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A Study Conducted among Selected Yakima Business Offices to Give Direction to Future Curriculum Planning in the Secretarial Training Department at Yakima Valley College

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A STUDY CONDUCTED AMONG SELECTED YAKIMA BUSINESS OFFICES
TO GIVE DIRECTION TO FUTURE CURRICULUM PLANNING
IN THE SECRETARIAL TRAINING DEPARTMENT
AT YAKIMA VALLEY COLLEGE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Adeline Constance Engen
August 1962

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Business education teachers should educate their students so that they may perform adequately when employed in business offices. Teachers in the Secretarial Training Department of Yakima Valley College are well aware of this responsibility.

Yakima Valley College (17:9), a community college, draws most of its student body from the city of Yakima and from the smaller towns and farming communities in the immediate area. Therefore, it could be assumed that many students in the secretarial training classes seek employment in Yakima upon completing their formal studies.

It seemed important that the writer know what variety and degree of skills certain Yakima businessmen desired in office workers they hire. It seemed equally important to know the desired related skills, knowledges, habits, and personal characteristics.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to determine (1) the variety and degree of specific skills selected businessmen in Yakima desire in the office employees they hire; (2) the degree of importance they attach to work habits and related educational knowledges and skills; and

(3) the personal characteristics and traits they find most desirable in office personnel.

Need for the study. Students in the secretarial training classes at Yakima Valley College who are there specifically for vocational purposes are entitled to the best training they can receive in skill development, related learnings, and personality development. Teachers of these secretarial training classes need to be aware of the basic office requirements in certain business offices in Yakima in order to prepare the students for initial vocational competency or for a changing business environment.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Unless otherwise stated, all terms will be used in their commonly accepted definitions.

General clerical workers. As identified by Greenleaf (8:220), these need little training or experience. Among the many duties they might perform are sorting and classifying records, working accurately with simple figures, and operating certain office machines including the typewriter and certain bookkeeping machines.

Typists. These workers, according to Greenleaf (8:222), spend most of their time using the typewriter to write letters,

address envelopes, copy from printed or written materials, make stencils to use in duplicating machines, make statistical tables, and fill in report forms.

Stenographers. According to the Department of Labor (14:1), these perform straight typing, take dictation from one or more persons, compile and type reports, answer telephones, operate various types of office machines, and perform other clerical duties.

Secretaries. Greenleaf (8:226) says secretaries are not only stenographers but confidential helpers to the executives for whom they work. Besides taking dictation and transcribing notes, they must carry out orders, make appointments, meet visitors, take care of correspondence, and possibly supervise other clerical workers in the office.

Office workers. These include any or all of the following types of office employees: secretaries, stenographers, typists, and general clerical workers.

Businessmen. These are owners of businesses, office managers, or personnel managers directly concerned with the hiring of office employees.

Basic skill. This refers to a skill taught as a specific ability, such as typewriting, shorthand, or transcription.

Related education skill. This indicates skill developed through the study of a particular course such as a foreign language or through the use of language arts and mathematics as they might relate to any course of study.

Business education. This is defined by Blackstone (4:24) as that education "needed by every consumer of the products and services of business and which is essential for an economically literate society." The term is used in this study, however, to identify the curriculum taught in the schools for the specific purpose of training students in the skills and knowledges necessary for employment in business offices.

Schools. These refer to institutions of learning, the high schools, colleges, and business colleges, where business education classes are taught.

Secretarial Training Department. At the Yakima Valley College (17:50-51), this includes classes in typing, shorthand, transcription, and secretarial and office practice. Other business education classes, such as business mathematics, business correspondence, and office machines, are included in the Business Administration Department.

Basic office forms. These refer to forms used in business offices on which the office worker is required to type or write the necessary information on printed lines or in columns.

Words per minute in typing. This refers to the gross number of words typed in one minute, GWAM, in a timed test usually five minutes in length.

Words per minute in shorthand. This means the number of words the dictator speaks in one minute to the stenographer or secretary who is taking it down in shorthand. Dictation for the classroom and the employment office testing in shorthand is usually for five minutes, but it may be for only one, two, or three minutes.

Mastery. This is the ability to perform a skill rapidly and accurately.

