This would seem to indicate that graduates are employed in positions for which they are trained.

Graduates indicated that typewriting instruction, Business English, and Secretarial Office Procedures were considered as being most important subjects in the curriculum. Economics, Business Law, and Data Processing were considered as of least importance in the curriculum. Graduates indicated that instruction in human relations should be given more emphasis in the curriculum. This would seem to indicate that graduates become more cognizant of the need for good communication skills after a period of employment.

Employers were asked to indicate to what degree General Secretarial graduates were meeting the needs of their firms. Employers indicated that graduates were performing satisfactorily. This would seem to indicate that graduates possess saleable skills which meet employers' needs.

Employer recommendations for curriculum revision centered primarily on human relations. This indicates a correlation between employer and graduate responses indicating a need for more human relations instruction in the General Secretarial Curriculum.

A majority of employers indicated that salaries for General Secretarial graduates were adjusted to compensate for post-secondary training. This would seem to indicate that employers are becoming more aware of the value of post-secondary vocational training.

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August 9, 1971

A CURRENT EVALUATION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAL CURRICULUM
OF THE ALEXANDRIA AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

by

DUANE GLENN BOWEN

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the General Secretarial Curriculum of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School, Alexandria, Minnesota, to determine if the curriculum is adequately preparing General Secretarial graduates for the business world.

General Secretarial graduates' success was measured by the types of positions held and by the duties and responsibilities performed. Employers' opinions regarding the General Secretarial graduates' capabilities and performance and employers' recommendations for changes in the General Secretarial Curriculum were also used as evaluative measures.

The questionnaire technique was used to survey 106 General Secretarial graduates of 1968, 1969, and 1970. The questionnaire technique was used to survey the 78 employers of these graduates. Responses were received from 95 graduates and 75 employers.

A majority of the General Secretarial graduates indicated that they were employed in positions where they were using their shorthand and machine transcription skills. This would seem to indicate that graduates are employed in positions for which they are trained.

Graduates indicated that typewriting instruction, Business English, and Secretarial Office Procedures were considered as being most important subjects in the curriculum. Economics, Business Law, and Data Processing were considered as of least importance in the curriculum. Graduates indicated that instruction in human relations should be given more emphasis in the curriculum. This would seem to indicate that graduates become more cognizant of the need for good communication skills after a period of employment.

Employers were asked to indicate to what degree General Secretarial graduates were meeting the needs of their firms. Employers indicated that graduates were performing satisfactorily. This would seem to indicate that graduates possess saleable skills which meet employers' needs.

Employer recommendations for curriculum revision centered primarily on human relations. This indicates a correlation between employer and graduate responses indicating a need for more human relations instruction in the General Secretarial Curriculum.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Vocational education has been recognized as a valuable means of obtaining trained, skilled employees for the business world. With the passage of time and the expansion of business life in this country, additional vocational opportunities are beginning to appear and some current opportunities to disappear. It is estimated by Clague and Greenberg (2:745), that more than two million jobs will be lost to technology in the next ten years as a result of technological advancement and improved productivity.

Educators are recognizing the need for increasing vocational education and that vocational education is also changing in nature.

Eyster (4:6) states:

. . . Needs are becoming evident for new developments in education for high level technical business positions; and new needs are evolving for education suitable for workers in general clerical and general sales and service occupations.

Changes in the business world must be accompanied by updating the business education curriculum. Parish (11:162-164) points out the need for curriculum change when he writes:

. . . any curriculum cannot remain static. Business education can either move ahead--by accepting change and adjusting to meet the change--or it must fall back and consequently decrease in importance in our school systems.

Vocational and technical educators have remained cognizant of the constant change in the business world. One method that vocational

educators have utilized as a means of remaining aware of the trends in business has been to survey their graduates and the employers who employ those graduates to determine their effectiveness in the world of work. This has placed an obligation on educators, businessmen, and legislators to coordinate views and efforts to assure that vocational curriculums are relevant to today's business requirements. Huckabay (6:28) emphasized the fact that the key to achieving our aims in business education is the word "change." One of the weaknesses of business education, both past and present, is that many teachers are not aware of changes that have been taking place in the business world.

