

T
194

COMMERCIAL EDUCATION
IN
LEBANON

A Critical Analysis of the Need
For Commercial Education and the
Competencies Required, with Some
Practical Suggestions for Teachers
and Administrators.

By

Michel H. Shamma'a

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements
of the degree Master of Arts in
the Education Department of the
American University of Beirut
Beirut, Lebanon

1957

F O R E W O R D

In his capacity as Head of the Brief Business Program at the American University of Beirut since its inception in 1947, the writer has had the opportunity to evaluate the demand for such skills as the Brief Business Program provides.

There are many 'private' and 'night' schools in Beirut which teach some of these subjects. These are however, all run on a business basis, that is to say for profit, using various forms of enticement and propoganda to gain pupils. Unfortunately two distinct weaknesses underlie their efforts - they teach only shorthand, typing and accounting, and they accept any applicant who pays the fees irrespective of his or her educational background. After a few months of coaching these sporadically trained pupils are given certificates and turned out to make a living.

During the past few years the writer has, at the request of the Personnel Office of the American University of Beirut, tested over 300 boys and girls who applied for employment. UNRWA in both Damascus and Beirut, as well as ARAMCO and TAPLINE in Beirut have also sent their employees for testing and reclassification. In each case the candidate was asked where he or she had studied. 95% had done so at

the various "business" schools of Beirut. The plain truth is that of the 300 applicants mentioned above not one could qualify as a good secretary. Quite a number were satisfactory as typists, and a few had some notion of arrangement and presentation of material. None, however, had any idea of office work.

It is deplorable - yet in the circumstances quite understandable - that these business schools have done so little to prepare their trainees to serve the best interests of their employers. The fact that they immediately found employment merely emphasizes the tremendous demand.

The importance of training in business methods, the requirements and standards called for, and how best to prepare students for such work will be the main issues taken up in this thesis.

The writer wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Frederick R. Korf for his valuable suggestions and guidance.

Especial thanks are due to the personnel officers and businessmen of the community from whom valuable information was secured through a questionnaire as well as a personal interview.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

THE NEED FOR COMMERCIAL TRAINING IN LEBANON

CHAPTER		Page
I	A Brief Survey of the Lebanese Economy with Emphasis on the Demand for Training in Business Methods.....	5
	Introduction.....	5
	Geographical & Historical Sketch.....	6
	Autonomy.....	8
	Education.....	9
	Political Economy.....	10
II	The Economic Structure of the Arab East.....	12
	Underdevelopment.....	12
	Low Agriculture Productivity.....	12
	Low Industrial Productivity.....	13
	Inadequacy of Economic Institutions.....	14
	Slow Capital Formation.....	14
III	The Existing Economic Structure.....	16
	Land Tenure.....	16
	Handicrafts & the Rising of New Industries.....	17
IV	New Factors in the Economic Structure.....	19
	Oil.....	19
	Impact of the West.....	19
V	Present-Day Economic Conditions in Lebanon....	23
	Role of Post-War Foreign Trade in the Lebanese Economy.....	24
	Conclusion.....	40

PART II

WHAT IS COMMERCIAL COMPETENCY?

CHAPTER		
	Introduction.....	44
I	The First Office Workers.....	46

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

THE NEED FOR COMMERCIAL TRAINING IN LEBANON

CHAPTER	Page
I	A Brief Survey of the Lebanese Economy with Emphasis on the Demand for Training in Business Methods..... 2
	Introduction..... 2
	Geographical & Historical Sketch..... 3
	Autonomy..... 5
	Education..... 6
	Fatalism, Rationalism & Enterprise..... 7
	Political Economy..... 10
II	The Economic Structure of the Arab East..... 12
	Underdevelopment..... 12
	Low Agriculture Productivity..... 12
	Low Industrial Productivity..... 13
	Inadequacy of Economic Institutions..... 14
	Slow Capital Formation..... 14
III	The Existing Economic Structure..... 16
	Land Tenure..... 16
	Handicrafts & the Rising of New Industries... 17
IV	New Factors in the Economic Structure..... 19
	Oil..... 19
	Impact of the West..... 19
V	Present-Day Economic Conditions in Lebanon..... 23
	Role of Post-War Foreign Trade in the Lebanese Economy..... 24
	Conclusion..... 40

PART II

WHAT IS COMMERCIAL COMPETENCY?

CHAPTER	Introduction..... 44
I	The First Office Workers..... 46

CHAPTER	Page
II Office Workers in Action Today.....	52
III Defining Business Competency.....	56
Personal Appearance as a Factor in Job-Getting	63
What do Employers Look for During the First	
Interviews?.....	63
IV The Interview.....	70
Questionnaire.....	72
V The Formula.....	84
Personal Appearance.....	84
Potentiality.....	85
Background and General Training.....	85
Skills.....	87
Personal Characteristics.....	88

PART III

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

CHAPTER		Page
	Introduction.....	91
I	Providing the Required Skills and Personal	
	Characteristics.....	94
	Other Suggestions.....	103
	Personality Development.....	103
	Versatility and the Ability to Handle Many	
	Tasks.....	103
	Public Relations.....	104
	Personal Development Through Experience.....	105
	Accuracy.....	109
II	Characteristics of Business Teachers.....	111
	Business Experience.....	111
	Professional Development.....	112
	Affiliation with Outside Groups.....	112
	Summary and Conclusion.....	114

PART I

THE NEED FOR COMMERCIAL TRAINING

IN

LEBANON

CHAPTER I

A Brief Survey of the Lebanese Economy with Emphasis on the Demand for Training in Business Methods.

Introduction

A proper appraisal of the factors that underlie the case for an expanded program of education in the field of business methods in Lebanon necessitates adequate acquaintance with the country's social and economic structures and with its level of development, as well as with the nature and dimensions of its major economic activities. Only a brief and skeletal survey is aimed at in this chapter, as a more elaborate and lengthy study would take us into secondary issues that would but add detail at the expense of good proportion. Hence the writer's survey is expressed in broad terms namely, the need for an expanded program. The survey will cover prevailing conditions; it will also go further to take into account the plans and expectations for the development of the country, since these are of direct relevance to any training program in the field of business methods. It will further undertake an analysis

of business and various schemes of instruction with the object of determining what business may properly claim the service of commercial education, and what particular schemes and methods of instruction may best be adapted to the needs of a particular business.

Geographical and Historical Sketch

The Republic of Lebanon is a small country, with an area of some 10,350 square kilometers and a population of 1.4 million inhabitants. It lies on the western side of Asia, where the continent meets the Mediterranean and the West. Like its neighbours on the coastline, Lebanon is ideally situated for trade, and it is no wonder that the country has always exploited its geographical position to the fullest for the conduct of trading operations with the rest of the world, east and west. As a matter of fact, the Phoenicians, who are one important component in the ancestry of the Lebanese, contributed in no small measure to the development of many institutions, instruments, and skills indispensable to trade in the fields of navigation, astronomical reckoning, the alphabet, accounting, colonization, trade agreements, and so on.

This tradition has never been seriously interrupted for any considerable length of time. At the worst, Lebanon

has restricted its commercial operations to the satisfaction of its own needs; at the best, it has conducted operations for clients far and wide, becoming an intermediary not only for its immediate neighbours but for countries much further away. How this tradition has come down to contemporary Lebanon, and how it stands today, are matters that will be dealt with further on when we come to the survey of present-day conditions.

Though trade was the major field of economic activity in the Lebanon of ancient times, yet it was not the only important field. Industry, understood in the context of those days, was almost equally important. Thus Phoenician handicrafts were a tangible proof of Phoenician skill and the source of both substantial revenue and wide repute. The dyes, purple cloth, glass-work, and wood-work of those days still stand as a stock examples of the distinctive industry of Phoenicia.

Present-day Lebanon does not represent a political continuity of old Phoenicia, the political entity having passed through many ups and downs before reaching its present form. Nevertheless, continuity does exist in the basic forces and features underlying Lebanese society and economy. As the country is not richly endowed with agricultural resources, being mainly mountainous as compared with its

neighbours which have relatively more plains, it has been forced to make a larger proportion of its living out of trade and industry than its neighbours. Its mountain community combines qualities of toughness and adventuresomeness, the latter conditioned in no small part by closeness to and reliance on the sea. Thus the enterprise of man in Lebanon has always tended to compensate for the niggardliness of nature. Other cultural and sociological factors combine with the geo-physical factor in shaping Lebanese enterprise, but no attempt will be made here to trace each of these factors and estimate its relative importance.

