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A CURRICULUM STUDY FOR THE BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF DICKSON COUNTY SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL

JOHNNIE ANNIS HOLLAND

A CURRICULUM STUDY FOR THE BUSINESS DEPARTMENT
OF DICKSON COUNTY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

An Abstract
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Education Specialist

by
Johnnie Annis Holland
June 1978

ABSTRACT

This study was made to determine existing employment opportunities for high school graduates in selected businesses and industries in the Dickson County employment area.

A cover letter and a questionnaire were mailed to one hundred businesses in the area. Seventy per cent were returned, and the data were included in this study. An informal questionnaire was given to three hundred ninety students presently enrolled in business courses at Dickson County Senior High School to ascertain their educational and vocational plans.

This research resulted in the following findings:

1. Most initial employment opportunities are in clerical occupations.
2. High school graduates may secure initial employment in the Dickson County employment area.
3. Most high school graduates lack sufficient skills in composing letters, in spelling, in handwriting, and in taking and transcribing dictation.
4. Behavioral traits are most important when seeking employment.
5. Training on the most commonly used business machines, including data processing equipment, is needed for initial employment.
6. To obtain initial employment, high school graduates need a good background in English, business arithmetic, typewriting, business behavior and office practice.

7. Most business people believe work experience would improve the business education program.
8. Many people in the business field revealed a willingness to work with the school to improve the curriculum.
9. Fifty-two per cent of students presently enrolled in business courses plan to continue their education after high school.
10. Only one-fifth the students taking business courses plan to work in the business field.
11. Students do not utilize the services of the Guidance Department in planning their programs of study.

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Johnnie Annis Holland

June 1978

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Study written by Johnnie Annis Holland entitled "A Curriculum Study for the Business Department of Dickson County Senior High School." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Specialist in Education Degree.

Donald B. Lambert
Major Professor

We have read this research study and recommend its acceptance:

George M. Bawline
Second Committee Member

Allan S. Williams
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Graduate Council:

William H. Ellis
Dean of the Graduate School

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to extend sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. Donald Lambert for his generous assistance and guidance throughout the preparation of this study.

Appreciation is also extended to the business teachers at Dickson County Senior High School, to Mrs. Alma Bell, and to the business people who assisted in the preparation of this paper by completing the questionnaire.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, every person is heavily involved in the business and economic world. Each person must have some understanding of the world of business and how it functions to be literate and informed. Business education plays a very important part in providing students at all age levels with the ability to function effectively in our business world.¹

What shall students learn in their formal school experience? For the field of business education, which must assume much of the responsibility for preparing students for work and for developing an understanding of the place of business activity in the total society, the demands for wise selections of school experiences become critical.

There is no single prescription for those charged with the responsibility for the curriculum of a business department in a secondary school. . . . The diversity in a society as complex as the American society demands thoughtful consideration and awareness of the uniqueness of the situation in which the program is to be offered.²

¹Louis C. Nanassy, Dean R. Malsbary, and Herbert A. Tonne, Principles and Trends in Business Education (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1977), p. 1.

²C. A. Nolan, Carlos K. Hayden, and Dean R. Malsbury, Principles and Problems of Business Education (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1967), p. 647.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A crucial problem of business education is deciding exactly what is needed by the initial worker on the job and providing a curriculum which will enable students to meet job requirements. What curriculum changes need to be made in the Business Education Department at Dickson County Senior High School to provide a program needed by the business community?

THE PURPOSE

In order to evaluate the business curriculum at Dickson County Senior High School, this study was conducted to determine job opportunities for high school graduates and to identify requirements needed to secure these positions. A secondary objective of this research was to institute a program for good public relations between the school and the business community.

Specifically, the objectives of this survey were:

1. To determine existing employment opportunities for high school graduates in selected businesses and industries in the Dickson County employment area.
2. To identify and analyze the essential skills and knowledges needed by the beginning worker for initial job competency in these positions.
3. To decide what characteristics prospective employers want in an applicant.
4. To find out the kinds of equipment on which businesspersons feel the high school student should be trained.

5. To identify those business subjects businesspersons consider to be most important.
6. To foster good public relations between the school and the community.
7. To make recommendations in the form of curriculum objectives for the Dickson County Senior High School business education program.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

What kind of workers would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the business activity within the community? This is one of the most important questions the business department of a secondary school may ask. However, it is not sufficient to ask businesspersons what they want in a worker. Future requirements need to be determined and provided for in the school program.

The Business Education Department should not adopt a curriculum used in another school merely because it was successful there. Consequently, teachers in the Business Education Department should know what job opportunities are available in the employment area and the educational requirements for these positions.

Prior to this study, a community survey had not been made for the purpose of studying the business curriculum. Information obtained in this study was important in the following ways: (1) The curriculum was to be enriched. (2) Businesspersons were to become more aware of the functions of the Business Education Department at the high school. (3) Occupational information was to be obtained to improve the

counseling of business education students.

SETTING

This study was conducted in Dickson County and the surrounding area. Dickson County is located in Middle Tennessee and is bordered by Montgomery, Houston, Cheatham, Williamson and Hickman Counties. Metropolitan Nashville, Davidson County, is only forty miles from Dickson. The land area of Dickson County is four hundred eighty-five (485) square miles, and the 1970 population was twenty-one thousand nine hundred seventy-seven (21,977).

Dickson County Senior High School is the only secondary school in the county and has an enrollment of twelve hundred seventy-six (1,276). There are three junior high schools located in the county at Charlotte, Dickson, and White Bluff.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The population for this study was limited to approximately one hundred selected businesses in the Dickson County employment area. In addition to Dickson County, the employment area includes five counties within a fifty-mile radius of the county. The businesses selected within the county included all major industries, all banks, department stores, jewelers, insurance agencies, automotive dealerships and stores, truck lines, real estate firms, professional persons, and all local, state, and federal government offices.

The firms in the surrounding counties were chosen because they test and employ high school graduates.

ASSUMPTIONS

The findings in this study were based on the following assumptions:

1. A study of the curriculum was desired by the administration and business teachers of Dickson County Senior High School.
2. Questions on the survey instrument were adequate to provide the information needed for this study.
3. A sufficient number of questionnaires to complete the study would be returned.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms used in this study are defined as follows:

INITIAL EMPLOYMENT: The first permanent job secured by the high school graduate is initial employment.

BUSINESS ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT: A course usually taught in the twelfth grade for the purpose of giving students an overall understanding of the starting of a business.

BOOKKEEPING I: The high school course in bookkeeping generally involves the principles and methods of recording business transactions, the preparation of financial statements, and the interpretation of financial statements with emphasis on the records of a small business.

BOOKKEEPING II: Bookkeeping II stresses the interpretation of bookkeeping data with emphasis on corporation

and partnership accounting.

BUSINESS ARITHMETIC: This course applies the fundamental principles of arithmetic to business problems.

BUSINESS ENGLISH: Business English is a course dealing with both written and oral English as it applies to business. The emphasis is on the type of correct and proper English needed by the secretary, stenographer, clerk, and dictator as contrasted with the academic emphasis on English appreciation and literature.

BUSINESS LAW: Business law is a course dealing primarily with the application of the legal principles and procedures to the personal business problems of the individual. It also promotes the understanding of laws regulating the total economy which affect the individual as a producer-consumer.

CONSUMER ECONOMICS: Consumer economics is designed as a basic course for all students regardless of occupational or professional interests with a primary objective to help pupils understand the economic principles that are essential for participation as a citizen and for performance as an efficient producer in one's occupation or profession.