Acquaintance. When used with reference to operating a machine, this denotes the ability to use the machine for simple operations only.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

A questionnaire was devised to include information the writer was interested in obtaining from certain businessmen in Yakima. A listing of the types of businesses in Yakima was obtained from the classified section of the telephone book. From this listing, firms were selected because of (1) the use of office workers, (2) the availability and convenience of an interview, and (3) the interest on the part of the businessmen. Appointments were made for interviews, calls were made,

and information received was recorded by the writer. The results were then tabulated and tables constructed in an effort to obtain accurate and meaningful information to support the problem. From this information, conclusions were drawn.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to (1) a selected sample of the business offices in Yakima where office workers are employed and where it was possible to arrange an interview with the businessmen, (2) the permanent, full-time employees of these businesses, (3) the information requested in the questionnaire pertaining to certain skills, work habits, related knowledges, and personal characteristics desired in the office workers hired, and (4) certain information volunteered by the businessmen as to other desirable skills or personal characteristics not listed in the questionnaire.

While this study was limited to the technical, related, and personal skills desired by selected businessmen in Yakima, it is hoped that the findings will give some direction to future curriculum changes in the Secretarial Training Department of Yakima Valley College.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In 1874, Packard College in New York City offered a class in typewriting to the first group of women courageous enough to wish to enter the business world. Recently the United States Department of Labor published this statement (14:1):

In 1960, nearly 2.4 million persons were employed in occupations which required typing or stenographic skills. More than 95 per cent of these workers--who are usually designated as typists, stenographers, or secretaries--were women. Although duties and job titles vary markedly among places of employment, typing skill is a basic requirement for entry into any of these occupational categories.

Place and Strony (11:10) have listed a number of facts which emphasize the general status of women in business today. Among these facts, the following seemed pertinent to this study:

1. The majority of office workers are women.
2. Since 1890, the number of persons needed to do office work has increased by 2,250 per cent.
3. Women are represented in all but nine of 451 occupational classifications, although three-fourths of the women who work are concentrated in twenty-three occupations. Among the leaders are those of the ranks of stenographic workers, typing, secretarial, bookkeeping, accounting, cashiering, and general clerical workers.

Place and Hicks (10:10-11) have said that the three broad levels of jobs in an office are (1) executive, which

determines the policies of the business; (2) managerial or supervisory, which co-ordinates, directs, and carries out the policies; and (3) clerical, which performs "doing" activities such as mailing, computing, filing, duplicating, typewriting, and communicating.

Blackstone (4:24) identifies the office worker in our economy as being a "facilitator," and states further that his job is to place at management's elbow all the information it needs for making decisions. According to Blackstone, in 1960 about ten million or 15.2 per cent of the total number employed were employed as office workers.

Beckman (5:214) refers to the training of office workers as the responsibility of the schools. In an address before the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Beckman drew a comparison between business organizations and our public education system. He stated that just as public utilities and large manufacturing companies are alert to market surveys and trends and are accepting the responsibility for supplying services and manufactured products wherever needed, the public education system has an equal responsibility to anticipate the needs for its product--trained students--in the quantities required and with the necessary skills. This, he stated, is an essential part of the business of education.

Business education teachers should maintain a close contact with business organizations to be as well-informed as

possible in meeting the needs of the community and its youth. In an editorial, "What Business Educators Want to Know from Businessmen," Elvin S. Eyster (5:217) listed a number of questions as to the types of information the schools need to know in order to improve their service to business and to the students. The questions listed include:

1. Skills and knowledges required--in each kind of business job, what special office and sales skills should graduates have for initial employment? What areas of related business knowledges should they have?
2. General education requirements--what general education abilities (such as abilities in English, mathematics, science, expression) are essential for business employees? To what extent should each one of these be acquired in pre-employment education?
3. Standards of performance--what minimum levels of performance are necessary for initial employment in each kind of business jobs to which inexperienced employees are assigned?
4. Personal traits, attitudes, and work habits--in what personal traits, attitudes, and work habits are deficiencies common among new, inexperienced employees, and specifically, what undesirable traits, attitudes, and work habits do they have? In what ways can business and schools cooperate in developing desirable traits, attitudes, and work habits?
5. Occupational intelligence--what understanding should new, inexperienced employees have about business jobs, their demands on employees, opportunities, relationship between employees and management, service the business renders, etc.?

The goals of business education teachers might be more clearly defined if business offices could set specific standards that must be met by the workers. During recent years

much has been said about the business office standards, as indicated by Pendery. But, he continues, "an analysis of studies that have attempted to appraise the actual progress of improvement in the field shows that actually little has been accomplished in setting standards that are of much benefit to teachers"(6:31).