Autonomy

Compared with its neighbours, Lebanon has always shown a more effective openness to the outside world and a greater readiness for interaction with it. During the Ottoman Empire Lebanon had a special status and continued to be governed by its feudal Amirs who recognized Ottoman Sovereignty, and paid tribute to the Sultan. Internally the affairs of Lebanon were controlled effectively by the Amirs and, as such, Lebanon had a tradition of local autonomy. It has enjoyed more autonomy in the last few centuries than its neighbours in the Fertile Crescent (consisting of present-day Syria, Jordan, and Palestine), which fact has been influential in the shaping of national character and achievement. Thus,

as early as the 16th century, the Lebanon began intercourse with the West.¹ The impact of this intercourse on education, knowledge and experience, travel, and hard-and-fast business dealings cannot be overemphasized. Even since the 1860's, however, intercourse has been more intensive and continuous, and the impact has been greater.

Education

The Lebanese are generally recognized as the most literate of the Arab peoples today, although no accurate comparative figures exist. Lebanon has the highest rate of literacy among the Arab States. It is estimated that between 70 and 75 per cent of the children of the primary-school age are attending school - a considerably higher rate than in the neighbouring countries.² There is a multiplicity of educational systems in the country, but the authorities are trying to establish uniformity, mainly at the elementary and high-school levels. The predominant influence is still European continental, especially French, with emphasis on the 'baccalaureate' system. Liberal arts and humanities have received relatively greater attention

1. Under Fakhr-ud-Din al Ma'ni. See Royal Institute of International Affairs, The Middle East, (2nd ed. London, 1954), p. 468.

2. Education in the Arab Countries of the Near East - Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi; Chapter 24 - Organization & Administration of the Educational System, p. 407

than other fields of learning, but the social and physical sciences are slowly gaining ground. The needs of the country in personnel qualified in science, technical knowledge, economics, and business administration and methods are inadequately provided for, and the shortage will become even more acute the greater the move toward development. Yet the working population is resourceful, highly adaptable, and capable of learning skills rapidly. Although there are no published data to substantiate the statement, it may safely be said that since the Second World War, great strides have been taken in the acquisition of skills and in the technical improvement.

Political Economy

On the political scene also one can clearly observe the prospective need for such training. For Lebanese political philosophies and policies, irrespective of confusion and vagueness, reveal a clear tendency towards free enterprise, free trade, and free economic association with the outside world beyond what is customary today in other states, particularly those in the Middle East. This can be clearly substantiated from a review of the area's laws and regulations pertaining to business, currency, investment, and foreign exchange.¹

1. A study that embodies such laws and regulations made by the Economic Research Institute, American University of Beirut.

Since the end of the Second World War, the businessman in the Near East has started, for the first time in history, to examine his role in modern society critically. This has been forced upon him by the pressure of circumstances - competition, introduction of the income tax, the influx of foreign capital and foreign companies etc. He has come to realize that he should adopt modern methods of business which necessitate a high degree of specialization and division of labor and the employment of efficient and skilled personnel. From the above it becomes evident that the country's business units presently need, and will need even more in the future, the services of trained secretaries, accountants, office managers and others of allied skills. In response to such a rising need, the American University of Beirut has stood and still stands ready to meet the demand for the type of personnel needed.

CHAPTER II

The Economic Structure of the Arab East

A general look at the economic structure of the Middle East gives the following picture:

Underdevelopment

The economic structure of a country is the result of the interaction between the people of that country and its natural resources. The Arab World experienced a social, political and economic stagnation which lasted for many centuries and was only recently interrupted by the impact of western ideas, technology and power. As a result of this stagnation the economic resources of these countries were left on a very low level of exploitation.

Low Agriculture Productivity

One of the most outstanding facts about Arab life is its fundamentally agricultural economy. The overwhelming majority of the people live on the land and subsist by agriculture. Built upon this agricultural economy is a system of trading and commerce whereby goods are exchanged within

the country or are exported and imported. It is no wonder then to discover that the only resource which was exploited was land, and that even land exploitation was unable to produce more than a very low level of subsistence.

The productivity of agriculture measured by the productivity of land was only between one half and one quarter of similar productivity in many advanced countries, and as modern industry slowly became established, its productivity was also very low as a result of the inexperience of the people in industrial methods and techniques.

Low Industrial Productivity

Modern industry had not developed and all industrial production was made by handicraft methods. A few industries, before the Second World War, existed which catered to the needs of the country districts. These industries have suffered a tremendous eclipse since the mass production of machine-made goods in the west. As a result most of the goods needed in the countryside are no longer produced locally but are imported from abroad, and the apparent balance of trade in the Arab East shows an unfavorable balance of imports over exports.

The mineral resources were untouched. After the First World War a new process of economic development began, but this process necessarily started from the very low level which the economic life had reached by that time.

Inadequacy of Economic Institutions

The economic institutions for the agricultural as well as the industrial sectors of the economy were inadequate. Until recently, the only way farmers could obtain credit was to go to the money lender, who exacted very high rates of interest from these farmers, often causing permanent distress and misery. No institutions for agricultural credit were provided; every farmer depended entirely on his own resources for production as well as for marketing. Cooperatives or other forms of collective action were completely unknown. The result was that in addition to the farmer's low productivity, his share in the produce was still lower, and this added a great deal to the hardship under which he lived.

Slow Capital Formation

In the industrial sector, only two forms of industrial organizations were known: The single proprietorship and the partnership. The limited company which has played such a major role in the development of western countries through the happy fusion of capital and management was entirely unknown. Credit facilities for industry were lacking. Public utilities were in an appalling state of backwardness. Means of communication were inadequate and were rarely set up with a view to the development of the country,

but were established in the interest of foreign operating companies and projects. Institutions for saving were backward, and the Muslim idea that interest was morally prohibited acted as a further obstacle to the growth of adequate saving institutions. Money and investment markets were completely lacking.

CHAPTER III

The Existing Economic Structure

Land Tenure

The predominance of an agricultural economy in the Arab East is the most important economic determinant of its low standard of living. It is the low level of efficiency in agricultural exploitation of the land, together with the prevailing system of land ownership and tenancy which are the main cause of the low standard of living. On the whole the lands are fertile and there is a potentiality of high productivity in the soil, provided it is properly exploited. Agriculture is on the extensive rather than the intensive side, and variety of produce is limited mainly to those grains needed for the subsistence diet of the people. The system of land tenure which concentrated most of the land in the hands of a few owners and made of the farmers who tilled and cultivated the land mere tenants, at the complete mercy of these land owners, was a formidable obstacle to agricultural development because it provided no incentive for the farmer to improve his land. The state of law and order was not perfect and the system of justice was slow and unfit for the urgent needs of a growing economy.

The prevailing system has created a situation where either the government owns most of the land, or a system where large tracts of land are owned by wealthy landowners. The government leases the land out to tribal chiefs and influential people who in turn distribute it among individual farmers. The wealthy land owners - usually living in cities - rent out the lands at comparatively high rentals to farmers, or take from the farmers a high share of the produce.

Fortunately nowadays there is a great change taking place in Syria, Egypt and Iraq where redistribution of land is being considered. In Lebanon, individual land ownership prevailed, and farmers were in a much better position.

Handicrafts and the Rising of New Industries

Most economic units were designed on a basis of self sufficiency with only a surplus to exchange for other essential needs. This situation has been slowly changing. New patterns, methods, and technologies have been applied to the several sectors of the economy. New institutions have been imported, and are being developed slowly to a state of effectiveness. Modern equipment and scientific methods are being used on an increasing scale in agriculture and in industry. Moreover the Arab Governments have recently started to

show great interest in economic development. Government projects for the improvement of public utilities and communications are being undertaken. Economic plans are being made and executed. Legislation is being amended and supplemented to suit new needs and new facts, and the machinery of justice is being improved slowly but surely. Taxes are used for the purpose of financing various projects.

The lessons of two world wars have taught businessmen the great value of industry as a source of profit and the new national ideas and yearnings have added a further impetus to this trend of industrialization. Through this industrial progress a new middle class has been created which acts as a balancing social factor counteracting the previous overwhelming superiority of the feudal landlords. The social balance has been further improved by the emergence of the new working class made up of the masses of workers employed in modern factories, in services, in public utilities and in the manifold activities of construction, communication, and trade.

CHAPTER IV

New Factors in the Economic Structure

Oil

A more recent factor which gave a new force to this trend of development was the large-scale exploitation of oil, which influenced Arab economic development in two ways: In the first place, big industrial empires using the latest equipment, technology and methods of production were built in the heart of the stagnating or slowly moving Arab economy to serve as a pattern and example for efficiency and success; and in the second place, the revenue of governments from oil operations has provided a flow of money for use in furthering construction and development.