GENERAL BUSINESS: General business is a course that provides the student with an introduction to the business world and which helps him to understand his environment.

OFFICE PRACTICE: The content of this course includes broad knowledge and procedures of the modern office in a changing business world. Important objectives of this course

are: to develop skills necessary to perform clerical, non-stenographic duties at an employable level; to develop a knowledge of common business forms and skill in handling them; and to develop personal qualities and attitudes needed by successful clerical workers.

SHORTHAND I: The purpose of beginning shorthand is to develop a minimum shorthand writing skill of at least eighty words a minute on relatively easy and controlled material.

SHORTHAND II: The shorthand II course emphasizes the development of skills acquired in beginning shorthand through dictation and transcription.

TYPEWRITING I: The purpose of typewriting I is to develop a touch system of typing with a mastery of the keyboard, a knowledge of the parts of the machine, the ability to type business and personal letters in good form, the ability to tabulate, and the ability to follow instructions.

TYPEWRITING II: The second year of typewriting is used exclusively for teaching students to meet the high production requirements of the business world.

PERSONAL TYPEWRITING: High school students elect this course primarily to develop a useful and rapid typewriting skill which can be applied in a variety of useful ways--composing skill, manuscript and report writing, orderly work habits, and a research tool.

NOTETAKING: Notetaking is a personal-use writing

system for the purpose of writing notes rapidly with sufficient legibility so that it is not necessary to transcribe the notes.

RECORD KEEPING: Record keeping is offered to give students an understanding of the principles and procedures for planning, managing, and recording the business transactions to which most individuals are exposed in their personal and occupational lives. This course offers the less-than-average ability student the opportunity to elect a general clerical course rather than bookkeeping.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures were used in conducting this study: (1) a list of selected businesses within the Dickson County employment area was compiled; (2) a questionnaire was designed; (3) a cover letter was composed and typed; (4) the cover letter, questionnaire, and a stamped-envelope were mailed to one hundred businesses; (5) those firms who did not respond by the date required were contacted by telephone or personal visit; (6) a questionnaire was given to all students presently enrolled in a business course at Dickson County Senior High School; (7) the data on the responses were tabulated and analyzed; and (8) the curriculum proposal was prepared.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In 1972, Rebecca T. Collins found the survey technique had become accepted by almost all communities as a practice essential to vocational guidance, evaluation, and long-range program planning.³

An informal survey of clerical employees was taken in Clarksville, Tennessee. The researchers found clerical jobs required many specific duties, and bookkeeping positions also demanded a variety of skills. Businesspersons felt students should have training in the use of various office machines.⁴

A survey of business offices by Dorothy M. Cochran in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, revealed more job opportunities for the beginning worker were available in clerical occupations. Cochran also found that ninety-six per cent of the businesses surveyed required a minimum high school education for employment. Characteristics in employees considered most important were honesty, accuracy, and intelligence. The most prevalent negative personality traits were lack of initiative

³Rebecca Irene Collins, "Guidelines for Community Occupational Surveys in Vocational Education," Business Education Forum, XXVIII (October, 1973), 38.

⁴Judy Berzins and others, "A Survey of Clerical Employees in a Random Sampling of 144 Clarksville Business Firms" (An informal survey, Austin Peay State University, 1967), p. 7. (Mimeographed.)

and lack of responsibility, and the most prevalent training weaknesses were spelling and arithmetic.⁵

Zita Fortman conducted a study in the El Segundo, California, area to gather data about entry-level job requirements and employment possibilities for high school graduates. Her findings were: (1) Over sixty per cent of the businesses were willing to hire inexperienced personnel for general clerical or clerk typist positions. (2) Businesses were hesitant to hire inexperienced bookkeepers. (3) Firms, as a rule, preferred to promote from within the company to stenographic or secretarial positions. (4) All companies rated job attitude, appearance, and speech as being the three most important factors in hiring personnel. (5) New office employees showed strengths in attitude, attendance, and appearance. (6) Major weaknesses were general business knowledge, proofreading, and basic mathematical skill.⁶

Another survey to determine entry-level employment requirements using returns from one hundred seventeen Pomona, California, firms revealed the following: (1) Sixty-eight of the firms responding did employ high school graduates;

⁵Dorothy Martin Cochran, "A Survey of Business Offices in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, with Implications for the Business Education Curriculum of Christian County High School" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Austin Peay State College, 1965), p. 86.

⁶Zita E. Fortman, "Analysis of Entry-Level Office Job Opportunities in Business and Industry Served by the El Segundo Unified School District," Business Education Forum, XXVI (October, 1971), 35.

(2) Shorthand, typing, filing, math, and language skills were tested by a majority of the firms; (3) Attitude, personal appearance, cooperation, and dependability were ranked by employers as the most important personality traits; (4) The interview impression by the applicant was the most important single factor when hiring; (5) The firms suggested better preparation in spelling, language skills, letter writing, typing, and behavioral traits; (6) Employers looked for good spelling ability, reading and following instructions, good telephone technique, filing knowledge, use of proper vocabulary, and proficiency on an electric typewriter when considering applicants.⁷

Data compiled by Ann Belland in the Addison, Illinois, area indicated the largest number of jobs available to the high school graduate were in clerical occupations. Future growth opportunity areas in office employment were in the data processing and the secretarial occupations.⁸

Delbert D. Karnes made an analysis of job-entry positions in selected major industries in Ohio. Karnes found that female graduates who pursued the business education

⁷Ellen F. Medley, "A Survey of the Pomona Business Community to Determine Entry-Level Employment Requirements for High School Graduates with No Previous Business Experience Applying for Positions as General Clerk, Clerk-Typist, or Stenographer," Business Education Forum, XXVI (October, 1971), 45.

⁸Ann Miller Belland, "A Survey of the Office Occupations in the Addison, Illinois, Area," Summaries of 1968 Research Studies in Business Education, National Business Education Quarterly XXXVIII (October, 1969), 6.

curriculum qualified for seventy per cent of the total number of job-entry positions, as compared with thirty per cent of the female graduates who took the college preparatory curriculum.⁹

In 1974, a study was completed by Ebri Usani Eteng to identify the relationships between expectations of businesspersons and the type preparation of prospective office workers by Madison, Wisconsin, Area High School. A high school diploma was the minimum requirement for employment in the area, and a growing interest was being placed on higher education qualifications. Businesspersons desired more emphasis placed in such areas as spelling, human relations, use of modern office machines and equipment, and initiative. Eteng also found most top executives still utilized the services of secretaries who wrote shorthand.¹⁰

Edna L. Gregg conducted a study in Tri-Cities area of East Tennessee to discover how office workers were selected and what personal characteristics were sought and evaluated. Gregg found the most common criticism of applicants' conduct at interviews was a lack of confidence.

⁹Delbert D. Karnes, "An Analysis of Job-Entry Positions in Selected Major Industries in Ohio," Business Education Forum, XXX (October, 1975), 38.

¹⁰Ebri Usani Eteng, "A Survey to Identify the Relationships that Exist Between the Expectations of Madison Avenue Business Representatives and the Type of Preparation of Prospective Office Employees by the Area High School," Business Education Forum, XXX (October, 1975), 35.