Pendery uses the words of Leslie Mathies in defining what constitutes a standard: "A standard is the number of acceptable work units that can be completed in a given time, under specific conditions." The words "acceptable" and "specific conditions," he adds, make it difficult to set uniform office standards in business.

Office standards vary because of the type of operation or because the executives demand specific performance. The Department of Labor (14:2) has stated that the degree of stenographic and typing skill required differs from employer to employer and is sometimes influenced by the demand for and supply of typists, stenographers, and secretaries in a community. The Federal Government has specified minimum standards for employment. Typists must pass an examination which includes a test covering verbal abilities, a clerical aptitude test, and a typing test in which the applicant must type at a rate of about 40 words a minute. In addition to these tests, stenographers must demonstrate their ability to take dictation at the rate of 80 words a minute, and shorthand reporters must

be able to record material at the rate of 160 words a minute. (No mention was made in this article as to whether the typing rate was gross words a minute, net words a minute, or correct words a minute. Similarly, the material dictated for the shorthand test was not identified as being new or previewed material. No mention was made of a minimum transcription rate.)

The Department of Labor bulletin also states that adequate performance as a secretary, stenographer, or typist depends not only on typing and shorthand skill but also on a good background in language skills such as spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar. The bulletin adds that an acquaintance with office machines and equipment is often helpful.

While the basic skills such as typing and shorthand are necessary for office employment, studies have shown that attitudes and personal characteristics are considered even more seriously by the businessmen. Baer and Roeber in a discussion of occupational requirements state (3:99):

A number of years ago the Carnegie Foundation issued what was then considered a surprising statement: "On the basis of our studies we find that technical training counts for only 15 per cent in the success of an individual, while personal qualities count for 85 per cent."

Baer and Roeber also state that later studies confirmed the Carnegie findings that personal qualities are more important in first jobs, promotions, and discharges than are the skills required for the position.

Heyer (9:30) conducted a study in Madison, Wisconsin, to determine if personal characteristics are a factor in employee hiring or dismissal and to identify the desirable character traits. In 88 per cent of the cases studied personal characteristics were listed for loss of jobs. The most important desirable character traits were dependability, ability to get along with others, initiative, ability to follow directions, and loyalty to the firm.

Rothermel (12:65), investigating the knowledges, skills, and attitudes that employers consider essential for successful clerical performance in a California coastal area, found that of the firms questioned nearly one-half did not require a minimum speed in typewriting or shorthand dictation and that the pre-employment testing on these skills was limited. Rothermel also found the most important subject-matter backgrounds included spelling, basic arithmetic, analytical ability, and English. Of the attitudes explored, the most important were job attitude and attitude toward co-workers and the public.

Using a negative approach, Changing Times (15:43) published an article in which the author listed six personal habits emphasizing "How not to get ahead." These habits were (1) absenteeism, (2) frequent change of job, (3) lack of interest, (4) haughtiness, (5) emotionalism, and (6) gossip.

A shortage of workers with stenographic and typing skills has existed in many areas since World War II. Through business expansion and increased government activity, new opportunities are created. Job vacancies occur as young women advance to other positions or leave the labor market. An article in Time (13:80) contains the information that about two million women hold secretarial jobs. The shortage of these workers is emphasized when the author states that some 250,000 secretarial jobs "go begging every day." The author of this article further declares that because of the shortage of office help, students are entering the business world before they have completed the training provided in the business education classes. This tends to lower the skill and ability of the beginning office workers.

A recent study on the adequacy of business education training in the high schools in the state of Washington was made by Wilsing (16:1-26), who interviewed businessmen to get their evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational preparation of students who came to them directly from the schools. His conclusion, formulated by comments from the businessmen interviewed, was that

. . . generally, employers were pleased with the products of the schools if they were completely trained in the commercial area and they were "A" or "B" students or if they came recommended to them by some business teacher with whom they had contact. . . . Of greatest concern to many employers, however, were students who came to them incompletely trained, often with only one semester or year of typewriting taken as a sophomore.

One of the areas Wilsing investigated was the guidance needed by students who might be potential business education majors. With early planning, many of these students could be graduated from high school with some "salable business skills" as well as the preparation for college. Another idea presented was the need for some selection of business students in order that high caliber students might be recruited for business careers.