The importance of student evaluation is pointed out by Alter (1:473) who states that the most important and most neglected area of a school's operation is that of the follow-up of its graduates to determine their effectiveness in the world of work. Iliff (7:30) also points out the importance of the follow-up study in her article when she states:

. . . The follow-up study, with all its limitations, may result in a worth-while, small scale contribution to business education if carefully and systematically conducted. Although conclusions drawn and the recommendations offered will, in many instances, be applicable only to a single institution; nevertheless, the value realized may be of more practical worth than studies of wider scope.

The basic aim of teaching job-entry-level vocational training is to aid the student to develop saleable skills enabling the student to obtain positions in business and advance to higher-level positions

as the student gains experience. This function of vocational education requires that vocational curriculums be closely allied to the current duties and responsibilities of employees in the business world.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this study to evaluate the General Secretarial Curriculum of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School to determine if the General Secretarial Curriculum is adequately preparing General Secretarial graduates for the duties and responsibilities required in the business world as measured by:

1. The different types of businesses employing General Secretarial graduates.
2. The duties and responsibilities performed by General Secretarial graduates.
3. Employers' opinions regarding the General Secretarial graduates' capabilities and performance.
4. Employers' recommendations for changes in the General Secretarial Curriculum.

Importance of the Problem

This investigation was conducted for the purpose of evaluating the General Secretarial Curriculum. The importance of evaluation relies on the premise that an investigation was necessary to determine if the General Secretarial Curriculum and instruction were meeting the standards of business. Importance was added to the study because an

in-depth study of General Secretarial graduates of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School had never been performed prior to 1970.

Mr. Vernon Maack, Director of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School, indicated that the Vocational Education Act of 1963 requires a follow-up study of graduates of an area vocational-technical school. The counselors and the Placement Director of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School indicated that data obtained from the General Secretarial graduate survey and the Employer survey would be helpful in the recruitment of future students and in the placement of graduates.

II. PROCEDURES

The investigative procedures of this study were conducted in two areas: (1) Survey of the General Secretarial graduates of 1967-1968, 1968-1969, and 1969-1970; and (2) Survey of current employers of the General Secretarial graduates. The procedures are discussed separately to insure clarification and understanding.

General Secretarial Graduate Survey

The following procedures were used for development of the General Secretarial graduate study.

1. Discussion with Mr. Maack, Director of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School, pointed out the need for a follow-up study of General Secretarial graduates which is required by the Vocational Education Act of 1963.

2. Consultation with faculty members indicated that revision of the General Secretarial Curriculum should be considered, as only minor revisions had been made in the General Secretarial Curriculum prior to 1970.

3. A survey of the literature was made to determine what information was available pertaining to follow-up studies of graduates.

4. A four-page questionnaire was developed based on the information desired by the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School in determining the effectiveness of the General Secretarial Curriculum and information required by the Federal government on area vocational-technical school graduates. (See Appendix.)

5. All General Secretarial graduates who successfully completed the nine-month General Secretarial Curriculum for the school years 1967-1968, 1968-1969, and 1969-1970 were selected for this study. A cover letter, questionnaire, and stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed to each General Secretarial graduate's home address. The Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School maintains a permanent student file which provided the addresses of the General Secretarial graduates.

On October 1, 1970, a cover letter, questionnaire, and stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed to 106 General Secretarial graduates. On October 20, 1970, questionnaires had been returned from 77 graduates, a 72.6 per cent return.

On October 20, 1970, a second cover letter, questionnaire, and stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed to 29 General Secretarial graduates who had not responded to the first mailing. On November 10, 1970, questionnaires had been returned from an additional 18 graduates giving a total return of 95 of 106 General Secretarial graduates, 89.6 per cent. No further follow-up was made.