Employers said many applicants had no definite job in mind and were unrealistic about starting salaries and rank. Although employers welcomed application letters, few were received. The initial contact between employer and prospective employee usually occurred when the applicant walked in and asked for a job. Unfavorable impressions were created by applicants who only partially completed application forms. Businesspersons, in general, felt young workers failed to apply principles learned in school to practical work situations.¹¹

Riley Roy Wallingsford compared educators' and employers' views of high school graduates' skills. Employers and educators had different opinions of what was expected of the high school graduate. Employers wanted students to be able to perform general duties rather than specialized tasks as indicated by educators. Employers generally required a higher degree of proficiency in clerical skills than was expected by educators. Businesspersons did not find high school graduates so dependable as educators predicted, and a major cause of dismissal was absenteeism and tardiness. People in business felt more counseling was needed before the graduate sought employment.¹²

¹¹Edna L. Gregg, "Employment Procedures in Tri-Cities Area of East Tennessee," Business Education Forum, XXX (October, 1975), 36-37.

¹²Riley Roy Wallingsford, "A Comparison of Educators' and Employers' Views of High School Graduates' Skills," Business Education Forum, XXX (October, 1975), 52.

Helen Abbot made a survey to develop a list of critical requirements in human relations behavior which contribute to the successful occupational adjustment of beginning office workers. She found supervisors were more aware of human relations behaviors of beginning office workers in five areas than were the beginning workers. These five areas were (1) interest in self-improvement and job, (2) adaptation to the environment, (3) willingness to help co-workers, (4) performance in hostess capacity, and (5) maintenance of firm image in the community.¹³

In a study to determine the need for shorthand, Samuel M. Scammon found shorthand was used by seventy-six per cent of secretaries surveyed. Of these, ninety-eight per cent used symbol shorthand. The mean speed was sixty to eighty words a minute with some jobs requiring eighty to one hundred words a minute.¹⁴

Carol Garrison conducted a survey to determine career opportunities for high school graduates in the legal secretarial field. She found the legal secretarial field offered career choices for women of all ages. Over one-half the legal secretaries surveyed had only high school educations, and most began their employment in that field without previous

¹³Helen Lawson Abbot, "Human Relations Skills of Beginning Office Workers in Occupational Adjustment," Business Education Forum, XXIX (October, 1974), 29-30.

¹⁴Samuel Maurice Scammon, "A Survey to Determine the Need for Shorthand," Business Education Forum, XXX (October, 1975), 50.

training.¹⁵

Benita Lynn Harris compared the use of manual shorthand, dictating-transcribing machines, and machine shorthand in the Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, area. Dictating-transcribing machines were used to record and transcribe business office dictation more frequently than any other system although manual shorthand played an important role in business office dictation. Approximately one-fifth of the businesses had word processing centers, and the IBM magnetic card system was the most frequently used equipment in these centers. Transcription workers felt their training should have included more emphasis on punctuation.¹⁶

Linda Bly Holub made a survey to determine the relative merits of mechanical dictation-transcription equipment with manual shorthand. She found a significant number of firms used a combination of mechanical equipment and manual shorthand. Manual shorthand transcribers were more efficient in their method of completing transcription. Shorthand writers were given more responsibility in the area of composing correspondence and looking up data to be

¹⁵Carol Garrison, "The Background, Current Status and Future Role of Legal Secretaries in Illinois," Business Education Forum, XXIX (October, 1974), 33-34.

¹⁶Benita Lynn Harris, "The Use of Manual Shorthand, Dictating-Transcribing Machines, and Machine Shorthand in Selected Businesses in the Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, Area," Business Education Forum, XXXII (October, 1977), 43.

included in the transcript.¹⁶

In a survey to determine the status of data processing in the secondary schools in the United States, Alfred E. Smith found thirty-nine per cent of the schools surveyed offered courses in data processing. Twenty per cent of the schools offered a one-year program, and the course most often taught was "Introduction to Data Processing."¹⁷

Walter J. Burgess completed a study to examine the business data processing instruction at the public secondary school level in Georgia and to determine effective secondary school curricula and effective business teacher education programs. Burgess discovered data processing was taught as a unit or section of another business course rather than as a separate course. He also concluded that workshops and seminars were not considered sufficient preparation to teach data processing without other formal training or experience.¹⁸

Edward Paulus made a survey to determine the extent to which teachers of high school introductory data processing included essential concepts in their courses. He concluded

¹⁶Linda Bly Holub, "A Survey to Determine the Relative Merits of Mechanical Dictation/Transcription Equipment with Manual Shorthand," Business Education Forum, XXXII (October, 1977), 44.

¹⁷Alfred E. Smith, "Survey to Determine the Data Processing Status in Secondary Public Schools in the United States," Business Education Forum, XXX (October, 1975), 51.

¹⁸Walter J. Burgess, "Business Data Processing Instruction at the Public Secondary School Level in Georgia," Business Education Forum, XXVIII (October, 1973), 36-37.

teachers were not doing a satisfactory job of including concepts considered to be essential to the education of all high school business students.¹⁹

From a study to determine business data processing job classifications, Jean Overton concluded the desirable education level for computer operators, data processors, and key punch supervision was high school graduation. Oral and written communication skills are desirable for all data processing classifications.²⁰

Sharron D. Kovach discovered the highest educational level required for keypunch and tabulating machine operators, tape librarians, and other clerical workers was high school completion. To instill the necessary attributes in potential employees, employers felt the high school training most useful would be data processing concepts and theory, mathematics, communication skills, general business knowledge, bookkeeping, machine operation, and personal traits of dependability, logic, honesty, initiative and flexibility.²¹

¹⁹Edward Paulus, "An Analysis and Evaluation of Data Processing Education in Secondary Schools and Universities," Business Education Forum, XXVIII (October, 1973), 51.

²⁰R. Jean Overton, "Business Data Processing Curriculum in the Community Colleges and Technical Institutes and Data Processing Job Classifications in Selected Businesses and Industries in North Carolina," Business Education Forum, XXIX (October, 1974), 41.

²¹Sharron Dale Kovach, "Opportunities for High School Graduates in Data Processing Positions in Selected Business Firms in the St. Louis Area," Summaries of 1968 Research Studies in Business Education, National Business Education Quarterly XXXVIII (October, 1969), 22.

Data collected by Marvin Manning indicated that an introductory course in data processing should be offered at the secondary level. Businesspersons were willing to hire high school students to work in their data processing departments. Educators and employers preferred students to have hands-on experience with data processing equipment.²²

Rosanne Reiff conducted a study to determine the requirements for entry-level employment in word processing centers in New York City. Reiff found the majority of business educators were unfamiliar with the concept of word processing. However, minimum qualifications necessary for employment in entry-level jobs in word processing centers in New York City could be achieved within the current business curriculum.²³

Margaret Casey Reap analyzed the job tasks of the beginning accounting and bookkeeping worker. She found the job tasks of the beginning worker required little or no understanding of the principles of debit and credit. Of the one hundred fifty job tasks on the list representing real work, only thirty-six of those could be found in the

²²Marvin Dale Manning, "A Survey of the Opinions of Businessmen and Educators in the Chicago Area Concerning the Content of an Introductory Data Processing Course in the Secondary School with a Resultant Course Outline," Summaries of 1968 Research Studies in Business Education, National Business Education Quarterly XXXVIII (October, 1969), 26.

²³Rosanne Reiff, "A Study to Determine the Requirements for Entry-Level Employment In Word Processing Centers in New York City," Business Education Forum, XXX (October, 1975), 49.

textbook representing the high school curriculum.²⁴

According to Leonard J. West, high school instruction in bookkeeping extended far beyond what employers wanted or needed from beginning workers and particularly failed to represent the vast effect of computerization in job duties.²⁵

John William Smith concluded that there is a significant difference between the achievement in college elementary accounting of students who have and who have not studied high school bookkeeping.²⁶

A summary of the previous research discloses that most jobs available to high school graduates are in clerical and secretarial occupations. High school graduates may secure initial employment in clerical data processing positions.