Wilsing made a comparison of business standards with student achievements in the high school business education classes; 24 Yakima firms were included. Wilsing's investigation indicated that the average typing speed required of stenographers or typists who spent a good share of their work day at the typewriter was 50 net words per minute, while for other jobs not requiring such extensive use of the typewriter, the rate specified was 40 net words a minute. Some businessmen desired higher speeds but stated this was for their top jobs. There was some deviation in the interpretation of "net words a minute" as some of the businessmen deducted 5 words per error and others deducted 10 words per error from the gross words per minute. Wilsing's conclusion on this comparison was that students who had had two years of high school typewriting were usually able to meet the requirements of business offices, while those with just one year of typewriting tended to fall short of what the employers wanted.

In his comparison of shorthand standards, Wilsing found that since the median speed desired by the Washington businessmen was 80 words a minute, most students who had had two years of shorthand qualified. On the other hand, one year of shorthand was generally found to be insufficient to meet business requirements since the achievement of most students with one year of high school shorthand did not exceed 60 words a minute.

The Seattle Chapter of the National Office Management Association (1) conducted a survey of Seattle business offices and published the findings. This survey shows that of all the people now employed in Seattle, 42 per cent are employed in business occupations. This includes clerical workers, proprietors, and managers. Because of the increasing numbers of people in business occupations and because most young women who take business positions work only a short time, it will require about half of all the high school students in Seattle to supply the needs of business in that city.

The results of the survey indicate that most office workers in Seattle receive their entire training in high school. A "Statement of Proficiency" card is presented to each graduate who has satisfactorily completed "the subjects listed . . . in any one of the four business courses" identified as Clerical, Retailing, Bookkeeping, and Secretarial. Office managers report that almost 100 per cent of the students who come to

them equipped with this recommendation of their training become satisfactory office workers.

As the shortage of office workers continues, it seems almost contradictory to think of the possibility of automation affecting employment. A recent article in the Annals of the American Academy (2:60-68) brought out the idea that automation may affect the significance of work in our society by changing the job content, redistributing employment opportunities, or decreasing the number of working hours.

Gibson (7:24-25) stated that increased mechanization is one of the answers to the office-worker shortage that has existed for some time. The accretion of paper work caused by government requirements for reports, the growth of firms, and their frequent consolidation into larger units has brought about the need for this ever-growing group of non-productive office workers.

According to Gibson, the shortage of office workers will continue to be a problem to business because (1) too few people are going into office work, (2) too few business teachers are being prepared to train office workers, and (3) the obvious result, a continued shortage of office workers, will only intensify the trend toward new systems and new office equipment.

The review of the literature indicates that in less than three-quarters of a century the number of persons needed to do office work has increased over 2,000 per cent. Training

this large group of office workers is mainly the responsibility of the schools through the business education courses taught in the high schools, colleges, and business colleges. In order to make teaching more effective, teachers of business education courses need to know what skills, knowledges, and personal characteristics businessmen desire.

The literature reveals a variation in office standards, determined by the type of business and the management personnel of the business. Besides a usable degree of skill in shorthand (80 words a minute) and in typing (50 words a minute), the office employee needs an ability in such language arts as spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Personal characteristics and traits are important factors in the consideration of an employee, the ability to get along with other people being most important.

According to the literature, the shortage of office workers will tend to increase the use of new systems and equipment to accomplish the work required by business. Automation may affect the significance of work in changing job content and in number of jobs, but at the present time there seems no reason to conclude that automation will cause all office workers to lose their jobs.

Businessmen want more workers who are completely trained. They have expressed concern that often students come to them with limited preparation and think they are qualified

to be office workers. Businessmen are also interested in earlier guidance for potential business education majors, inasmuch as one-half of all high school students are needed to supply the personnel requirements of business.

Even though businessmen assume that the applicant has some usable skill, the literature showed that personal characteristics were considered important in retention and promotion.

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF APPROACH AND MATERIALS USED

The interview-questionnaire method was used in this study to obtain and classify the data procured from 28 business offices in Yakima. The judgment method of selecting subjects for study was used. A listing of types of businesses was made, with the classified section of the telephone book as a guide. An effort was made to secure such a list from the local Chamber of Commerce and the Washington State Employment Securities office, but each informed the writer that their files were set up alphabetically without regard to type of business. From this listing, firms were selected by reason of (1) employment of office workers, (2) availability and convenience of an interview, and (3) interest on the part of the businessman. Table I reveals a listing of the types of businesses visited together with the total number of employees and the number of office employees.