6. A series of work sheets were devised to facilitate classifying and summarizing the data obtained from the General Secretarial graduate survey.

The Employer Survey

The following procedures were used for development of the Employer Survey.

1. A survey of the literature was undertaken to determine what studies had been conducted involving employer recommendations and suggestions for curriculum revision. Questionnaires of other investigators were studied to determine what types of questions had been used in obtaining data from employers.

2. A cover letter and a two-page questionnaire were developed. (See Appendix.)

3. When a response was received from a General Secretarial graduate indicating a current employer and the employer's address, a cover letter, questionnaire, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope

were mailed to the employer. By December 1, 1970, a total of 78 questionnaires had been sent to employers.

4. On December 8, 1970, questionnaires had been returned from 64 employers. On December 9, 1970, a second cover letter, questionnaire, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were sent to 14 employers who had not responded to the first mailing. On December 24, 1970, a total of 11 questionnaires had been returned from the follow-up mailing. The return of 75 of 78 questionnaires from employers of General Secretarial graduates represented a 96.2 per cent return. No further follow-up was made.

5. A series of work sheets were devised to facilitate classifying and summarizing the data obtained from the Employer survey.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations apply to this study.

1. Only the General Secretarial graduates of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School were surveyed.

2. The survey was limited to General Secretarial graduates who attended the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School during the school years 1967-68, 1968-69, and 1969-70.

3. The employer survey was limited to those employers who are currently employing at the time of this study General Secretarial graduates of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School.

4. The employer survey was further limited to employers who were employing General Secretarial graduates of the school years 1967-1968, 1968-1969, and 1969-1970.

5. The survey was limited to the General Secretarial Curriculum of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School. (See Appendix.)

6. Further limitations, as they apply to specific areas of the investigation, are discussed in their respective sections within the study.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

General Secretarial Curriculum. A course of study consisting of 1080 hours of classroom and laboratory instruction designed to give General Secretarial students a saleable skill in preparation for entering the business world. (See Appendix.)

General Secretarial Graduates. Students who have successfully completed the nine-month General Secretarial Curriculum.

Employers. Individuals who employed General Secretarial graduates at the time the investigation was conducted.

School Year. Period of study for General Secretarial students consisting of 1080 hours of instruction beginning in September and ending in May.

General Secretary. An assistant to an employer, possessing mastery of office skills and ability to assume responsibility without

direct supervision, who displays initiative, exercises judgment, and makes decisions within the area of her authority.

Greater Importance. An arbitrary term using numbers from one to six on a scale of one to 12 on Table II, page 23.

Lesser Importance. An arbitrary term using numbers from seven to 12 on a scale of one to 12 on Table II, page 23.

Greater Importance. An arbitrary term using numbers from one to five on a scale of one to ten on Table III, page 25.

Lesser Importance. An arbitrary term using numbers from six to ten on a scale of one to ten on Table III, page 25.

Machine Transcription. The skill of transcribing dictation from a machine that records voice on tape, belt, or disk.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

There have been numerous articles published concerning follow-up studies of student graduates from various types of educational institutions. Evaluation of curriculum has been one of the major purposes of these articles. This survey of literature revealed only one study that pertained exclusively to secretarial graduates of area vocational-technical schools in the state of Minnesota. As a result of little related literature concerning area vocational-technical school secretarial graduates, the investigator utilized information from literature concerning follow-up studies of secretarial and clerical graduates of various types of secondary and post-secondary institutions.

The literature available was perused, analyzed, and utilized as guidelines for determining the parameters and methodology of obtaining, compiling, and analyzing the data in this study.

Simmons study. (12:41-46) The purpose of this study was to survey selected businesses in the state of Minnesota in an effort to determine what recommendations businessmen had for revising the General Secretarial curriculums of area vocational-technical schools in Minnesota.

The study revealed that 61 of 66 businessmen, (92.4 per cent, ranked the ability to get along with fellow workers as number one of 23 various office skills and abilities.)