Impact of the West

Another factor of no less importance is the fear of imperialism and foreign rule. This fear was vastly increased after the establishment of the State of Israel in the heart of the Arab World. For through Israel the Arabs have learned the lesson that economic and technological superiority can be devastating to a stagnant and underdeveloped society. Moreover the new socialist ideas, which

emphasize material well-being and the value of a high standard of living, have had a great effect on the Arab mind and have served to create new desires and tastes and to drive the people to further effort in order to satisfy them. Modern education has had its effects too, for it has taught the people the value of science and scientific methods, and has pointed out the means to be used in the achievement of better standards of production, health and living.

The foregoing glimpse of the state of affairs in the Arab World at the present moment shows an old, static society which is being overtaken by new dynamic forces from within and from without, and which finds itself almost incapable of resisting these dynamic forces. Unless it provides a new economic pattern, new standards of science, technology, and living, it is in danger of losing its own character completely and succumbing finally to foreign influences. Thus the great need of the moment is to facilitate this process of changing development. This requires a number of things: In the first place it needs a speedy development of new values which can establish themselves incontestably at the expense of the old values. For it is generally accepted that values are a guiding force as well as an outgrowth of the state of affairs in the society. Thus when the society was stagnant, fatalism

emphasize material well-being and the value of a high standard of living, have had a great effect on the Arab mind and have served to create new desires and tastes and to drive the people to further effort in order to satisfy them. Modern education has had its effects too, for it has taught the people the value of science and scientific methods, and has pointed out the means to be used in the achievement of better standards of production, health and living.

The foregoing glimpse of the state of affairs in the Arab World at the present moment shows an old, static society which is being overtaken by new dynamic forces from within and from without, and which finds itself almost incapable of resisting these dynamic forces. Unless it provides a new economic pattern, new standards of science, technology, and living, it is in danger of losing its own character completely and succumbing finally to foreign influences. Thus the great need of the moment is to facilitate this process of changing development. This requires a number of things: In the first place it needs a speedy development of new values which can establish themselves incontestably at the expense of the old values. For it is a well known maxim that values are often merely a reflection and justification of the state of affairs in the society. Thus when the society was stagnant, fatalism

and surrender were raised as great virtues; acceptance of government, however corrupt and inefficient, was elevated into a sacred principle. Rigid social classes were sanctioned and privileges were established and maintained. But now all this has to be changed. Stagnation should be considered undesirable, and work and dynamism raised to the level of virtues. Fatalism must give way to self-confidence, a belief in the creation of a new world, a belief in the achievement of new aims, and to the vision of a new society. The idea of government must be amended and changed too, to be adapted to the new situation. In the old pattern, government was a part of the sacred state of affairs, now it is no longer that but a secular institution which exists only to serve the society which elects and supports it.

The new ideas must furthermore call for a new set of social values as well as for a new social structure. Land should not be considered a sign of prestige or power any longer, and the landlord should not be awarded a higher rating than the tenants in the social structure. Rather than through land-ownership, prestige should be acquired by the building of factories, raising of chimnies, and the construction of projects. Prestige must become entirely dependent upon achievement. All privileges must be abolished and the rigidity of the social structure broken.

Individuals in what used to be considered the lower strata of society should be free to rise to the highest places in order to contribute fresh blood and wide talents to a dynamic change.

Lastly, institutions need to be adapted to the new requirements. Old institutions, however useful for their times, are no longer so. They are in many cases even obstacles to development. Family loyalty must make room for the newer loyalty of union or cooperative society or economic organization. Institutions for production, for marketing, for financing, must be created and adapted to the needs of the different sectors of the community. The task is not an easy one, for institutions cannot be imported. Many an institution which has proved successful in foreign lands may prove an utter failure when imported to a new land unless it is fundamentally changed and amended to meet the new situation.

CHAPTER V

Present-Day Economic Conditions in Lebanon

We come now to the brief survey of the Lebanese economy. Lebanon had a national income of L.Leb. 1,030 millions in 1950, the last year for which a national income account was made by the Economic Research Institute of the American University of Beirut. Since then the figure has risen by considerably more than the natural increase in population, according to projections made by the Institute. This income was equivalent to roughly L.Leb. 800 (or \$250) per capita for the year in question. No country in the whole of Asia and Africa, (except Israel whose case is special), has a per capita income so high.¹ But this is by no means the only feature of special interest in the Lebanese economy. Another feature is the rather unusual distribution in the importance of the various sectors in the economy, a distribution according to which trade and services account for about two thirds of income, while commodity-producing sectors (agriculture, industry and construction) produce the remaining third. We shall not enter into the controversy that has arisen intermittently with regard to the merits or significance of the distribution in question. What is of

1. According to statistics published by the United Nations Secretariat, 1956.

interest for this study is the implication of this distribution, even if the exact limits of its components are not very precise. In other words, what is of interest is the type of training called for in an economy with a structure like the Lebanese economy.

Role of Post-War Foreign Trade in the Lebanese Economy

A number of factors attribute to Lebanese foreign trade a major importance in the Lebanese economy. These may be divided into two broad categories: those arising from the geographical position of the country and those attributable to the general level of economic development, and to the economic policy of the government.

Viewed geographically, Lebanon occupies a central position in the Middle East¹ with well-equipped sea and air-ports; its climate characteristics and beautiful scenery have also always attracted many summer and winter resorters from neighbouring Arab countries. Beirut has come to assume a leading importance in the foreign trade of the Arab East.² This however, is not only due to its geographic position and its being easily accessible by land, sea, and air,

-
1. It is bounded by the Mediterranean Sea from the West, by Palestine from the South, and by Syria from East and North.
 2. Especially since the creation of the state of "Israel" in 1948 that has been boycotted economically and politically by neighbouring Arab countries.

but to the government's policy of establishing a free foreign exchange market, and lessening to a great extent restrictions on Lebanese foreign trade as well. On the other hand, Lebanon is economically underdeveloped with its industrial sector playing a relatively less important role than each of the agricultural and trade sectors. As J. Adler puts it when discussing external economies as an important factor in economic development, "there are in most underdeveloped areas at least two sectors of the economy in which external economies have been developed. These sectors usually are the export industries and commerce, particularly that engaged in import trade. In these sectors external economies of the industry exist in the form of transportation and processing facilities and in a steady supply of skilled and semi-skilled managerial and supervisory personnel. They are supplemented by the external economies of the fourth type i.e. those provided by the international organization of world trade. It is for these reasons that private investment in under-developed countries tends to perpetuate itself in the traditional lines of exports and commerce, and the development of agricultural and manufacturing industries for the internal market is lagging".¹ Not only local but foreign private capital also is attracted by the foreign trade sector and primary industries

1. John H. Adler, "The Fiscal and Monetary Implementation of Development Programs" American Economic Review, Vol. XLII, May, 1952, p. 591.

dealing with raw material,¹ a large part of which is exported to the more advanced industrialized countries. No doubt that in under-developed areas agriculture and trade are two sectors that assume the major importance in the economy. While in most under-developed countries agriculture is the more important of the two (in terms of national income), in Lebanon it is the other way round. The reasons lying behind such a phenomenon have already been briefly mentioned.

One of the accepted ways of measuring the economic importance of any given sector is the amount of national income it generates as a proportion of the total. Adopting such an approach it is found that for the year 1950 the Lebanese trade sector (internal and foreign) generated 300 million Lebanese pounds constituting around 30 per cent of total national income.² This was more than the income generated by any of the other sectors - the agricultural and industrial sectors' shares were 203 and 137 million Lebanese pounds respectively.

1. Refer to R. Nurkse, Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), pp.24-31.

2. See A. Badre and Economic Research Institute Staff, National Income of Lebanon, 1948, 1949 and 1950, Income Arising in the Trade Sector, Monograph No. 8 Unfortunately, no dependable data is available for other years. The trade sector includes export, import, transit, entrepot, industrial and agricultural trade.

This shows clearly the role assumed by foreign trade in the Lebanese economy. As would be expected there are wide discrepancies between per capita incomes in each of the sectors compared, the lowest being that of agriculture which supports around 50 per cent of the population.

A closer look at the structure reveals that in 1950 the national income could be accounted for as follows: (Data obtained from the Economic Research Institute, American University of Beirut.)