No special effort was made to select firms of various sizes. However, the study shows that the firms visited employ from 1 to 350 persons. Owners of businesses were not included in this number; for example, a lawyer who employed a secretary was considered to have one employee, and the two owners of an insurance business who have four office workers were considered to have four employees. More than half the firms visited employ

TABLE I
 TYPES OF BUSINESSES IN THIS STUDY
 WITH NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AND OFFICE EMPLOYEES

Type of Business	Employees	Office Employees
Accounting #1	17	5
Accounting #2	6	2
Attorney	1	1
City of Yakima	350	41
Bank #1	85	17
Bank #2	26	3
Bank #3	9	5
Department Store #1	150	15
Department Store #2	66	4
Department Store #3	72	15
Department Store #4	135	25
Doctor	3	1
Fruit	20	4
Grocer, Retail	250	1
Grocer, Wholesale #1	68	16
Grocer, Wholesale #2	122	16
Hospital #1	350	20
Hospital #2	337	27
Hotel	135	6
Insurance	4	4
Library	40	20
Lumber	9	1
Newspaper	200	15
Radio and TV	50	9
Real Estate	30	9
Travel Agency	5	4
Utility #1	129	26
Utility #2	100	10

less than 100 people; the remaining employ from 100 to 350. The number of office workers in the firms visited ranged from 1 to 41, with more than two-thirds of the businesses having less than 20 office workers. Employees included as office workers were secretaries, stenographers, typists, and general clerical workers. Managers of offices or departments and professional men such as accountants were not counted.

Figure 1 indicates the ratio of office workers to total employees in the business offices in this study, showing that 12 per cent work at office jobs.

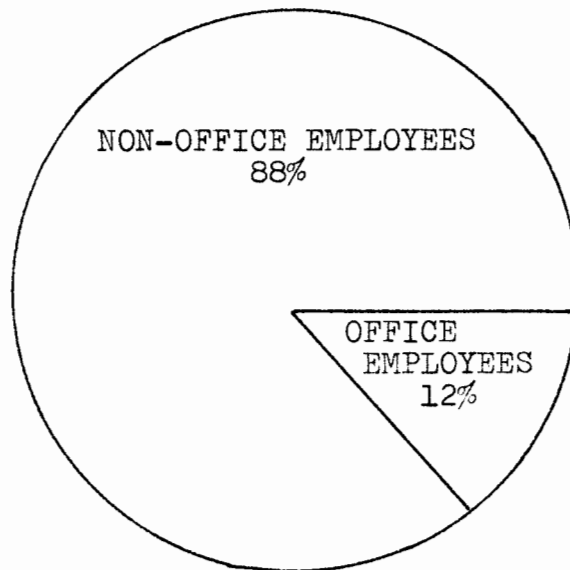


FIGURE 1

COMPARISON OF OFFICE EMPLOYEES
AND NON-OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN THIS STUDY

Table II indicates a comparison by per cent of the total employee turnover and the office employee turnover. Showing turnover in percentage is somewhat misleading. For instance, the largest number of firms had a turnover of 10 per cent or less, many indicating less than one per cent. Some of the subjects in this group had only two or three employees, all of whom had been with the firm for five or ten years or more. Then, again, a company with four or five office employees who found it necessary to replace two in one year would have a turnover of 40 or 50 per cent. Firms having the largest per cent of change in total employees were those who employed unskilled help and admitted a low salary schedule. An effort was made to prevent a seasonal turnover from affecting the data by asking for information on permanent employees only. The table indicates that in both the total employees and the office employees most firms visited reported less than a 30 per cent turnover.

Since this investigation centered around students trained in the Yakima Valley College who might seek employment in the business offices in Yakima, the businessmen were asked during the interview if they would hire beginning office workers. Two of the personnel managers interviewed replied that they chose beginning workers and asked the schools for recommended students. The other 26 businessmen said they would hire beginning office workers if all efforts to obtain experienced help had failed.