The ability to use correct punctuation in written communications was ranked as number two by 59 of 66 businessmen, 89.4 per cent.

Effective use of the dictionary and office handbook was ranked number three by 57 of 66 businessmen, 86.4 per cent.

Three abilities were ranked by 55 of 66 businessmen, 89.3 per cent, as items that shared fifth place. These required abilities were: (1) express a pleasing personality and present an effective personal appearance; (2) typewrite mailable letters and address envelopes; and (3) verify information from various sources.

The study revealed that businessmen consider certain aspects of business to be teachable to the employee after employment if the employee does not possess knowledge of the duties. Phases of banking operations, use of machines peculiar to a particular business, and company policies, procedures, letter styles, etc., were indicated as being teachable after employment.

This study also asked employers to indicate those skills and abilities desirable for employees to possess to make them more efficient employees. Knowledgeability in the area of economics and business terminology was indicated as a desirable quality by 74.2 per cent of the businessmen. The ability to compose and type letters without instructions from the employer was indicated by businessmen as a trait that was desirable for more efficient employees. Participation in

community organizations and activities was indicated by businessmen as a desirable employee trait.

Cook and Shapiro study. (3:33-35) The purpose of this investigation was to set the basis for a pilot study which would serve as a means of analyzing the secretarial role and serve as a basis for revising and updating curriculum. The study was to direct attention to those variables in the work situation which contribute to success or failure in the secretarial/stenographic positions. The investigation was conducted in Detroit, Michigan. The population of the study involved 149 secretaries, 132 supervisors, and 45 other clerical employees.

The population was stratified into three areas, secretary/stenographer, supervisor, and peer. The investigators stratified success into ten divisions as measured by responses from secretary/stenographers, supervisors, and peers.

A major conclusion arrived at was that a major role of the secretary was "to please and assist her boss." Another conclusion was that a secretary's role must include assuming responsibility, possessing high levels of secretarial skills, having a pleasing personality and sharing an interest in her work.

Significant differences were observed between mean scores in secretarial success for groups of secretaries who had taken education at different types of institutions. The group of secretaries who

attended private business schools were the least successful of all post-secondary secretarial graduates.

In the area of subjective secretarial skills, investigation revealed that secretary/stenographers who possessed a greater degree of secretarial skills, such as "accurate typing" and "capable of written and oral communications," possessed a significantly greater degree of success.

This study indicated that objective secretarial skills, such as accuracy and speed in typing, dictation and transcription skills, spelling ability, and intelligence, did not reveal any significant relationship between secretarial skills and secretarial success.

Klein study. (9:292-93, 335) The purpose of this study was to determine how secretarial graduates were performing in business and whether curriculum revision should be considered. The study was undertaken in western New York state. The population of the study consisted of 179 graduates with 112 respondents.

Taking dictation and transcription was found to be the major activity of graduates. The recommendation was made by graduates that there should be a greater emphasis on technical dictation and dictation at the typewriter. Typewriting continued to be the major activity of secretaries in this study. Graduates suggested that more training be provided in rough-draft typing and in preparing carbon copies.

General office activities, such as handling mail, making appointments and reservations, receiving visitors, and making long-distance telephone calls, were performed by over 70 per cent of the respondents. Thirty per cent of the respondents recommended that more emphasis be placed on receiving callers. Many of the respondents made comments indicating a need for more training in human relations.

Secretarial grammar was indicated as adequate by 88 per cent of the respondents. Office-style dictation was considered inadequate by 72 per cent of the respondents.

Students indicated by their responses that there should be more actual office situations, problems, and solutions. The investigator suggested that this would tend to indicate the need for business teachers to return to business to get more office experience or at least make more office visitations.

Weber study. (14:6-11) This study had as its main purpose the establishing of priorities in training secretaries through a survey of the opinions of secretaries, executives, and secretarial teachers concerning the importance of skills and knowledges and personal traits required in business for secretarial success. The members of the study were 83 secretaries, 31 executives, and 22 Secretarial Block vocational office education teachers in the Phoenix, Arizona, metropolitan area.