<u>Sectors</u>	<u>L.Leb. in Millions</u>	<u>Per cent of National Income</u>
Trade	300	29
Agriculture	203	20
Industry & Crafts	137	13
Services	100	10
Real Estate	96	9
Government	72	7
Transportation and Communication	43	4
Construction	42	4
Finance	40	4
TOTAL	<u><u>1,033</u></u>	<u><u>100</u></u>

The following table compares the proportional national incomes arising in the trade sector of different countries.¹

Percentage of Income Arising in the Trade
Sector of Various Countries

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Percentage of Total National Income Arising in the Trade Sector</u>
Lebanon	1948	26.00
U.S.A.	1948	19.80
France	1948	13.90
Denmark	1948	13.90
Finland	1948	12.70
Netherlands	1948	14.50
Greece	1948	11.20
Pau	1947	20.70
Norway	1948	14.10

The following are additional figures denoting percentages of income originating from Commerce which in this case covers wholesale and retail distribution, finance and insurance:

1: A. Badre and Economic Research Institute Staff, op. cit.
Monograph No. 8.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Percentage of Income Originating in Commerce</u>
Egypt	1945	10.20
Mexico	1948	24.10
China	1946	13.50
Turkey	1949	18.20
Italy	1948	12.80

(See U.N., National Income and its Distribution in Underdeveloped countries, N.Y., 1951, p. 4)

Among the countries listed above, the proportion of national income arising in the foreign trade sector to the total national income is largest in the case of Lebanon. It has already been stated that a variety of factors have contributed towards such a phenomenon among which was the economic policy of the government. The latter's policy of establishing a free foreign exchange market in Lebanon, the extension of the free zone, and the facilities extended to re-exports and transit trade has made out of Beirut an important commercial center. Such a policy has helped to stimulate transit trade,¹ attract foreign capital, and establish Beirut as a major center for foreign exchange transactions.²

1. Income from transit alone accounted for around 29 per cent in 1950 of the total income originating from the trade sector. (See A. Badre and Economic Research Institute Staff, op.cit.)

The number of earners in each sector is not proportional to the sectors' shares in income. Thus, while agriculture accounts for a fifth of total national income, it accounts for one half to three-fifths of the working population - which indicates, among other things, a low productivity of labor and rather underdeveloped agricultural activity. At the other extreme, trade engages 2 per cent of the working population and accounts for some 30 per cent of national income, a phenomenon which points to high ability and productivity in trading activity. In between these two extremes, there are industry with 4 per cent of the working population and 13 per cent of national income, transportation and communication with 4 per cent of the working population and 4 per cent of national income, services with 3 per cent of the working population and 10 per cent of national income, and government with about 6 per cent of the working population and 7 per cent of the national income.

-
2. A considerable income is supposed to be earned by Lebanon through triangular trade operations, stimulated by the existence of a free market in Lebanon on the one hand and exchange restrictions in other countries on the other hand. Unfortunately no statistics are available to denote its magnitude.

Apart from the sectors of agriculture, construction, and possibly transportation, in which training in business administration and in business methods generally is not so urgent, the other sectors represent the more needful field for such training. This is especially significant in view of the fact that the latter set of sectors, that is, those for which training in business methods is urgently needed, account for over two thirds of national income. Since, on the other hand, they account for less than one third of the working population, the productivity of labor (labor being understood generally to include all elements in the working population) acquires great importance. Any measure likely to increase productivity ought therefore to be encouraged, if the sectors with a comparative advantage are to produce the optimum benefit. Training in business methods is one such measure.

At this point it will be useful to examine the sectors one by one. Such a study will help in drawing of conclusions with regard to the need for, and prospects of, a business-methods training program. The examination will, however, be directed to those sectors that are of greater relevance to the study; namely, all the sectors with the exception of agriculture, construction, and transportation.

The industry and crafts sectors comprise about 1300 industrial establishments with a combined capital exceeding L.Leb. 145,000,000 as well as many hundreds of handicraft workshops. The average size of an industry is quite large, involving over L.Leb. 110,000 of capital. The figure is as high as this mainly because public utilities are included in the capital cost of this sector. But apart from this feature, industry contains the largest number of limited-share companies among all the sectors, a fact which also partly accounts for the large average size of establishments. An interesting characteristic of many of the larger establishments is the relatively high modernity and efficiency of the capital equipment, when compared with the markedly lower levels of organization, industrial relations, and skills in the labor and administrative force.

Trade is conducted mostly by partnerships and individual ownerships. The share of wages and salaries paid from the income of the trade sector is very small, ranging between one tenth and one sixth. On the other hand, the share of profit and interest is very high. This points to the preponderance of the owner-operator type of trading firm and the relative scarcity of salaried staff. The implication of this observation for training in business methods is serious -- namely, that in spite of

the large proportion of income in the trade sector, it does not provide much employment and therefore does not constitute an important source of demand for business training. A counteracting factor might be the desire of owner-operators (or potential owner-operators) themselves to get training in business methods. This desire will become more urgent as business itself becomes more rational, and as the government's requirements become more rigorous in account-keeping and auditing for taxation and other purposes. But more on this subject later.

Of the remaining sectors, those of finance and government represent the most extensive fields where the services of trained office managers, accountants, filing clerks, secretaries and the like are needed. The need in communications, real estate, and services is not likely to be as great. The finance sector includes money-changers and bankers. Like trade, this sector is one in which the Lebanese excel, and in which they have established a reputation known far and wide. Innate talent, specialized knowledge, and operational efficiency are required. The latter includes the office-and-records side of business. If activities in this field are to lead to maximum financial gain, all three qualities have to be present in abundance, and the need for training in business methods becomes therefore important for the staff and owner-operators of establishments dealing in finance.

Government, on the other hand, needs a large number of persons trained in office work. The civil service in the central government and in municipalities and local authorities adds up to the largest total number of workers found outside the agricultural sector, and the duties of government employees are of basic and general significance. Unless the level of performance of civil servants, high and low alike, is satisfactory, the public interest will suffer greatly and even the private sector of economy will be adversely affected. The belief that one commonly hears expressed - that it is the acts and capabilities of the higher officials, as opposed to the lower, that determine the effectiveness of government - is quite indefensible. The higher officials can do little unless the officials further down in the hierarchy keep pace with them in efficiency and competence. And this the smaller officials cannot do unless they are in possession of the necessary skills. What has been said acquires added relevance in view of the widening of the field of government action and of the growing complexity and centralization of government.

There are two factors especially relevant to the argument that training in business methods is needed in Lebanon. These will be mentioned at this point in the survey of the Lebanese economy, and not in association with the

discussion of any one sector, because they cut across the various sectors and relate to the economy at large. The factors are:

1. Business organization, and
2. Development in the use of accounting and auditing procedures. This development has been enhanced by the growing complexity of business and by the institution, some years ago, of an income tax.

Before taking up these two factors it is appropriate to say something of what the American University of Beirut has done in this field. As far back as 1900 this institution foresaw the importance of business in a developing society. Special requirements were bound to arise and there would be a demand for persons especially trained to cope with them. To this end, there came into being, first, the Long (4-year) Commercial Course equivalent to the B.A., in Arts and Sciences. Later, as demand increased, the Brief Business Course (a two-year non-degree course) was started. This afforded professional business training leading to a diploma. Time has fully justified the purpose of, and the need for, the Brief Business Course as well as the Long Course.

It is a trite saying, but nevertheless true, that some elements of 'business' have entered into the relations between men since the time when they began to exchange goods and services. As long as these relations remained simple, the business side of a transaction was quite incidental. As business became more complicated with advances in the arts, higher specialization, and higher standards of living, the size of the average business and its demands increased. Although there are still many 'one-man shops' in industry and trade, this situation will probably continue as long as freedom of entry is insured and the initial investment is not too great. The fact remains that the great bulk of goods and services produced comes from business units with substantial aggregations of personnel and investment - aggregations which must be integrated into an effective and productive mechanism. Such a typical modern business unit must be directed by someone who has mastered the art of business administration with a number, large enough, of clerical staff to assist him. This means that, as business grows, the owner or owners must bring in or develop assistants and specialists to keep records of business transactions, file correspondence, distribute the product, serve as store-keepers, salesmen, collectors and a host of other business functions.

Thus business units in this part of the world, heterogeneous and underdeveloped as they are, do still manifest an unmistakable and increasing demand for professional training at the various levels of specialized managerial and clerical functions. One clue to the rapidly rising importance of professional preparation is given in the increasing enrollments in the American University of Beirut's Brief Business Course. Whereas in the ten years before World War II enrollments averaged 18 in the two classes, after the reinstatement of the Brief Business Program in 1947 enrollments during the last 10 years averaged 58 in the two classes, with a present enrollment of 56.

Reverting to the two factors; by business organization is meant here the legal forms adopted for the purpose of carrying on business.

Single ownership is the most popular form of business organization, with the partnership following and the corporation quite a distance behind. In spite of the fact that the economy of Lebanon is characterized by a preponderance of trade and services over agriculture,¹ and although such preponderance is one indication of a more developed economy, yet Lebanese business still favors the

1. This is unlike the situation in other countries of the Middle East, (excluding Israel).

single-ownership and the partnership forms of business which elsewhere in similar situations tend to give way to corporate ownership. This seemingly paradoxical phenomenon finds explanation, in part, in the dominating individualism of the Lebanese and in the inadequacy of company laws. The existing laws tend to discourage rather than invite the formation of corporations. This is partly a remnant of the influence of the French from mandate days, and partly a reflection of the relative unpopularity of incorporation among businessmen. To the extent that corporations are neither very numerous nor very large in size (except public utilities), this potential field of demand for men trained in business methods will perforce be small. On the other hand, to the extent that businessmen - irrespective of the form of business they adopt - are highly competitive and full of drive and of the desire to excel and to be efficient, to that extent they are likely to desire to run their business with trained assistants and clerks.