The minimum educational requirement for employment in business office occupations is high school graduation. Employers consider character traits, personality traits, work habits, attitude, personal appearance, and dependability most important when selecting applicants for employment.

²⁴Margaret Casey Reap, "Job Tasks of the Beginning Accounting and Bookkeeping Worker Compared with the Content of the High School Accounting and Bookkeeping Curriculum," Business Education Forum, XXXII (October, 1977), 51.

²⁵Leonard J. West, "Survey of Entry-Level Bookkeeping Activities in Relation to the High School Bookkeeping Curriculum," Business Education Forum, XXXII (October, 1977), 59.

²⁶John William Smith, "Articulation of High School Bookkeeping and College Elementary Accounting," Summaries of 1968 Research Studies in Business Education, National Business Education Quarterly XXXVIII (October, 1969), 44.

Although dictating-transcribing machines are widely used in business offices, there is still a need for those graduates who write shorthand. An acquaintanceship knowledge and skill in the operation of various business machines are valuable to the high school graduate seeking initial employment.

According to the literature, the content of the high school bookkeeping and accounting courses provide a better background for college-bound students than for the vocationally oriented.

Researchers also found that educators and employers have different opinions of what is expected of the high school graduate in the business world.

Chapter 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in Dickson County and the surrounding area to determine job opportunities for high school graduates and to identify requirements needed to secure these positions.

Dickson County is located in Middle Tennessee extending to Montgomery County on the north, Houston County on the northwest, Cheatham County on the east and northeast, Williamson County on the southeast, and Hickman County on the south.

The land area of Dickson County is four hundred eighty-five (485) square miles, and the 1970 population was 21,977. There is a continuing population growth in the county due to industrial expansion and an influx of residents from Metropolitan Nashville, which is forty miles away.

Dickson County Senior High School is the only secondary school in the county. The 1977-1978 enrollment was 1,276. Eight per cent of the students attending Dickson County Senior High School are non-white.

There are fifty-three teachers on the faculty at Dickson County Senior High School. The school has one principal and two assistant principals. One of the assistant principals is also director of vocational and technical

education. Dickson County Senior High School is served by three guidance counselors.

The Frank G. Clement Vocational Technical School is located in Dickson. In addition, the high school has a Vocational Department offering instruction in masonry, plumbing, auto mechanics, carpentry, auto body repair, cabinet making, radio and television repair, small engine repair, crafts, drafting, and occupational home economics.

There are three junior high schools located in the county at Charlotte, Dickson, and White Bluff.

The Business Education Department has six full-time teachers. All teachers hold a bachelor's degree and are certified in their areas of teaching assignments. Three teachers have the master's degree, and one is presently completing requirements for the education specialist's degree in administration and supervision.

Courses offered in the Business Education Department and the number of sections in each subject are:

Vocational Office Education I	1 Section
Vocational Office Education II	1 Section
Typewriting I	4 Sections
Typewriting II	2 Sections
Bookkeeping I	4 Sections
Bookkeeping II	1 Section
General Business	5 Sections
Shorthand I	3 Sections
Business English ($\frac{1}{2}$ unit)	3 Sections
Business Law ($\frac{1}{2}$ unit)	3 Sections

Typewriting I and II, general business, and shorthand are open to sophomores, juniors and seniors. The majority of students registered for these courses are juniors and sophomores

Juniors and seniors may also register for bookkeeping, business English, business law, and vocational office education.

In initiating this study, the researcher compiled a list of one hundred businesses within the Dickson County employment area. In addition to Dickson County, the employment area includes five counties within a fifty-mile radius. These counties are Montgomery, Davidson, Humphreys, Williamson, and Cheatham.

The businesses within the County included all major industries, all banks, department stores, jewelers, insurance agencies, automotive dealerships and stores, transportation firms, real estate agencies, professional persons, and all local, state, and federal government offices.

Businesses chosen in area counties were banks, manufacturing firms, communications businesses, insurance companies, stock brokers, hospitals, and government offices. These firms were selected because they test and employ high school graduates.

The survey instrument designed for this study may be classified as a fact finding and an opinion attitude device. Eight items on the questionnaire were designed to secure facts about the situation, while four items sought to determine how businesspersons felt about the training of high school graduates. A copy of the survey instrument is given as Appendix B.

Evaluative Criteria for Survey Instruments in Business Education by Lawrence W. Erickson and Mary E. Oliverio

was used in evaluating the questionnaire.²⁷

A cover letter (Appendix A) was then composed and typed. The questionnaire and the cover letter were printed. Each letter was addressed individually and mailed with the questionnaire and a stamped envelope to each firm.

Businesspersons were given approximately three weeks to return the questionnaire. Sixty-five responses were received before the requested deadline. Those firms which did not respond were contacted by telephone, and five more questionnaires were received in time to be included in the study.

One firm, which employs a large number of graduates in Dickson County and in other counties, stated company policy prevented their completing the questionnaire.

Seventy per cent of the questionnaires were returned. Four employers called the researcher and discussed the survey. These companies provided teaching aids and valuable materials to be used in counseling business students. Several businesspersons offered personal assistance to the Business Education Department.

Each item on the seventy questionnaires returned was then tabulated and analyzed by the author.

An informal questionnaire (Appendix C) was given to all students presently enrolled in a business course. The

²⁷Lawrence W. Erickson and Mary Ellen Oliverio, Evaluative Criteria For Survey Instruments in Business Education, Monograph 111 (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 50-64.

purpose of this survey was to determine the educational and occupational intentions of students taking business subjects and to find out if students utilized the services of the Guidance Department.

All business teachers cooperated with the researcher and gave the questionnaire to three hundred ninety students currently enrolled in business classes.

Items one, two, three, and four were then tabulated and analyzed on three hundred ninety responses.

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose, importance of the study, setting, limitations, assumptions, definition of terms, and procedures.

The review of related literature and analysis of previous research is given in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 describes the research design.

An analysis and interpretation of the data is presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of the findings, the author's conclusions and recommendations.

The reference section includes the bibliography and appendixes.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order for the Business Education Department to determine existing employment opportunities for high school graduates in the Dickson County employment area, businesspersons were asked to give the number of positions in their firms which, if vacant, could be filled by high school graduates. The results shown in Table 1, page 27, were compiled from fifty responding companies within Dickson County and twenty firms outside the County.

Fifty Dickson County businesses reported a total of two hundred six (206) jobs which, if vacant, could be filled by the beginning worker. Twenty area firms indicated a total of six hundred seventy-nine (679) positions which, if vacant, could be filled by the high school graduate.

Sixty per cent of the positions within Dickson County were classified as clerical. There were twelve stenographic, twenty-nine retail sales, thirteen telephone operator, fifteen teller, and three cashier jobs which, if vacant, could be filled by those with no post-secondary training.

In twenty area businesses, seventy-four per cent of jobs available to beginning workers were clerical. There were eighty stenographic jobs open to high school graduates.