Some conclusions derived from the study were: Secretaries, executives, and secretarial teachers generally agreed that a thorough

knowledge of the basic tools of English, taking and transcribing dictation from shorthand or stenotype, and accuracy in performance of duties were the most important elements in the study. All three groups agreed that skill in calculating percentages, discounts, ratios, interest, fractions, and working with data processing were least important.

The three groups agreed that personal qualities and traits were more important than either fundamental or specialized skills and knowledges for secretarial success.

Size of the office or the type of firm did not seem to significantly affect the secretary's view of the relative importance of skills, knowledges, and traits required for secretarial success.

Heckert study. (5:1-80) This study was an appraisal of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School Clerical graduates to evaluate the success of the Clerical Training curriculum. The study involved 90 Clerical graduates and 70 employers of the Clerical graduates.

Conclusions derived from this study were as follows: The statewide Clerical Curriculum consisting of 1080 hours is satisfactory. Employers constantly pointed out the need for more training in business communications and business mathematics.

The investigation revealed that 51.4 per cent of the population had employment in the metropolitan area of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and their suburbs.

Student replies indicated that instruction in business machines and typewriting were of primary importance for employment. Fifty per cent of the students rated Business Law, and Data Processing as being of least importance.

Sixty-seven per cent of the employers in this study indicated that they would prefer to hire an individual who possessed post-secondary vocational training.

Ninety-five per cent of the employers indicated that the area vocational-technical schools were doing an adequate job in training potential employees for office positions.

Over one-half of the employers commented that clerical employees need more training in human relations and communications.

McKee study. (10:4190A) The purpose of this study was to determine the differences between Seventh-Day Advent offices and regular business offices and how this difference affects the work of secretaries in Seventh Day Advent offices.

The investigator concluded from the study that work in Seventh Day Advent offices differs from regular business offices in the promotional aspects work of the church and in the terminology employed in these offices.

A general conclusion, consistent with other secretarial studies, was the need for maturity, good judgment, adequate preparation in the basic secretarial skills, and special proficiency in grammar, spelling, mathematics, voice transcription, and duplicating.

✓ James study. (8:2812-2813) This study indicated that employers consider personal characteristics to be of prime importance in both the hiring and in the promotion stages of secretarial employees.

While employers state that they pay greater attention to personal characteristics in both hiring and promoting beginning stenographic and secretarial workers, this does not indicate that the skill areas are to be forgotten, minimized, or neglected.

Poor spelling, poor grammar, poor dictation and transcription, poor typewriting, and lack of English fundamentals were found to be the greatest technical weaknesses in beginning workers. The most significant personal weaknesses found in beginning workers were lack of proper grooming, lack of interest, poor selection of wearing apparel, poor diction and voice, use of too much make-up, immaturity, and lack of conscientiousness.

Zoubek study. (15:25-26) The purpose of this study was to determine if the need for shorthand skills was on the way out. The study indicated that employment offices in the United States still had a great demand for girls with shorthand skills. The Department of Employment Security in Minneapolis, Minnesota, indicated that they have

never been able to fill the positions available for girls with shorthand skills. Employers have indicated a concern over the shortage of girls with shorthand skills. Private employment offices also indicated that there is always a need for girls who can take shorthand.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

It was the purpose of this study to evaluate the General Secretarial Curriculum of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School to determine if the General Secretarial Curriculum is adequately preparing General Secretarial graduates for the business world. An in-depth study of the General Secretarial graduates had not been performed prior to 1970. The Director of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School indicated that the Vocational Education Act of 1963 required a follow-up study of graduates of an area vocational-technical school.

In an effort to maintain continuity and readability of this study, the General Secretarial Graduate Questionnaire and the Employer Questionnaire were divided into separate sections with subdivisions of information in each section.