The existing keen competition in business and the desire of businessmen to excel to a high point of efficiency are conditioned by two considerations. The first is that most businessmen now realize that the employment of trained assistants, though expensive, is conducive to greater efficiency and larger net returns in the long run. The second consideration is the inclination of businessmen at

large toward good office management, toward competent book-keeping and accounting and allied services.

Obviously, the extent to which the Lebanese businessmen employ assistants trained in business methods, or themselves acquire the training or give it to their children, depends on how closely those same businessmen link their love of calculation and their rationalism with the acquisition of such training. For, due to excessive, but shortsighted, calculativeness, they sometimes adopt what might seem to them a rationalistic attitude which, in fact, ends up by being irrational, such as saving on salaries by employing assistants with insufficient training. They may be ignorant of the fact that the saving is likely to be very small compared with what can be achieved through the greater efficiency of a more highly trained staff.

C O N C L U S I O N

The above survey has brought out a number of factors which have a direct bearing on the demand for training in business methods arising in the Lebanese economy at present. It has brought out contradicting influences which it is not attempted here to reconcile. The benefit to be gained from a discussion of the influences is not so much to calculate some net result of their numerical values, as to discover the fields in which the influences operate and the type and intensity of training needed in each of the fields. Furthermore, a better knowledge of the pattern of business organization in the country and the attitude of businessmen toward calculativeness and rationalism can help in making some guess as to the future trends. No more can be hoped for in the absence of accurate social and economic data from which to draw conclusions about the present and make estimates for the future.

Apart from the effect of the prevailing structure of the economy there is the prospective effect of any substantial change in this structure due to current and future economic development. Development as here used refers to a substantial change in the productive ability of the

country expressed in a sizeable rise in national income. Development of this type is bound to call for a marked increase in the number of men trained in business methods. This increase is noticeable during the process of acceleration in expansion, and in the long run in the expanded sectors and industries. The result will be an increase in the demand for personnel, whether development takes the form of growth in existing activities, while these sectors keep, more or less, the same relative importance in the economy, or whether their relative importance undergoes a marked reshuffle. What the net effect of a reshuffle will be on the demand for trained personnel cannot be estimated. It depends on the nature and degree of the reshuffle.

It is not easy or safe to talk about the development plans of the Lebanese government and public. Such plans frequently undergo substantial changes. But in spite of any changes, a few basic facts remain. First, plans for the development of means of communication, of electric power, and of irrigation and domestic water services persist. Secondly, the projects involved in the plans require a long period for execution and fruition. Thirdly, they require the investment of hundreds of millions of pounds. Fourthly, many of the essential skills required in the execution, and later the operation, of the projects are in short supply and

will remain so for many years. Judging by these points, there is a strong basic need for a training program in business methods -- a program possessing flexibility and universality.

PART II

WHAT IS COMMERCIAL COMPETENCY?

Introduction

PART I of this thesis dealt with the demand for skilled and well trained office workers. The fact that many 'private' institutions - night schools, and commercial and technical institutes - are in existence further proves this point. Furthermore, specialization in jobs, has greatly increased the opportunities for clerical workers.

The problem that confronts us at present is: "Are these schools providing the students with **the** right kind of training to enable them to secure initial employment in business offices?" If the answer is "No", how can they improve their standards, and what are the criteria on which they can build their plans for improvements.

There is no doubt that skills are of prime importance to businessmen. On the other hand there are many other qualifications, along with skills, which are also required of clerical students. What are, therefore, these qualifications, and how can we meet them in our commercial schools? The present part of this thesis will, therefore, deal with the first part of the last question.

Since business men depend to a large degree on commercial schools, it is evident that commercial education

and business should have complementary interests. Yet in both groups there are many who are ignorant of, and indifferent to, the attitudes, needs, problems and aspirations of the group with which they are not immediately concerned. Unfortunately, in Lebanon, there is little, if any, regard by any one group for the other.

The purpose of this study is to find out, through investigation and research, the meaning of commercial competency. Once this is known, the the next step would be how to train students to be competent.

CHAPTER I

The First Office Workers

Office workers today are doing the same kinds of jobs that workers have done for thousands of years. They may have different systems of writing and keeping records. They may have typewriters, telephones and other mechanical devices to speed up their work. They may write more letters, deal with more people, keep track of more money, attend to more details and do more complicated jobs. But their function is still the same -- to help make the wheels turn in business, in government, in education, in all the social institutions which mankind started ages ago.

Through the ages office workers have kept records for their employers. This is still one of their main duties, just as it was in ancient Egypt. In those early days kings, weavers, carpenters and merchants did not know how to write. So they had "scribes"¹ to record what was happening to their property and goods.

When he acted as a secretary the scribe carried around a little wooden case. In it were reed pens, papyrus

1. A person who can write.

rolls² and ink. Out would come this writing equipment when he made a note of what his employer owned, bought, sold, or exchanged. Sometimes he carved these records on stone slabs.² Acting as bookkeeper he kept track of figures by making notches on counting sticks called tallies. As filing clerk he stored away the records. A number of these carved and written records have been preserved showing us how business was carried on in ancient Egypt.

Many of the business methods of Egypt were carried over into Greece and Rome. As culture and commerce increased, more office workers were employed in these countries and throughout the world.

The first system of brief writing was a kind of shorthand invented by Tiro, Cicero's secretary. Secretaries in the Roman government used it to record speeches of Caesar and members of the Senate. The early Christian church employed shorthand writers to record the teachings of religious leaders and the court trials of people unfaithful to the church. Emperors and state officials often studied shorthand but they usually had secretaries to handle their business affairs. Cicero, for example, said of Tiro: "He was serviceable in a thousand ways in every department of my business."

1. Paper was unknown at that time.

2. Thin flat - usually square or rectangular piece of stone or rigid material.

Figuring, as well as writing, was required of the Roman office worker. If he worked for one of the public service guilds, he had to keep track of how much food was distributed to the people.

When the barbarians swept down over southern Europe in the early part of the Middle Ages, the great civilizations of Greece and Rome gradually crumpled. War put a stop to cultural advancement. Trade and commerce came to a standstill.

The previous skills of reading, writing and figuring were almost wiped out. But the monks managed to rescue some of the books. They carried the manuscripts to their monasteries and patiently copied them by hand.¹ They taught their knowledge and skills to younger members of the clergy who in turn taught them to other monks. In fact, the term "clerical workers" that we now use for people working in an office comes from "cleric," meaning "member of the clergy".

When trade and culture revived in the last part of the Middle Ages, office work increased. But just knowing how to read and write was not enough for this occupation. The medieval secretary was an educated man who had to know all about domestic and foreign politics if he worked for a king; all about the church if he worked for an archbishop.

1. The beautiful writing, art work and bookbinding of monks can be seen in museums today.

The clerk who worked for a feudal lord had to know all about taxes, fines, weighing grain, supervising land and tenants, writing letters, figuring in Roman numerals and keeping records. Clerks doing similar work were employed by towns, parishes and cities.

Individual craftsmen and merchants employed clerks. But gradually the goldsmiths, weavers, bankers, grain merchants, city officials and others got together with other men in the same business. Each trade formed a cooperative group called a "guild" or "league." These guilds needed many clerks who understood the complicated business activities. And the only way for a man to learn was to become an apprentice.

Even before a boy could become an apprentice, he had to know mathematics, bookkeeping and letter writing in a special commercial handwriting and style. He also had to know geography because so much trade was carried on with foreign countries. He usually got an experienced clerk to coach him.

After a boy became an apprentice there was still much more to learn. He had to know trade routes over which ships carried goods; roads over which caravans bore merchants from one market to another; markets where the best prices were paid. He had to know the values of products in other lines

of business because bills were often paid in goods. He had to learn to buy real estate with the profits from trade. He had to know the trade laws of neighbouring and foreign cities. He had to understand banking practices -- particularly in Italy where the Lombards financed most of the business for other countries. Above all he had to have a thorough knowledge of the goods he dealt in.

As the work grew, the guilds found it more efficient to have certain clerks do only certain jobs -- such as keeping records or writing letters. This specialization exists today in most large offices.

After the 15th century, commerce, industry and public affairs went forward rapidly. This period was the Renaissance. There were new ways of making new goods, new ways of traveling, new opportunities in new countries specially culminating later in America.