Table 1

Number of Positions Which, If Vacant, Could Be Filled
by High School Graduates

General Job Description	Number of Positions in Dickson County	Number of Positions in Area Firms
General Office Worker	46	195
Typist	24	92
Bookkeeping, Clerical	24	109
General Clerical	21	84
Data Processing, Clerical	9	29
Stenographic	12	80
Retail Sales Worker	29	11
Telephone Operator	13	51
Teller	15	28
Cashier	3	
Other	<u>10</u>	<u>—</u>
Totals	206	679

These data clearly indicate most job opportunities for high school graduates were in clerical occupations. This classification included general office worker, typist, bookkeeping, general clerical, and data processing clerical. Stenographic jobs were next in number of positions for the beginning worker. There were only twelve jobs in the Dickson County firms for stenographic employees; however, twenty area businesses reported eighty stenographic positions. There were also job opportunities for those who would like to work in retail sales or as telephone operators, tellers, or cashiers.

Firms within the county responding to the survey reported employing approximately sixty-eight (68) high school graduates annually. Other county businesses indicated hiring about eighty-seven (87) graduates over a five-year period. In addition, responding companies in the employment area affirmed employing four hundred ninety-nine (499) each year. Several of these firms reported openings at all times for beginning workers.

Respondents were requested to give the reasons for turnover in their firms over the past five years. The most frequent reason given by county businesses was acceptance of position elsewhere. Other causes were inefficiency, marriage and maternity, health and attendance, personality and character traits, college entrance, retirement, relocation, and work overload. Nine county firms reported no turnover.

Acceptance of position elsewhere was also the main reason for turnover in the surrounding area businesses. Forty-five per cent of area business listed inefficiency as a reason for turnover in employees.

Table 2 illustrates reasons for turnover in personnel as reported by responding companies.

Table 2

Reasons for Turnover in Personnel

Reason	Number in County Firms	Number in Area Firms
Acceptance of Other Position	21	17
Inefficiency	7	9
Marriage and Maternity	7	5
Health and Attendance	5	8
Relocation	2	4
Personality and Character Traits	5	2
College Entrance	4	
Retirement	4	1
Promotion	1	
Work Overload	1	
Inadequate Education		1
No turnover within past five years	9	1

Findings in this study reveal high school graduates with no previous experience and no post-secondary training may secure initial employment within the Dickson County employment area.

Since more clerical jobs were available for high school graduates, teachers and counselors should advise students to consider these job opportunities and assist them in planning their programs of study to receive proper training.

Inasmuch as clerical jobs are available, a clerical practice course should be offered to students of Dickson County Senior High School. The Business Education Department and the administration should consider establishing a placement program to assist business students in securing these jobs.

To analyze essential skills and knowledges needed by the beginning worker, the author asked employers to rate recent high school graduates on eleven skills and knowledges. Only thirty-eight local businesspersons responded to this question, and some did not rate all eleven items. Of those responding a majority had found graduates to be good in most all areas. The most apparent deficiency of recent graduates was composing letters. Employees were also poor in spelling.

Although twenty-six firms felt recent graduates were good in handwriting, nine businesses rated them as poor. Two respondents, both retail stores, who had recently employed a number of high school graduates had a particular problem with handwriting. One suggested students be taught how to write and to make figures.

Twenty area firms responded to this question, but not all respondents rated all eleven skills and knowledges. Overall high school graduates received a good rating. Again, composing letters was the most obvious weakness. Of twenty respondents, eighteen gave a poor rating on composing letters. Nine of fourteen employers indicated high school graduates were deficient in spelling.

High school graduates also lacked sufficient skills in taking and transcribing dictation. One respondent said he rarely employed a high school graduate who could take dictation. Another businessperson reported her company was desperate for applicants who wrote shorthand.

Data compiled in this study indicate high school graduates lack sufficient skills in composing letters, spelling, handwriting, and in taking and transcribing dictation. Therefore, teachers in all business classes should emphasize communications skills. Letter writing should be stressed in typewriting, office practice, and vocational office education classes.

More emphasis should be placed on spelling and word studies in all classes. Both typewriting and office education classes present opportunities to stress spelling and word studies.

Advisors should counsel students who plan to work in business offices to include business English in their programs.

Students who plan to work in stenographic positions should take two years of shorthand. If only one year is taken, the students should register for this in the senior year.

Table 3, page 32, shows the ratings of graduates by local businesses, and Table 4, page 33, tells how area firms rated high school graduates on knowledges and skills.

Table 3

Ratings of Graduates' Knowledges and Skills
by Local Businesses

Knowledges and Skills	Number of Firms Rating		
	Excellent	Good	Poor
Arithmetic	1	30	7
Composing letters		15	16
Filing	2	30	2
Handwriting	2	26	9
Dictation--Transcription Speed		11	4
Typewriting accuracy	4	20	2
Typewriting speed		24	2
Spelling		22	13
Using adding machine	1	28	3
Using transcribing machine	1	11	4
Vocabulary	3	30	3

Table 4
Ratings of Graduates' Knowledges and Skills
by Area Businesses

Knowledges and Skills	Number of Firms Rating		
	Excellent	Good	Poor
Arithmetic		10	.5
Composing letters		2	18
Filing		16	
Handwriting		10	4
Dictation--Transcription speed	1	4	9
Typewriting accuracy	2	7	6
Typewriting speed	1	9	6
Spelling	1	4	9
Using adding machine	1	12	1
Using transcribing machine	1	11	4
Vocabulary	1	8	5

To find out what characteristics prospective employers found necessary in an applicant, the researcher requested businesspersons to rate recent high school graduates on nine attitudes, traits, and work habits. Forty local businesses completed this item on the survey instrument; however, some firms failed to rate all nine catagories.

A majority of businesses rated high school graduates as good in all nine areas. However, thirty-seven per cent of the employers felt graduates were poor in planning and organizing work. Twenty-five per cent said employees lacked initiative, did not accept criticism graciously, and failed to display pride in work.

Fifteen area businesses responded to this question. The findings were similar to those indicated by the Dickson County firms. A majority rated high school graduates good in all areas. Planning and organizing and pride in work were the two areas in which more employees were deficient. One-third of the respondents indicated high school graduates were poor in following instructions and personal grooming.

Some employers said these traits depended upon the individual and his personality. While many graduates were excellent in all catagories, others were below average in all areas.

Since findings indicate more and better preparation is needed in behavioral traits, instructors should continue to emphasize these traits in all business classes.

Table 5

Employees' Ratings on Attitudes, Traits, and Work Habits
In Local and Area Firms

Attitudes, Traits, and Work Habits	Number Local Firms Rating			Number Area Firms Rating		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Excellent	Good	Poor
Accepts criticism graciously	5	25	10		13	2
Attendance	9	24	1	2	10	3
Checks work for accuracy	4	29	7	1	10	4
Follows directions	7	28	3		10	5
Grooming	10	27	3		10	5
Initiative	6	24	10	2	8	5
Punctuality	5	31	4	2	10	3
Pride in work	6	25	9	2	7	6
Planning and organizing work	3	20	15		7	8

On what business machines should the high school Business Department offer instruction? Several kinds of equipment were listed on the questionnaire, and respondents were asked to decide whether or not training should be given on each machine. According to the firms surveyed, the Business Department should provide training on all machines listed on the questionnaire.

Two respondents felt students should be familiar with the most widely used word processing and composing devices. A large number of firms felt high school students should have instruction on data processing equipment.

When asked what equipment changes were planned for the foreseeable future, fourteen local businesses said an electronic computer system was being considered. Seven area firms indicated updating of or additions to computer systems now in use were in their immediate plans.