TABLE II
 COMPARISON OF TURNOVER OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES
 AND OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN THE FIRMS VISITED

Per cent of turnover	Total employees	Office employees
Less than 1	7	10
1 - 10	10	9
11 - 20	5	4
21 - 30	4	3
31 - 40	0	1
41 - 50	0	1
51 - 60	1	0
61 - 70	0	0
71 - 80	1	0

As a business education teacher, the writer was interested in knowing what pre-employment testing is administered by the businessmen in Yakima. Table III reveals the results of the five items asked in the questionnaire and in addition the number of businessmen who accept the scores on typing and shorthand tests administered by privately-owned employment offices as well as the Washington State Employment Securities Office.

TABLE III
SKILLS TESTS GIVEN BY BUSINESSMEN IN THIS STUDY

Kind of Test	Number of Businessmen
Typing, timed-writing	6
Typing, problem solving	0
Shorthand, dictation and reading back	3
Shorthand, transcribe mailable copy	0
Dictation machine, transcription	1
Typing and shorthand tests administered by an employment service	15

Pre-employment testing by the businessmen is limited. The results of tests administered by the privately-owned or state employment services, however, were used by more than

half the businessmen visited. Without these available scores, the inference was that personnel managers would administer their own tests.

Many of the office managers indicated they required no special speed in typing but were interested in accuracy. The greatest number of those asking for a specific speed stated that 50 words a minute was acceptable. (See Table IV).

TABLE IV
DESIRED SPEED IN TYPEWRITING AND SHORTHAND

Typewriting Speed GWAM	Number of Businessmen	Shorthand Dictation Speed	Number of Businessmen
40	5	80	4
50	7	100	2
60	2	120	1
75	1		

Other than on the typewriter, there was no testing on office machines. Table V shows the degree of skill in operating these machines desired by businessmen in the office employees they hire. The first four items in the table are the specific machines investigated. The last three items are machines volunteered by some of the businessmen.

TABLE V
DEGREE OF SKILL DESIRED ON OFFICE MACHINES

Machine	Mastery	Acquaintance	Training not needed
Ten-key adding	2	11	14
Full-key adding	1	6	20
Comptometer	0	8	19
Bookkeeping machine	0	7	21
Calculator	1	7	0
Telephone Switchboard	0	2	0
Posting machine	0	1	0

The ten-key adding machine is the most popular in the offices visited; however, most of the personnel managers felt the operation of this machine is so easy to master that pre-employment training is unimportant.

There is very little testing of applicants in areas outside the basic skills, as is shown by Table VI. The City of Yakima Personnel Manager gives a personality test as well as the required State Civil Service Test. Some self-devised general tests as well as self-devised vocabulary and arithmetic tests are administered. Spelling was considered important enough by the personnel manager of the newspaper office to devise a test. No applicant is hired there who misspells more than seven words out of thirty. The list includes such words as guarantee, bookkeeping, technique, privilege, and edition. Another office manager stated that handwriting has become increasingly important because of data processing. In his words, their employees have become "an office of pencil-pushers" since it is more convenient to make all original items in pencil before they are sent to the home office for data processing. Two businessmen indicated they do no testing but base their evaluation entirely on the oral interview. Another personnel manager outlined his evaluation by stating he has the applicant type the answers to questions on the application form, then turn the paper over and write a letter in longhand to the company stating why she would like to be

employed by that company. These are the bases for an evaluation of typing, handwriting, and ability to compose a letter.

TABLE VI
UTILIZATION OF TESTS OTHER THAN SKILL TESTS

Kind of Test	Number of Businessmen
Arithmetic	1
Handwriting	1
Interview Evaluation	2
Personality	1
Self-devised	4
Spelling	1
Vocabulary	1

Table VII presents in tabulated form the sources of information about an applicant and the number of firms using these sources. In order to report the results of the survey exactly, the writer has divided "employee's statements" into two categories: (1) the occasions when the employee's statements on the application form are used in conjunction with testing or interview evaluation but without verification by references and (2) those when the employee's statements are considered but are verified by references. By way of contrast,

one personnel manager stated his company required him to check each employee through all references and school records; another stated his company placed little faith in references and depended on the immediate personal evaluation of the applicant.

TABLE VII
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT APPLICANT

Source	Number responding
Employee's statements only	6
Employee's statements and references	22
School records	2
Character reference	22
Business reference	22
School personnel reference	7

Working skills and habits are difficult to measure, but they are considered "Very Important" by most of the businessmen interviewed, as is revealed by Table VIII. Since working with office forms is considered a fairly easy task by the office managers, this item was given less importance. The first item in the table, "accuracy," and the fourth,

"efficiency and accuracy in following directions," were rated very important by all the interviewees; and an emphatic verbal comment was usually given.