In the late 1800's business grew with the Industrial Revolution. Trading companies expanded. Factories were built. Labor-saving machines were invented. Educational institutions flourished. Governments became more complicated. All this increased activity led to more and more jobs for office workers. But there had been little change in office work itself from the days of the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution.

Then came the first upheaval -- the introduction of the typewriter. This revolutionized office work, although at first many people objected to it -- like the customer who wrote, "You don't need to print no letters to me. I kin red writin".

The typewriter had been invented many years before, and various models had been tried. But it was not until 1874 that the first practical model was built by Christopher Sholes and operated by his daughter.

Following the typewriter came many other mechanical devices to make office work more efficient. Some of these were based on earlier inventions. The adding machine, for example, goes back to around 450 B.C. when numerals were traced on a dust-covered board called an "abacus." Later, wax replaced the dust. Then came boards or tables marked with lines upon which counters were moved back and forth. This kind of abacus is still used in some Chinese offices. The Romans used pebbles on their boards. Some of our expressions in figuring, like "borrow one" and "carry two" come from the use of these early counting boards.

CHAPTER II

Office Workers in Action Today

What is the nature of the work that must be done in any office -- large or small -- by one person or many employees? Following is a list of some of the present office activities:

1. Making records of all business transactions
2. Handling mail, packages, telegrams and other items coming in and out of the office
3. Receiving customers, salesmen, agents, business associates and other visitors
4. Answering the telephone and putting calls through
5. Giving out information by telephone, mail or in person
6. Ordering and caring for supplies, machinery and equipment used in the office
7. Taking stenographic dictation and transcribing it on the typewriter
8. Composing and typing material without dictation
9. Copying items by hand, on the typewriter or on duplicating machines
10. Filing
11. Sending out and paying bills, wages and salaries

All these activities, and many more, are required to keep an office in good working order. In a small concern one person may take care of everything. Large concerns find that a division of labor or specialization is more efficient. A glance at the above activities and the duties of the first office worker will show that there is actually no real difference between the two. Whatever difference exists is in the degree to which machinery is used.

A comparison of the specialized work in the list below will also show that the idea of specialization and division of labor is not a new one. It started with the early guilds which found it necessary to have workers do only one kind of job.

1. Billing Machine Operators - these operators work on machines that are combinations of typewriters and calculating machines. They write copies of orders, bills and other items.
2. Bookkeeping Machine Operators - these operators record or post sales, expenses and other items. They post on loose ledger sheets or large flat books.
3. Calculating Machine Operators - these operators use all kinds of machines that do addition, subtraction, multiplication and other processes with numbers.

4. Other machine Operators - people work on machines such as those that write checks, record dictation, duplicate written material and sort mail.
5. Telephone Operators - who work at small and large switchboards.
6. Typists - who do only typing or who combine this with other duties.
7. Addressers - in large concerns - those who write or type addresses on envelopes and other mail.
8. Bookkeepers - those who keep records of stock and money transactions. Or there may be one or more special bookkeepers who keep records of the goods bought, sold, manufactured and on hand; the cost and sale prices of these goods; money paid in and out; money owed by and to the concern.
9. Cashiers - those who pay salaries etc.
10. Clerks - who do all kinds of specialized and general jobs. They sort mail, put material in envelopes, work in shipping rooms and do thousands of other jobs to assist fellow workers.
11. Messengers - who carry mail, information, packages and the like from one department to another, or from one office to another.

12. Stenographers and Secretaries - those who take care of dictation and transcription, office correspondence, reports, minutes, appointments, and other confidential matters in the business etc.

These are some - not all - of the huge army of office workers. But the point here is that though we are in the 20th century, and with so much advancement in inventions we still do the same kinds of jobs that our ancestors did thousands of years ago.

Looking ahead to the future, we can expect many more changes in office work, such as greater specialization and more machines to do routine jobs. But employers will always need helpers who understand the business, who have desirable personal qualifications and who are skillful.

The march of progress will bring new discoveries, new industries, new organizations. Office workers will be needed to help them grow.

CHAPTER III

Defining Business Competency

What is vocational business competency? How is it determined? And what are the criteria which determine the standards and curricula necessary to ensure that competency?

These are some of the most common questions, the answers to which will give the schools and teachers an idea of the policy they should follow in preparing pupils for jobs, or employment.

Business competency cannot be determined by the teacher, the school, the curriculum or by academic committees. It is true that experts in these lines have a great deal to say on the subject; but without knowing exactly what a businessman needs and what he considers 'competence', they remain inadequate no matter what study and research they have made in that subject. Furthermore in considering businessmen, one must think of them as human beings - and not machines - with minds, character, motives and aims. As human beings they cannot be alike, hence what may be considered competent for one businessman may not be so for another. Different businessmen require different standards of skills.

If you were to ask a hundred different employers to describe the ideal worker or secretary, you would get a hundred different answers. The reason is partly because the work in every office is different. But it is mainly because no two employers are alike. They differ in their work-habits, in their likes and dislikes, in the way they want their work done, in their emphasis on certain requirements.

Naturally it is necessary for the secretary to know thoroughly shorthand, typing, filing, and the other work required by the position. But even here the standards vary. Some employers require at least the average speed standards of 100 words a minute in shorthand dictation; 35 words a minute for transcription from notes, and 45 to 60 words a minute for copy from typed material. Other employers do not stress speed if the work is done well. Still others are willing to sacrifice a certain amount of skill if the secretary's personal qualifications are high.

Some jobs call for extra speed and extra accuracy in taking dictation. For example in court trials, in legislatures and in important meetings stenographers have to take down word for word what is said. Sometimes the fate of a person may depend on the stenographer's record of evidence. A few years ago all such records were taken in regular shorthand. But a machine was recently invented to speed up shorthand. The new process is called stenotyping.

To substantiate the above, there follow a few examples of the likes and dislikes of businessmen.

1. Loyalty and Confidence

A secretary just out of school may possibly record the dictation of a person who controls the secrets of a great enterprise or the intrigue of international politics. Secretaries are entrusted with information that might contribute immeasurably to the aims of business competitors, political opponents, or foreign governments. The confidence of a business is centered in its employees, and this confidence constrains such employees to be loyal to that trust.

2. Understanding and Common Sense

Employers prefer their employees to be alert, they like them to have common sense and understanding. Employers admit that they make mistakes, but they believe it is the duty of their employees - if they have the above qualities - to call their attention to or correct such mistakes. They like to see that the instructions and directions they give are carried out correctly. This depends on the experience and understanding of the employees. In reality, the errors that stenographers make every day are not simply in shorthand but are errors of judgment or understanding. Many examples can be cited, only a few are given here to show what understanding and common sense mean:

Examples:

1. We want to float a loan. "a loan" in shorthand can be read "alone". When the stenographers transcribe the sentence - though they have taken it at the required speed and correctly in shorthand - they write "We want to float alone."

2. A piece of dictation was given to students: They were told before hand that they should imagine themselves working for a bottling company. In the dictation they were supposed to order some rubber gaskets to be used in making pipe joints. The transcription was rubber "caskets". (gaskets and caskets are practically the same in shorthand.) Students with common sense or understanding should have known that their employer was not interested in burying anything or anybody.

Being a stenographer means more than being able to write shorthand and to use the typewriter. Among other things, it means job curiosity and sincerity of effort and generosity of time. It means willingness to relieve someone else of certain responsibilities so that his attention may be given to other matters. It means the ability to use shorthand as a tool with which to produce a finished product that has monetary value.

Following are some examples of what employers say about their secretaries, as recorded in personal interviews with the writer:

1. A Personnel Director:

"My secretary has to use his head more than his hands. Above all, he must know as much about my work as I do. If I stumble or mumble dictating a letter, he generally knows what I mean to say, fills it in and gets the letter out himself. But correspondence is only a fraction of his work. He must make everybody who comes into the office feel comfortable -- other employees, business associates and applicants for jobs. His tone of voice and attitude, as well as what he says, must give them the idea that he is serving them to the best of his ability."

2. The Head of an Export Concern:

"I have so much routine work that my secretary's chief value is clearing up details so I can give my attention to other matters. She sees that I have everything I need right at my desk -- records, filled fountain pen,

mail to be signed, and notes on my calendar about the day's business. I have to dictate a lot of mail and her rapid shorthand and typing are great helps. When she first came on the job, her letters did not always look neat; there were erasures and poor spacing. But now she knows that I insist on the perfect appearance of a letter. Our customers get their impression of our office from the letters we write as well as from the goods we ship. By the way, all our secretaries have to read and write English and French, and some of them must know some German, because much of our correspondence is done in English and French, and some of it in German.