The General Secretarial Graduate Questionnaire was divided into three areas of interest as follows: (1) data relevant to the General Secretarial Curriculum; (2) data relevant to the General Secretarial graduates' positions in industry; (3) data relevant to the graduates' likes and dislikes of the educational program at the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School.

The Employer Questionnaire was divided into four areas of discussion as follows: (1) data relevant to the adequacy of the General Secretarial graduates' vocational training; (2) data relevant to the type of on-the-job training required of new secretarial employees;

(3) data relevant to the education and number of secretaries employed by respondent firms; (4) data concerning the employers' attitudes regarding the promotion and salaries of secretaries with post high school training.

I. GENERAL SECRETARIAL GRADUATE SURVEY

The findings concerning the General Secretarial graduates of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School were based upon the results of a survey, using a questionnaire form, of General Secretarial graduates. (See Appendix.) Questionnaires were mailed to 106 General Secretarial graduates from the classes of 1967-1968, 1968-1969, and 1969-1970. Responses were received from 95 graduates, an 89.6 per cent return.

General Secretarial Curriculum

The General Secretarial Curriculum of the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School is an adaptation of the General Secretarial Curriculum recommended by the State Department of Vocational Education. The model curriculum recommended by the State Department of Vocational Education was created through the efforts and coordination of the General Secretarial instructors of the area vocational-technical schools in the state of Minnesota and the State Supervisor of Business Education for the State Department of Vocational Education.

Table I, page 21, indicates the subjects and the number of classroom hours devoted to each during the nine-month General

TABLE I

CLASSROOM HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN THE GENERAL
SECRETARIAL CURRICULUM AT THE ALEXANDRIA
AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Subject	Hours
Shorthand	180
Dictation Transcription	60
Machine Transcription	60
Secretarial Office Procedures and Charm	60
Typewriting	180*
Business English	60
Business Correspondence	60
Business Machines	120
Accounting	60
Business Math	60
Business Law	60
Economics and Business Organization and Management	60
Psychology and Human Relations	60
Total	1080

* Denotes 40 hours of Introduction to Data Processing included in 180 hours of Typewriting instruction.

Secretarial Curriculum. The Minnesota State Department of Vocational Education regulations require that 1080 hours of formal classroom and laboratory instruction be provided in the General Secretarial Curriculum.

Importance Ranking of Subjects by General Secretarial Graduates

General Secretarial graduates were asked to indicate how important the graduates felt the subjects in the General Secretarial Curriculum were in preparing General Secretarial graduates for their present position.

Table II, page 23, indicates the responses of General Secretarial graduates on the importance of the various courses they completed while attending the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School.* It may be noted in this table that 63 of the 66 respondents, 95.5 per cent, indicate that Typewriting was of greater importance to the student than any other vocational instruction. Additional investigation of this table indicates that students placed significant importance on instruction in Business and English. Fifty-eight of 66 respondents, 87.9 per cent, gave Business English a greater importance ranking. Fifty-seven of 67 respondents, 78.5 per cent, gave

* Importance ranking is based upon a scale of 1 to 12, 1 being most important and 12 being least important. A ranking of 1 to 6 was arbitrarily defined as a greater importance ranking, and a ranking of 7 to 12 was arbitrarily defined as a lesser importance ranking.

TABLE II

SUBJECTS RANKED BY ALEXANDRIA GENERAL SECRETARIAL
GRADUATES ACCORDING TO HOW IMPORTANT GRADUATES
FELT THE SUBJECTS WERE IN PREPARING
GRADUATES FOR THEIR
PRESENT POSITION

Subject	Per cent of students ranking subjects of Greater Importance 1-6	Per cent of students ranking subjects of Lesser Importance 7-12	Number Reporting
Typewriting	95.5	4.5	66
Business English	87.9	12.1	66
Secretarial Office Procedures and Charm	78.5	21.5	67
Business Correspondence	78.5	21.5	65
Human Relations	71.0	29.0	62
Business Machines	60.0	40.0	65
Shorthand	54.1	45.9	61
Machine Transcription	40.3	59.7	62
Business Math and Accounting	31.1	68.9	61
Economics	5.0	95.0	60
Business Law	3.3	96.7	60
Data Processing	3.3	96.7	61

Secretarial Office Procedures a greater importance ranking. Forty-four of 62 respondents, 71.0 per cent, gave Human Relations a greater importance ranking. Thirty-nine of 65 respondents, 60.0 per cent, gave Business Machines a greater importance ranking. Thirty-three of 61 respondents, 54.1 per cent, gave Shorthand a greater importance ranking.