These data reveal a need for an office machines course to be offered at Dickson County Senior High School. Training on office machines should be stressed in vocational office occupations classes and in clerical practice classes.

The Business Department curriculum should include a course in introductory data processing. Consideration should be given to acquiring data processing equipment.

Responses denoting kinds of business equipment on which high school students should receive instruction are given in Table 6.

Table 6

Opinions of Businesspersons Related to
Instruction on Business Machines

Machine	Forty-two Local Firms		Twenty Area Firms	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Full-key adding machine	24	15	15	2
Ten-key adding machine	33	9	18	0
Electronic calculator	36	6	17	0
Printing calculator	27	10	13	4
Stencil duplicator	16	20	7	6
Fluid duplicator	15	19	6	7
Transcribing machine	23	12	15	0
Bookkeeping machine	31	9	9	4
Manual typewriter	31	8	8	6
Electric typewriter	39	3	20	0
Word Processing machine	0	0	2	0
Data Processing Equipment				
Key-punch	15	10	16	1
Verifier	11	15	12	2
Sorter	11	11	13	2
Interpretator	8	15	7	5
Collator	8	13	9	4
Accounting machine	12	10	6	7
Computer	19	9	13	2
Terminal	16	8	13	1

Businesspersons were asked to indicate the importance to their firms of business subjects taught in high school. Forty-eight local firms answered this question, but all businesses did not respond to all subjects.

Ninety-six per cent of those responding listed English as being of major importance. Typewriting was useful to forty-seven firms, and forty-five companies felt that bookkeeping was valuable.

All but one respondent felt business behavior was an important subject to be taught to prospective employees, while eighty-two per cent considered business arithmetic to be worthwhile.

Shorthand was considered to be of lesser importance to thirty-five local firms; however, these businesses did not have positions for stenographic applicants. Seven local businesses felt shorthand was most important.

Nineteen of twenty area firms reported typewriting and English to be significant to their businesses. Office practice, business arithmetic, business behavior, general business, and bookkeeping were most important to over one-half the area firms surveyed.

Fifty per cent of the area firms felt shorthand was valuable to their companies.

Table 7, page 39, illustrates the importance of business subjects to local firms, while the significance of business courses to area firms is shown in Table 8, page 40.

Table 7

Importance of Business Subjects Classified
By Forty-eight* Local Firms

Subject	Major Importance	Lesser Importance
Bookkeeping	38	7
Typewriting	38	9
Shorthand	7	35
English	45	2
Economics	15	26
Office Practice	30	13
Business Arithmetic	37	8
Salesmanship, Marketing	23	21
General Business	28	14
Data Processing	14	29
Business Behavior	44	1
Business Management	21	20

*All firms did not respond to all subjects.

Table 8

Importance of Business Subjects Classified
By Twenty* Area Firms

Subject	Major Importance	Lesser Importance
Bookkeeping	12	5
Typewriting	19	0
Shorthand	10	9
English	19	0
Economics	4	9
Office Practice	17	0
Business Arithmetic	16	2
Salesmanship, Marketing	4	14
General Business	13	6
Business Law	3	14
Data Processing	8	7
Business Behavior	13	4
Business Management	7	9

*All firms did not respond to all subjects.

To obtain initial employment, graduates need a good background in English, business arithmetic, typewriting, business behavior, and clerical office practice. Bookkeeping, shorthand, and salesmanship are most important for those who desire employment in bookkeeping, stenographic, and retail sales occupations.

Since the problem of correct English usage is perennial, teachers should counsel all business students to include business English in their programs. Proper English usage should be stressed in all business classes.

Students planning to seek clerical jobs should be advised to take typewriting in the junior year and clerical office practice in the senior year.

Typewriting II should be open only to seniors who plan to work in the business field.

A course in personal typewriting should be offered to all college-bound students with emphasis placed on composing skills, manuscript and report writing, and research methods.

Since there is a tendency for more companies to use computerized word processing, experience in this area would be desirable for the business student. At least one automatic typewriter should be purchased for use in the vocational office occupations classes.

To enable students to perform the fundamental computational processes in a quick and accurate manner, business arithmetic should be offered for those planning to work in

the general clerical field or in retail sales.

Students who desire to work in accounting occupations and those who plan to take the business curriculum in college should register for first-year bookkeeping in the junior year and advanced bookkeeping in the senior year. Data processing concepts should be stressed in bookkeeping classes.

Approximately seventy-three per cent of local firms and eighty per cent of the area firms used a double entry bookkeeping system. Therefore, emphasis needs to be placed on the fundamentals of debit and credit.

A record keeping course should be offered at Dickson County Senior High School for the below-average students who wish to take a general clerical course other than bookkeeping.

Students who propose to seek secretarial occupations should take beginning shorthand in the junior year and advanced shorthand in the senior year. Shorthand II should include training on transcribing machines.

Since a knowledge of business law is of use to all students whatever their occupational or professional intentions, this course should be open to all juniors and seniors. Counselors should encourage students who plan a business major in college to take business law.

According to the businesses surveyed, alphabetic filing was the most frequently used system. Numeric, subject, and geographic systems were also used respectively. Many firms reported using two or more filing systems.

Putting records away and finding them again is a basic activity of the business office. Business teachers should, therefore, continue to teach filing in general business, clerical office practice, and vocational office education classes with emphasis on the alphabetic system. Students must also be familiar with numeric, subject, and geographic filing systems. Sorting, coding, indexing, cross-referencing and a fundamental understanding of the nature and purpose of file records should be stressed.

Table 9 illustrates the number of respondents using alphabetic, numeric, subject, and geographic filing systems.

Table 9
Filing Systems Used

System	Number of Firms Using	
	Local	Area
Alphabetic	46	18
Numeric	25	12
Subject	12	12
Geographic	3	1

Businesses surveyed were asked to indicate the kinds of tests given to job applicants. Findings revealed forty-two per cent of local businesses administered employment tests, while eighty per cent of the area businesses gave tests to job applicants.

Table 10
Employment Tests Required by Respondents

Kind of Test	Number of Local Firms Requiring	Number of Area Firms Requiring
Typewriting	16	16
Shorthand	2	4
English	6	2
Vocabulary	9	2
Personality	10	0
Math	1	0
General Aptitude	0	1

As shown in Table 10, a typewriting test was the most frequently required employment test. Applicants were required to type from forty to seventy net words a minute. The mean rate was fifty words a minute. Most employers demanded one hundred per cent accuracy.

Applicants who desired stenographic positions needed to be able to take dictation at speeds from eighty to one hundred words a minute.

Other tests given to job applicants were English, spelling, vocabulary, personality, math, and general aptitude tests.

When asked if employers reviewed the applicant's high school record, twenty-three reported in the affirmative. Two companies said they examined the record sometimes but not

always, while twenty-five businesses did not verify the applicant's high school record.

Of twenty responding area firms, twelve reported reviewing the prospective employee's school record. Seven area firms did not examine the record, and one respondent did not answer this question.

Based on these findings, business teachers should give shorthand, typing, and general clerical tests to business students to familiarize them with testing procedures used by businesses.

Respondents were asked to make recommendations for improvement of the high school business curriculum. Ninety per cent of both local and area businesspersons believed work experience would be valuable to the program.

Approximately one-half those surveyed listed field trips and speakers from businesses as devices to improve the business education curriculum. The next most frequent response was to emphasize basics.

One respondent suggested teaching students how to complete a job application form neatly and accurately and to stress that first impressions are crucial.

Two businessmen recommended emphasizing the importance of making notations neatly and legibly.