3. A Woman Executive:

"I don't expect my secretary to be perfect. No one is. But mine makes up for her weak points. For instance, her memory isn't as good as it might be, so she has her own system for keeping track of names, appointments and other details. She fits her work-habits to mine. I like to come to the office late and stay late, or even dictate mail at home in

the evening. She arranges her time accordingly although it may mean a last-minute shift of her personal plans. Sometimes I have to work at top speed; then she digs in, too. At other times I take it easier and she does not push me to get work done that can afford to wait. She carries out instructions but she also knows when to go ahead on her own. I have absolute confidence that whatever she sees and hears in my office ends there. She never discusses my affairs with anyone else."

Business is interested in an applicant's faculty for adapting himself to a given situation and in the facility with which he can brush off the green and become seasoned. The longer the time required for learning, the greater the penalty imposed by authority. The greater the maturity of judgment, the greater the utility in an office. Learning to grasp what the boss is trying to say, striving to understand the nature of the business that is being transacted, exercising fidelity in the use of language -- these will help the secretary to make the adjustment that gives security. Adaptability is the sign of experience.

Personal Appearance as a Factor in Job-Getting

An applicant was refused a job because she went to the interview in her prettiest and fanciest dress. Another applicant who had the right type of dress for office work was refused because she had a smart veil on the smallest kind of hat.

Of course, businessmen may be overdoing it in worrying about such matters; nevertheless, many of them do like things just right in the business office. Many employees win or lose a job on personal appearance even before they are interviewed or the interview takes place. These are negative pictures, but the point I wish to make is that employers are human beings and have their likes and dislikes.

When demand exceeds supply workers can do very much as they please, and employers are almost helpless to interfere. When jobs are scarce and hard to get, employers can pick and choose to their hearts' content. When competition for jobs is strongest, applicants must give the closest attention to details that would be completely overlooked at other times when work is easily available.

What do Employers Look for During the First Interviews?

Secretaries or applicants planning to go into any kind of office work, should be wise to develop certain

personal characteristics that are desirable in any office worker. Such details, trivial as they may seem, may be of prime importance to the employer.

The employer or personnel director who makes the interviews takes note of your appearance. He looks for cleanliness, neatness, and appropriate dress. He notices whether you are healthy. He listens to what you say - not only to get information but to find out if your voice is pleasing and if you use good language. He judges whether you are an attentive, intelligent listener. He takes note of your pleasantness, courtesy, ability to meet a stranger, sincerity and enthusiasm. He wants to know how well you accept responsibility and carry through what you have started. It is important for him to find out whether you can keep confidential matters to yourself.

Finally, an employer will want to know how you get along with people. Employers and fellow-workers steer clear of individuals who are disagreeable, because they upset an office no matter how efficient they may be.

Secretaries can develop personal qualifications to a large degree long before they apply for their first job. For instance, they can improve their ability to get along with people by taking every opportunity to be with them - in family gatherings, school meetings, sports, clubs, dances and other functions.

School activities can help in many ways. Classroom discussions, public speaking, assembly work and participation in clubs offer good training in developing such traits as pleasantness and a good public speaking voice.

Personal appearance is largely a matter of the person's own care and attention. Except in special fields, beauty or handsomeness is not a requirement for an office job. But boys can make a better impression by combing their hair neatly, keeping it trimmed, shaving as often as necessary, shining their shoes, pressing their clothes and neckties, and wearing clean shirts. Girls can make themselves more attractive by having clean and well-groomed hair and finger nails; by using natural-looking make-up, neither too much nor the wrong kind.

One of the most important guarantees of attractiveness is good health. It would, therefore, be wise to any applicant to consult his doctor regularly and see that he is always physically fit. Eyes and ears should be examined. Office work requires good sight and good hearing. Posture is another detail that an employer may notice.

Not many years ago, the technical skills learned in schools were all that was needed to get an office job. Today, competition is great, the requirements are increasing, and some types of clerical work have become highly specialized.

Therefore, more and more people are finding it worth while to get further training in commercial or business schools and colleges. While he is still in school a prospective secretary should make sure to learn how to read and write well, to spell and figure, to use correct English, French, and Arabic, and to keep papers and materials in order. He should always try to improve these skills. He can never tell what kind of job he will fill in the future. As a stenographer or clerk, or even an errand boy or general office worker, he will probably be asked at some time to operate a few simple office machines. He can practice these operations while at school. He might cut stencils for the programs of the school plays or societies and run off copies on the mimeographing machine. He might get permission to work the school switchboard under the guidance of the telephone operator. The school office or some local business concern may have a simple adding machine on which he may practice when it is not in use.

In other words a student should try to take advantage of every possible opportunity while at school to develop good personal characteristics, acquire as many skills as possible and be prepared to meet any situation that comes up during his ultimate business career. Some employers will not take "I don't know how to do this" as a natural answer.

It has been customary for teachers and schools to fix arbitrarily a standard for what, in their opinion, is vocational competency. These standards undergo change from time to time, and from one business place to another. Hence it is quite normal that business educators are exposed to criticism of their methods and products. Such criticism, if properly utilized by the educators, is very important and constructive because, through it, the educators learn what is needed and what is considered competent in business.

It is not unusual to hear that the school product is wholly unsatisfactory. On the other hand it is not uncommon to receive a familiar call over the telephone: "Send us another stenographer or accountant just like Mr. X". This is actually what the writer hears from various companies and business houses in Beirut.

The question then arises, "How can one school - say Brief Business Program - in its teaching and training meet the different demands of businesses?" I do not claim that the Brief Business Program can meet all requirements. But it must be noted that these requirements differ in degree and not in kind. This is where a good method and an understanding of business needs play a major part in narrowing the gap between the various degrees. Consequently we should always do our best and prepare the student to meet

and solve problems that he may face and encounter in his life career. As a result, we cannot therefore say that this is the program. Business needs vary from time to time and from place to place.

The writer's experiences as Secretary to the Registrar, Assistant Registrar, Business Manager, during World War II, of Jafet & Zahar Contracting Company, part time worker with the Socony Vacuum, "expert tester" of the UNRWA in Beirut and Damascus, and teacher for a good number of years, as well as his direct and personal contacts with businessmen and companies, have influenced to a great extent his achievement as a teacher. He has also benefited considerably from the request by the American Companies here - Tapline and Aramco - to draft an outline for the training of their employees, whom they did not think were vocationally competent. Such meetings with senior officers and managers of large companies were very enlightening to both parties.

Since we are training for the office, it seems very wise that our standards should be set by offices and not solely by ideas. Our ideas and beliefs may be quite right and true, but we should also give attention to what the businessman thinks. The following is a quotation by Howard E. Whlenad:

"We, in the schools, must train toward the most exacting employer. There will be enough of the poor students to satisfy the more easily satisfied employer."¹

Consequently it is, in my opinion, advisable to set up a formula for vocational competency. But if a given formula is to function, it must be followed. Experience has shown that people are always willing and ready to give suggestions, but that when it comes to application very little, if anything, is done.

The formula to be presented in this part of the thesis is based on:

1. The writer's experience for the last 21 years
2. The personal interviews the writer undertook with the various business houses in Beirut.
3. A review of Chapter II & I "Office Worker in Action Today" & "First Office Worker".

1. Wheland, Howard E. "The Place of the Teacher in Business Education", Tri-State Business Education, p. 10.

CHAPTER IV

The Interview

The first step in the planning of the interviews of the various businessmen was to divide "business" into three branches:

1. Business of Manufacturing
2. Business of Trading which includes buying and selling, store-keeping, wholesale and retail
3. Business of Finance - that branch of business which collects and preserves and distributes the supply of money on which the business world depends - banking.

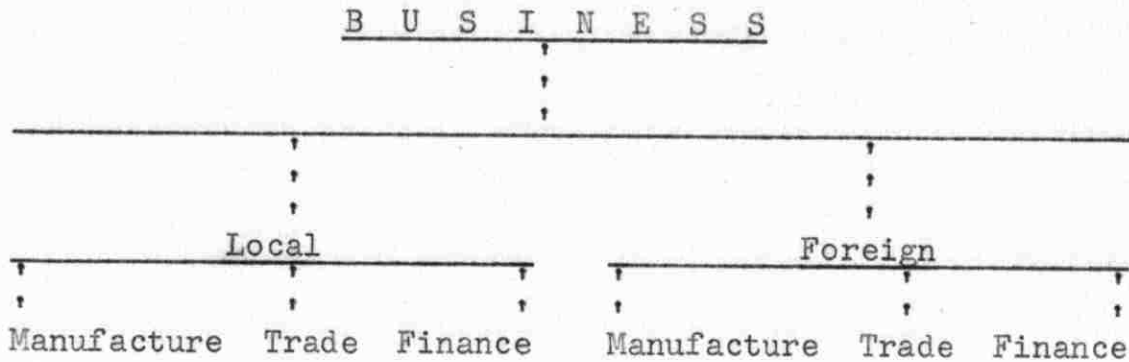
These three branches represent the various lines of business and typify the general activities of the business world.