Those subjects having a lesser importance ranking in the General Secretarial Curriculum as indicated by students' responses were as follows:

Business Math and Accounting received a lesser importance ranking by 42 of 61 respondents, 68.9 per cent. Economics received a lesser importance ranking by 57 of 60 respondents, 95.0 per cent. Business Law and Data Processing received a lesser importance ranking by 96.7 per cent of the respondents. The Business Law, Economics, and Data Processing courses were offered in a lecture-style presentation.

Importance Ranking of Job Responsibilities by General Secretarial Graduates

Table III, page 25, indicates the General Secretarial graduates' responses to the importance of the various responsibilities that are associated with a secretary's position. General Secretarial graduates indicated that they considered the typing of reports and forms as one of their primary responsibilities. Fifty-two of 64 respondents, 81.3 per cent, gave the typing of reports and forms a greater importance

TABLE III

RANKING OF PRESENT JOB RESPONSIBILITIES ACCORDING TO
IMPORTANCE BY THE 1967-1968, 1968-1969, AND
1969-1970 GENERAL SECRETARIAL GRADUATES
OF ALEXANDRIA AREA VOCATIONAL-
TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Job Responsibility	Per cent of students ranking job responsi- bility of Greater Im- portance 1-5	Per cent of students ranking job responsi- bility of Lesser Im- portance 6-10	Number Reporting
Typing Reports and Forms	81.3	18.7	64
Using the Telephone	79.4	20.6	63
Typing Correspondence	79.0	21.0	62
Meeting the Public	60.3	39.7	62
Filing Duties	55.6	44.4	63
Transcribing Dictation	43.9	56.1	57
Taking Dictation	40.4	59.6	57
Miscellaneous	33.9	66.1	59
Composing Letters	25.4	74.6	59
Making Appointments and Reservations	23.3	76.7	60

ranking.* Fifty of 63 respondents, 79.4 per cent, gave using the telephone a greater importance ranking. Forty-nine of 62 respondents, 79.0 per cent, gave typing of correspondence a greater importance ranking. Thirty-eight of 63 respondents, 60.3 per cent, gave meeting the public a greater importance ranking. The greater importance ranking of using the telephone and meeting the public may have a correlation with the graduates' responses to the need for increased emphasis on certain aspects of Human Relations in the curriculum as indicated by the responses on Table V, page 29.

Additional study of Table III indicates that filing duties were given a greater importance ranking by 35 of 63 respondents, 55.6 per cent. Taking dictation, transcribing dictation, and composing letters received greater importance rankings by less than 50 per cent of the respondents.** Composition of letters was given a lesser importance ranking by 74.6 per cent of the respondents. Transcribing dictation was given a lesser importance ranking by 56.1 per cent of the

*Importance ranking of Table III is based upon a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being most important and 10 being least important. A ranking of 1 to 5 was arbitrarily defined as a greater importance ranking, and a ranking of 6 to 10 was arbitrarily defined as a lesser importance ranking.

**Of interest to the reader may be the fact that duties receiving a greater importance ranking of 1 to 5 by 50 per cent or more of the respondents were those duties associated with Secretarial Office Procedures and not with Shorthand and Transcription, per se.

respondents, and the importance of taking dictation was given a lesser importance ranking by 59.6 per cent of the respondents.