The personnel manager of a large bank felt skill subjects such as typewriting and shorthand should be taken in the senior year.

Since ninety per cent of all businesses surveyed advocated on-the-job training, the Business Education Department should evaluate the possibility of incorporating a cooperative work-experience program into the senior vocational office education class.

This study also demonstrated a need for the school to work with the business community in an effort to improve the curriculum.

Teaching procedures in typewriting, general business, business English, office practice and vocational office education classes should include the completion of job application forms.

Since handwriting is important for job competency, all business teachers must insist on an adequate standard of legibility. Students need to be encouraged to develop habits of neatness, cleanliness of copy, and accuracy.

A questionnaire was given to three hundred ninety students currently enrolled in a business course at Dickson County Senior High School to ascertain their educational and vocational plans. Two hundred ninety-seven were female, and ninety-three were male students. Of these, two students did not want to finish high school.

Forty-eight of the male students completing the questionnaire planned to attend a four-year college after graduation. Eight intended to enroll in an area vocational school, four preferred a two-year college, and four wanted to go to a business college.

Only four of the twenty-nine students who were going to secure employment immediately after graduation planned to work in the business field. Six male students intended to work in the vocational or technical field, and ten indicated plans to work at any available job. Five male students had specific jobs in mind, while four were going to enter military service.

One hundred fifty-six, or fifty three per cent, of the female students enrolled in business courses planned to continue their education after high school. Sixty-eight intended to enter a four-year college, while sixty-two wanted to enroll in an area vocational school. Eleven had decided to go to a two-year college, and twenty-two had specific jobs in mind such as policewoman, nurse, and model.

Only one-fifth the female students taking business courses planned to seek employment in the business field. Twelve students intended to secure positions in the technical field, and forty-six indicated they would accept any available job.

Students enrolled in business courses were asked from whom they received guidance in planning their programs of study. Fifty-seven per cent of the college-bound students reported receiving guidance from parents, while only twenty-four per cent had talked with a counselor in the Guidance Department.

Thirty-six per cent of all students enrolled in

business courses had received no help in planning their programs of study, while thirty per cent had taken courses on the advice of other students.

Based on this information, a well-designed guidance program needs to be structured to:

1. Orient students to the curriculum.
2. Gain information about the students.
3. Inventory occupational information about the school's community.
4. Counsel with students in terms of these two components of information.
5. Place students in business occupations.
6. Follow-up students and evaluate the program.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study has been:

1. To determine existing employment opportunities for high school graduates in selected businesses and industries in the Dickson County employment area.
2. To identify and analyze the essential skills and knowledge needed by the beginning worker for initial job competency in these positions.
3. To decide what characteristics prospective employers want in an applicant.
4. To find out the kinds of equipment on which businesspersons feel the high school student should be trained.
5. To identify business subjects businesspersons consider to be most important.
6. To foster good public relations between the school and the business community.
7. To make recommendations in the form of curriculum objectives for the Dickson County Senior High School business education program.

To obtain this information, a cover letter and a questionnaire were mailed to one hundred businesses in the Dickson County employment area. Seventy responses were received and analyzed, and the data were included in this study.

This research resulted in the following findings:

1. Most initial employment opportunities are in clerical occupations.

2. High school graduates may secure initial employment in the Dickson County employment area.
3. Most high school graduates lack sufficient skills in composing letters, in spelling, in handwriting, and in taking and transcribing dictation.
4. Behavioral traits are most important to the graduate when seeking initial employment.
5. Training on the most commonly used business machines, including data processing equipment, is needed for initial employment.
6. To obtain initial employment, high school graduates need a good background in English, business arithmetic, typewriting, business behavior and office practice.
7. Alphabetic filing is the most frequently used system.
8. Many firms administer employment tests to job applicants.
9. Most businesspersons believe work experience would improve the business education program.
10. Many people in the business field revealed a willingness to work with the school to improve the curriculum.
11. Fifty-two per cent of the students presently enrolled in business courses plan to continue their education after high school.
12. Only one-fifth the students taking business courses plan to work in the business field.
13. Students do not utilize the services of the Guidance Department in planning their programs of study.

After careful consideration of these findings, the following conclusions and recommendations seem apparent.

Data collected in this study indicated that most jobs available to high school graduates in the Dickson

County employment area were in clerical occupations. Six other studies analyzed by the author also revealed that clerical jobs were the most numerous available for the beginning worker. Therefore, a clerical office practice course should be included in the business curriculum at Dickson County Senior High School. Business educators at the high school should consider establishing a placement program to assist graduates in securing employment in the area.

Data in this study, as well as findings by Medley and Eteng, revealed that many graduates lack sufficient skills in composing letters, in spelling, and in handwriting. In view of this, special attention should be given in all business classes to these skills. Business teachers should advise all business students to include business English in their programs.

Since high school graduates were also deficient in taking and transcribing dictation, teachers should counsel students who plan to seek secretarial occupations to take shorthand I in the junior year and shorthand II in the senior year. Shorthand II should include training on transcribing machines. Scammon, Garrison, and Harris have all found manual shorthand to be widely used in business office dictation.

A number of previous studies reviewed by the author and data obtained in the present study revealed a need for

more and better preparation in the behavioral traits. Helen Abott found supervisors were more aware of behavioral traits than were beginning workers. Accordingly, business teachers should emphasize character and personality traits, grooming, etiquette, work habits, attitudes, and business behavior in all classes.

Since training on the most commonly used business machines is an asset to a graduate seeking employment, a course in business machines should be made a part of the curriculum. Instruction on business machines should also be given in vocational office occupations and clerical office practice classes.

According to this study, a large number of firms felt the high school student should have training on data processing equipment. In 1974, Alfred E. Smith found that thirty-nine per cent of secondary schools surveyed were teaching introductory data processing. Walter Burgess concluded that many times data processing was taught as a unit in other courses, while Edward Paulus believed high school teachers were not doing an adequate job in teaching essential data processing concepts. Data collected by Marvin Manning in 1968, revealed that an introductory course in data processing should be offered at the secondary level, and business people preferred students to have hands-on experience with data processing equipment. These facts point to a need for an introductory data processing course to be taught in the Business Department

at Dickson County Senior High School. Consideration must also be given to acquiring data processing equipment.

Information in this study disclosed that the high school graduate needs a good background in English, business arithmetic, typewriting, business behavior and office practice to obtain initial employment. A careful review of these data warrants the following conclusions.

Proper English usage should be stressed in all business classes, and all students who plan to seek employment in the business field should be advised to take business English.

Business arithmetic should be included in the curriculum at Dickson County Senior High School.

Students who want to work in clerical jobs should be counseled to take typewriting in the junior year and clerical office practice in the senior year. Typewriting II should be open only to seniors who plan to work in business offices.

Since there is a tendency for more companies to use computerized word processing, experience in this area would be desirable for the business student. At least one automatic typewriter should be purchased for use in the vocational office education class.

Beginning and advanced bookkeeping should be taken by all students who plan to work in the accounting field.

A record keeping course should be made a part of the curriculum at Dickson County Senior High School for the

below average ability students who wish to take a general clerical course other than bookkeeping.

Business law should be open to all juniors and seniors.

Filing should be taught in general business, office practice, and vocational office education classes with emphasis on the alphabetic system.

Since many firms test applicants' skills, business teachers should give typewriting, shorthand, and general clerical tests similar to those given by employers to familiarize students with the testing procedures used by businesses.