TABLE VIII

DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO WORKING SKILLS AND HABITS

Working Skills and Habits	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important
Accuracy	28	0	0
Neatness	21	7	0
Familiarity with basic office forms	11	6	11
Efficiency and accuracy in following instructions	28	0	0

Table IX indicates the degree of importance given by the businessmen to business-related knowledges. Generally these were considered "Not Necessary" for office workers. It was stated that these knowledges would build good background for the office worker but would not be considered essential in the hiring process.

In the related education skills, the highest degree of importance was accorded to the language arts: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and articulation. Mathematics was considered important by half of those interviewed, sciences and foreign language of little or no value. A general comment

concerning spelling was that "an employee could be forgiven for being a poor speller but not for ignoring the use of a dictionary." Table X shows the tabulation on the related education skills.

Personal characteristics were listed in alphabetic order in the questionnaire to avoid undue emphasis. The interviewee was asked to number these characteristics in the order of importance to him. The results of this rating are shown in Table XI. As will be noted, nine of the subjects found themselves unable to rate these items, declaring all to be of equal importance. "Ability to get along with people" rated Number 1 by half of those who rated the characteristics, and no one rated it less than three. "Honesty" was placed in Number 1 position by seven of the interviewees, and "good grooming" by one. "Promptness" and "regularity of attendance" were considered by some of the personnel managers to be factors which could be controlled by office regulations and were, therefore, considered least important.

The personnel managers were asked to specify any other characteristics they considered important in the office workers they hired. Some of the ideas expressed included (1) ability to leave personal problems until after office hours, (2) ability to organize work, (3) customer consciousness, (4) good credit rating, (5) initiative, (6) responsibility, (7) personal

TABLE IX
DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO BUSINESS-RELATED KNOWLEDGES

Knowledge	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Necessary
Basic business	3	2	6	17
Economics	0	3	4	21
Accounting	1	5	9	13

TABLE X
DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO RELATED EDUCATION SKILLS

Education Skill	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Necessary
Grammar	21	5	2	0
Spelling	21	6	1	0
Punctuation	15	12	1	0
Articulation	20	7	1	0
Mathematics	8	12	6	2
Chemistry	0	0	0	28
Physics	0	0	0	28
Foreign language	0	0	3	25

TABLE XI

RANK OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AS RATED BY THE BUSINESSMEN

Personal Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5	6	All Equally Important
Ability to get along with people	11	6	2	0	0	0	
Good grooming	1	4	5	5	2	2	
Honesty	7	6	4	1	1	0	
Loyalty	0	2	6	6	4	1	
Promptness	0	1	0	1	9	8	
Regularity of attendance	0	1	2	5	3	8	
All listed characteristics seemed equally important							9

integrity, (8) personal money management, and (9) personal stability. The term "good human relations" was mentioned by one businessman, who stated that high skill was of little value if the members of his organization could not work well together.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this study, the writer has attempted to determine what technical, related, and personal skills selected businessmen in Yakima desire in the office workers they hire.

I. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the data presented in this study, some conclusions seem evident:

1. The ratio of office employees to total employees in the selected business offices in Yakima is slightly lower than the national figure. This might be explained by the use of full-time employees in this study as well as the fact that some of the businesses visited were branch offices which forward much of the detail work to home offices.
2. Few of the businessmen visited were interested in hiring beginning office workers. Further study would be necessary to determine the reasons.
3. Businessmen are concerned about the abilities of office workers they hire. Pre-employment testing on the part of the businessmen is limited; however, many of the personnel managers interviewed use the

- services of the State Employment Office as well as privately-owned employment offices and have high praise for the testing and screening performed by these offices.
4. The average desired speed in typing is 50 words a minute and in shorthand, 80 words a minute. This should be within the ability of most students who have had one year in these skill subjects. These average desired speeds in typing and shorthand, then, should be used as the minimum standards for evaluation of student progress during the first year of instruction.
 5. No testing was administered on office machines. More than half the businessmen were not concerned with pre-employment training while others felt that an acquaintance with the more familiar machines was desirable.
 6. Through experience in hiring office workers, some personnel managers in Yakima have found that if an applicant has certain knowledges or abilities used in that business, she will prove to be successful. Therefore, they have devised and use instruments for testing these skills and knowledges. These businessmen seem to be well satisfied with the results of this testing.