Use of Shorthand and Machine Transcription Abilities by General Secretarial Graduates

One of the purposes of this study was to determine how many of the General Secretarial graduates were using their shorthand and machine transcription skills. Table IV, page 28, indicates that 73.6 per cent of the General Secretarial graduates are using either shorthand or a combination of shorthand and machine transcription skills on the job. Only 17.0 per cent of the respondents, who indicated that they were employed in a position with secretarial responsibilities, were not using their shorthand skills.

Human Relations in the General Secretarial Curriculum

General Secretarial graduates were asked to indicate the areas of Human Relations they felt should receive more emphasis in the General Secretarial Curriculum.

Table V, page 29, concerning General Secretarial graduates' responses to increased emphasis on Human Relations in the General Secretarial Curriculum revealed that 51 of 84 respondents, 60.7 per cent, believed that there should be more emphasis placed on instruction in oral communications. At the present time, there are no formal speech courses available to students in the General Secretarial Curriculum. Efforts are made to provide opportunities for students to learn and

TABLE IV

USE OF SHORTHAND AND MACHINE TRANSCRIPTION ABILITIES
ON THE JOB AS DENOTED BY RESPONSES OF GENERAL
SECRETARIAL GRADUATES OF ALEXANDRIA AREA
VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

	Number	Per Cent
Secretary using shorthand only	21	39.6
Secretary using shorthand and machine transcription	18	34.0
Secretary not using shorthand	9	17.0
Secretary using machine transcription only	5	9.4
Totals	53	100.0

TABLE V

GENERAL SECRETARIAL GRADUATES' RESPONSES INDICATING AREAS
OF HUMAN RELATIONS THAT SHOULD RECEIVE MORE EMPHASIS
IN THE GENERAL SECRETARIAL CURRICULUM

Subject	Number	Per Cent
Oral communication with other people	51	60.7
Ability to work well with other people	13	15.5
Personality development	12	14.3
Charm development	8	9.5
Totals	84	100.0

apply voice control and speech delivery techniques in the Secretarial Office Procedures course. Additional techniques in oral communications have been incorporated in telephone training. A unit of instruction in Charm has been incorporated into the Secretarial Office Procedures course to help General Secretarial students to perfect their personality, poise, judgment and maturity.

II. GENERAL SECRETARIAL GRADUATES' POSITIONS IN INDUSTRY

The placement of graduates of an area vocational-technical school is an important aspect of vocational education. Students who attend the Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School in an endeavor to prepare themselves for the world of work have indicated on the entrance admission applications, which are a part of the school's permanent records, that they have come to such an institution to improve skills learned prior to vocational school enrollment or to acquire skills which they have not learned previously. With the students' goals in mind, these students must be placed in positions that provide an opportunity to utilize, to the fullest extent, these newly acquired skills.

The Alexandria Area Vocational-Technical School instituted a placement office in the fall of 1969. Prior to this time, instructors worked with the local State Employment Office in an effort to place students. The Placement Director has worked closely with

representatives of business, both local and statewide, in an effort to remain cognizant of job opportunities for graduates. There is liaison between the Placement Director and the local State Employment Office for providing State and Federal Civil Service testing for students who are interested in government employment.

Procedures Used by General Secretarial Graduates to Obtain Employment

General Secretarial graduates were asked to indicate what procedures they used in an effort to obtain initial employment after graduation.

Table VI, page 32, indicates the procedures used by 1967-1968, 1968-1969, and 1969-1970 General Secretarial graduates in obtaining positions in business. Employment was obtained through personal application by 33 of 72 respondents, 45.8 per cent. Employment was obtained with the aid of the State Employment Office by 14 of 72 respondents, 19.5 per cent.

Table VII, page 33, indicates the duration of time between graduation of General Secretarial students and the time of their initial employment in business. It may be noted from this table that 29 of 67 respondents, 43.4 per cent, obtained employment before graduation. Fourteen of 67 respondents, 20.9 per cent, obtained employment within four weeks after graduation. An additional eight respondents, 11.9 per cent, obtained employment within eight weeks after graduation.