While conducting this study, the author found many business people willing to work with the school to improve the business education program. Since Wallingsford found that employers and educators had different opinions of what was expected of the high school graduate, the Business Education Department should cooperate with the business community to provide the best program possible to the students of Dickson County Senior High School.

Ninety per cent of those surveyed felt that work experience would improve the business education program. Consequently, the Business Department should consider the possibility of incorporating a work-experience program into the senior vocational office education class.

Since fifty-two per cent of the students presently enrolled in business courses plan to continue their education

after high school, the business courses should be applicable to both the college-bound and the vocationally oriented students. A course in personal typewriting should be offered to all college-bound students with emphasis placed on composing skills, manuscript and report writing, and research methods. Students who plan a business major in college should be advised to take bookkeeping I, bookkeeping II, and business law.

In view of the fact that so few students seek counseling from the Guidance Department in planning their programs, the Business Education Department must implement a well-designed guidance program.

Considering the nature and importance of this research, a similar study should be made at least every five years. A follow-up study examining post-school or college experience of former students in order to determine whether educational goals have been achieved should be conducted each year.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Appendix A contains a cover letter which was mailed to one hundred businesses in the Dickson County employment area.

The attached questionnaire concerning job opportunities for high school graduates is part of a study being conducted by the Business Education Department at Dickson County Senior High School. This project is concerned specifically with updating the curriculum to better prepare our graduates to meet the needs of the business community.

We are particularly desirous of obtaining your response because of your interest in and service to the community. Will you please help us by answering the enclosed survey which has been constructed for your convenience. Most of the items are checklists so that you may merely mark them as you proceed. Although you may not employ any of our graduates, we would appreciate your answers.

We will appreciate your completing the questionnaire prior to April 21, and returning it in the stamped envelope enclosed. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Johnnie A. Holland (Mrs.)
Business Education Department

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

Appendix B contains the questionnaire sent to one hundred businesses in the Dickson County employment area.

DICKSON COUNTY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
BUSINESS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
DICKSON, TENNESSEE 37055

SURVEY OF OFFICES

Firm Name _____ Address _____

Completed by _____ Title _____

1. Indicate the number of positions in your business, which if vacant, could be filled by hiring high school graduates.

_____ General Office Worker
_____ Typist
_____ Bookkeeper, Billing Clerk, Posting Clerk
_____ General Clerical, Payroll Clerk, File Clerk, Clerk Typist
_____ Data Processing
_____ Stenographic and Secretarial
_____ Retail Sales (Sales Clerks, Stock Clerks)
_____ Telephone Operator
_____ Others--Please indicate. _____

2. Approximately how many high school graduates do you employ each year? _____ If less than one, how many do you employ over a five-year period? _____

3. Please check the reasons for turnover of your staff for the past five years.

_____ Acceptance of position elsewhere	_____ Inefficiency
_____ Health and Attendance	_____ Marriage
_____ Inadequate education	_____ Personality and
_____ Other: _____	_____ Character Traits

4. What employment tests do you require applicants to take?

_____ Typing	Required Speed _____	Required Accuracy _____
_____ Shorthand	Required Speed _____	
_____ English	Spelling _____	
_____ Vocabulary	Personality _____	None _____

5. Do you review the applicant's high school record? _____ Yes
_____ No

6. Listed below are attitudes, traits, work habits, knowledge and skills needed by employees. Please indicate whether high school graduates are excellent, good, or poor in these competencies.

Excellent	Good	Poor	Attitudes, Traits, Work Habits
_____	_____	_____	Accept criticism graciously
_____	_____	_____	Attendance
_____	_____	_____	Check work for accuracy
_____	_____	_____	Follow directions
_____	_____	_____	Grooming
_____	_____	_____	Initiative
_____	_____	_____	Punctuality
_____	_____	_____	Pride in work
_____	_____	_____	Plan and organize work
			Knowledge and Skills
_____	_____	_____	Arithmetic
_____	_____	_____	Composing letters
_____	_____	_____	Filing
_____	_____	_____	Handwriting
_____	_____	_____	Dictation and Transcription Speed
_____	_____	_____	Type with accuracy
_____	_____	_____	Type with adequate speed
_____	_____	_____	Spelling
_____	_____	_____	Using adding machine
_____	_____	_____	Using transcribing machine
_____	_____	_____	Vocabulary
_____	_____	_____	Other
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

7. Please indicate which of the following subjects you consider to be most important and which you feel to be of lesser importance.

	Most Important	Lesser Importance
Bookkeeping	_____	_____
Typewriting	_____	_____
Shorthand	_____	_____
English	_____	_____
Economics	_____	_____
Office Practice (filing, etc.)	_____	_____
Business Arithmetic	_____	_____
Salesmanship, Marketing	_____	_____
General Business	_____	_____
Business Law	_____	_____
Business Management	_____	_____
Data Processing	_____	_____
Business Behavior	_____	_____

8. Should the high school business department offer instruction on the following types of equipment?

	Yes	No
Full keyboard adding-listing machine	_____	_____
Ten-key adding-listing machine	_____	_____
Electronic calculator	_____	_____
Printing calculator	_____	_____
Stencil duplicator	_____	_____
Fluid duplicator	_____	_____
Transcribing machine	_____	_____
Bookkeeping machine	_____	_____
Manual typewriter	_____	_____
Electric typewriter	_____	_____
Specialized typewriter--keyboard machine (word processing and composing devices)	_____	_____
Please indicate. _____		

Data Processing Equipment:

Keypunch		
Verifier	_____	_____
Sorter	_____	_____
Interpreter	_____	_____
Collator	_____	_____
Accounting Machine	_____	_____
Computer	_____	_____
Terminal	_____	_____
Other--Please indicate. _____	_____	_____

9. What equipment changes are planned for the foreseeable future? _____

10. Please indicate whether you use a double-entry bookkeeping system. _____ Yes _____ No If no, what system? _____

11. Please check the filing system or systems used in your business.

_____ Alphabetic	_____ Numeric	_____ Soundex
_____ Subject	_____ Geographic	_____ Other

12. What recommendations would you make for high schools to improve their business programs?

_____ Field trips	Other _____
_____ Speakers from business	_____
_____ Work-experience programs	_____

APPENDIX C

Appendix C contains a questionnaire given to all students presently enrolled in business courses at Dickson County Senior High School.

Name _____ Grade _____ Male _____ Female _____

1. Do you intend to finish high school? _____ Yes _____ No
2. If you intend to continue your formal education after high school, indicate your future plans.
 - _____ Attend a college or university for four or more years
 - _____ Attend a two-year community college
 - _____ Attend a business college
 - _____ Attend an area vocational school
 - _____ Attend a hospital nursing school
 - _____ Other, specify _____
3. If further education is not planned, what do you expect to do after leaving high school? (Check one)
 - _____ Work in vocational or technical field
 - _____ Work in business field
 - _____ Work at any available job
 - _____ Enter military service
 - _____ Other, specify _____
4. In selecting and planning your program of study, did you receive guidance from:

_____ Guidance Department	_____ Other students
_____ Parents	_____ No one
_____ Teacher	_____ Other, specify. _____
5. Indicate why you enrolled in each subject below by writing the letter denoting your choice in each blank:

(a) job preparation	(c) consumer benefits
(b) college preparation	(d) other _____

General Business _____
 Business English _____
 Business Law _____
 Bookkeeping I _____
 Bookkeeping II _____

Shorthand _____
 Typing I _____
 Typing II _____
 Marketing _____
 VOE _____