7. References given by the applicant are contacted by most of the personnel managers. The screening and testing of the applicants by the various employment services is utilized and considered dependable.
8. Accuracy, neatness, and efficiency in following directions are important considerations in all areas of office work.
9. Business-related knowledges are not considered essential for office workers even though they increase the individual's basic understanding of business; economics was considered not necessary by three-fourths of the businessmen.
10. The language-arts are the most important of the related education skills, according to the rating of the businessmen, with special emphasis on spelling, grammar, and articulation.
11. Personal characteristics are considered to be of utmost importance in evaluating an applicant. The highest skill is of little value unless accompanied by the individual's ability to get along with other people. The businessmen expect the applicant to have the necessary skill when she applies for work. When this has been established, the interest of the businessmen centers around the more intangible qualities of work habits and personal characteristics.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the result of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. It is recommended that a follow-up study of the drop-outs and graduates of the secretarial training classes of Yakima Valley College be made to determine the effectiveness of their educational preparation.
2. It is recommended that an additional course in shorthand be added to the curriculum at Yakima Valley College for those students who are capable of developing a high degree of skill in this subject.
3. It is recommended that more selectivity be used in the admission of students to the shorthand classes at Yakima Valley College.
4. It is recommended that students who have graduated from the Yakima Valley College with a secretarial training major and are working in local offices be invited to participate in question-and-answer discussions planned by the current class in secretarial practice.
5. It is recommended that more emphasis be placed on developing desirable attitudes and personal characteristics in the secretarial training classes at Yakima Valley College.

6. It is recommended that a "Statement of Proficiency" card be issued to the outstanding graduates of the Secretarial Training Department of the Yakima Valley College.

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APPENDIX

COPY OF MIMEOGRAPHED QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How many employees in your company? _____
How many office employees? _____
Ratio of office employees to total employees _____

2. What is your total labor turnover each year? _____
What is your office worker turnover each year? _____

3. Do you administer employment skills tests? Yes ___ No ___

If "yes," check the kind of test and the degree of skill:

a. Typing, timed-writing _____ Minimum speed _____

b. Typing, problem solving _____

c. Shorthand, dictation and reading back _____ Minimum speed _____

d. Shorthand, dictation and transcribing mailable copy _____ Minimum speed _____

e. Machine dictation _____ Minimum speed _____

f. Office Machines

Training
Mastery Acquaintance not needed

(1) Ten-key adding _____

(2) Full-key adding _____

(3) Comptometer _____

(4) Bookkeeping machine _____

4. Do you administer other kinds of tests: Yes ___ No ___

If "yes," check the kind of test:

a. Intelligence _____ Title _____

b. Vocational preference _____ Title _____

c. Vocational aptitude _____ Title _____

d. Personality test _____ Title _____

e. Other _____ Title _____

5. If you do not administer tests, what is the source of your employment information?

a. Employee's statement _____

b. School records _____

c. References

(1) Character _____

(2) Business _____

(3) School personnel _____

6. How important do you consider these working skills and habits in the beginning office employee?

Very Fairly
Important Important Important

- a. Accuracy _____
- b. Neatness _____
- c. Familiarity with basic office forms _____
- d. Efficiency and accuracy in following instructions _____

7. How important do you consider these business-related knowledges in considering employing a beginning office worker?

Very Fairly Not
Important Important Important Necessary

- a. Basic business _____
- b. Economics _____
- c. Accounting _____

8. How important do you consider these related education skills in the beginning office worker?

Very Fairly Not
Important Important Important Necessary

- a. Grammar _____
- b. Spelling _____
- c. Punctuation _____
- d. Articulation _____
- e. Mathematics _____
- f. Chemistry _____
- g. Physics _____
- h. Foreign language _____

9. In relation to hiring a beginning office worker, rate the following personal characteristics in the order of their importance. (Use number one for the first, 2 for the second, etc.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>_____ Ability to get along with people</p> <p>_____ Good grooming</p> <p>_____ Honesty</p> <p>_____ Loyalty</p> | <p>_____ Promptness</p> <p>_____ Regularity of attendance</p> <p>_____ Other _____</p> |
|--|--|