The second step in the planning was to divide these three branches into two categories:

1. Those places run by foreigners¹
2. Those places run by natives of this region.

This can be clearly seen in the chart below.

1. Non-Lebanese or Lebanese & non-Lebanese together.



The third step was to choose appropriate business places and set the time for the interview. In sorting the various business concerns the writer tried to arrange them into groups which are similar in the nature of their work. The selection was also carefully done so as to have a reasonably representative sample of the businesses in Lebanon. The following list shows the local as well as the foreign business institutions in which interviews were carried out:

Local

Banks
Insurance Cos.
Trade (business)
Schools
Government Offices
Travel Agencies

Foreign

Banks
Insurance Cos.
Trade (business)
Schools
Diplomatic representations
Travel Agencies
Oil Companies.

This grouping made the comparison easier, and at the same time reflected on whether businessmen, foreign and local demand similar competencies of their employees.

The last step was the carrying on of the interview. A personal acquaintance with most of the personnel managers in town made the interview easy and pleasant. There was no formality necessary beforehand, except the appointment. The discussion was very free and informal.

The interview was divided into two parts:

1. A questionnaire prepared by the writer with the aim of getting information on some particular points which are pertinent to the study, and
2. An oral interview with the personnel managers to get their own point of view as to what in their opinion is commercial competency.

1. Questionnaire

- A. How do you recruit employees, or what are the means through which you recruit them?
 - a. by advertising in newspapers
 - b. through directors of commercial schools
 - c. through recommendations by friends or employees in your concern.

- B. What type of jobs do you recruit for?
 - a. clerical
 - b. secretarial
 - c. business executives

- C. What are the academic qualifications you ask for - degrees?
 - a. high school graduates
 - b. college graduates
 - c. university graduates

- D. Do you use any pre-employment test or simply depend on interviews and recommendations?

- E. Which types of tests are given for office and clerical positions?
 - a. General mental ability
 - b. Typing and shorthand
 - c. English language
 - d. Arithmetic and bookkeeping

- F. Do you have any restrictions as to age or sex?

- G. Do you have a probation or trial period?

- H. What is the percentage of dismissal - discharging - of employees after the trial period and on what basis were they discharged?

- I. What is the ideal employee in your opinion?

The results of this questionnaire are as follows:

- A. How do you recruit employees, or what are the means through which you recruit them?
 - a. 2% through advertising in papers
 - b. 18% through schools and recommendations
 - c. 80% of the recruitment is done through friends or employees

- B. What type of jobs do you recruit for?
 - a. 74% clerical
 - b. 22% secretarial
 - c. 4% business executives

- C. What are the academic qualifications you ask for - degrees?
 - a. 1% high school graduates
 - b. 54% college graduates
 - c. 45% university graduates

- D. Do you use any pre-employment test or simply depend on interviews and recommendations?
 - 96% give a pre-employment test and an interview
 - 4% depend on recommendations alone

- E. Which types of tests are given to office and clerical positions?
 - 90% give tests in typing
 - 80% give tests in languages

71% give tests in shorthand

36% give tests in Arithmetic and Bookkeeping

None gives a general mental ability test

Personality is estimated during the interview.

F. Do you have any restrictions as to age or sex?

a. All without exception prefer young people

b. Secretarial jobs are considered to be women, and the other office jobs for men.

G. Do you have a probation or trial period?

All business houses reserve the right for a probation or trial period - usually three months.

H. What is the percentage of discharging of employees after the trial period?

a. 15%

b. various reasons were given, but the main ones were skills and personal characteristics.

2. The second part of the interview consisted of the response to the question, namely: What is the ideal employee in your opinion?

The different personnel managers interviewed gave their own opinions freely and were not interrupted during the interview. This gave them a chance to say exactly what

they felt in describing the qualities of the proper employees for their own concerns. Notes were taken in shorthand. The results represent the answers given by directors or personnel managers of:

	3 foreign banks
	6 local banks
	2 foreign insurance companies
	3 local insurance companies
	3 diplomatic representations
	2 government offices
	5 oil companies
	15 local business houses
	2 foreign business houses
	4 manufacturers
Total	<u>45</u> businesses

The following tables compile the answers received in the three different branches of business, and in the combined total group of businesses.

TABLE I

Business of Manufacturing¹

<u>Characteristics of the Ideal Employee</u>	<u>No. of Interviewees Naming the Characteristics</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Honesty	4	100
Adaptability	4	100
Dependability	4	100
Potentialities	3	75
Typing Skill	3	75
Experience	2	50
Accounting Skill	2	50
Health	1	25
Filing Skill	1	25

1. The number of manufacturers interviewed is 4.

TABLE II

Business of Trading¹

<u>Characteristics of the Ideal Employee</u>	<u>No. of Interviewees Naming the Characteristics</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Honesty	17	100
Adaptability	16	95
Dependability	15	89
Languages	14	83
Personal Appearance	12	72
Accounting Skill	12	72
Potentiality	10	59
Social Connections (Background)	9	53
Experience	7	41
Office Work	7	41
Typing Skill	6	35
Filing Skill	3	18

1. The number of men in the trading business interviewed is 17.

TABLE III

Business of Finance - Banking¹

<u>Characteristics of the Ideal Employee</u>	<u>No. of Interviewees Naming the Characteristics</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Honesty	9	100
Adaptability	9	100
Dependability	9	100
Discretion-Loyalty, Confidence	9	100
Languages	9	100
Accounting Skill	9	100
Typing Skill	9	100
Machine Operating	9	100
Arithmetic	9	100
Punctuality	9	100
Handwriting	7	78
Neatness	7	78
Background-Social & Educational	6	67
Use of Leisure time	6	67
Potentiality	5	56
Shorthand	5	56
Personal Appearance	3	33
Gambling (aversion to)	3	33

1. The number of men in the business of finance interviewed is 9.

TABLE IV
Oil Companies¹

<u>Characteristics of the Ideal Employee</u>	<u>No. of Interviewees Naming the Characteristics</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Personal Appearance	5	100
Honesty	5	100
Neatness	5	100
Punctuality	5	100
Languages - English & Arabic	5	100
Adaptability	5	100
Political inclination	5	100
Health	5	100
Typing Skill	5	100
Arithmetic	5	100
Background	4	80
Shorthand Skill	4	80
Accounting Skill	4	80
Filing	3	60
Experience	2	40

1. The number of oil companies interviewed is 5.

TABLE V

Insurance Companies¹

<u>Characteristics of the Ideal Employee</u>	<u>No. of Interviewees Naming the Characteristics</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Personal Appearance	5	100
Languages - English, Arabic and French	5	100
Social Connections	5	100
Honesty	5	100
Courtesy	5	100
Gambling (aversion to)	5	100
Arithmetic Skill	5	100
Dependability	5	100
Punctuality	5	100
Background	4	80
Bookkeeping Skill	4	80
Typing Skill	4	80
Potentiality	4	80
Leisure time	3	60
Voice - Speech	3	60
Shorthand Skill	3	60
Political Inclination	2	40

1. The number of insurance companies interviewed is 5.

TABLE VI

Government and Political Representations¹

<u>Characteristics of the Ideal Employee</u>	<u>No. of Interviewees Naming the Characteristics</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Loyalty & Confidence	5	100
Political Inclinations	5	100
Background - Education	5	100
Dependability	5	100
Languages - English, Arabic and French	5	100
Typing Skill - Arabic	5	1000
Translation	5	100
Punctuality	4	80
Typing Skill - English	4	80
Adaptability	4	80
Personal Appearance	3	60
Shorthand Skill	3	60
Arithmetic	2	40

1. The number of Government & Political representations' offices interviewed is 5.

TABLE VII

Combined Total for All Business
Shown in Previous Tables

<u>Characteristics of the Ideal Employee</u>	<u>No. of Interviewees Naming the Characteristics</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Honesty	40	88.88
Adaptability	38	80.88
Dependability	38	80.78
Languages	38	79.15
Typing Skill	36	66.00
Accounting Skill	31	55.66
Punctuality	23	50.00
Background	29	49.00
Personal Appearance	28	47.50
Arithmetic Skill	21	44.00
Potentiality	19	31.44
Discretion	14	31.11
Neatness	12	25.46
Political Inclination	12	25.00
Shorthand Skill	15	21.33
Machine Operating	9	20.00
Gambling (aversion to)	8	13.31
Use of Leisure Time	9	13.00
Handwriting	7	12.13
Health	6	11.66
Courtesy	5	11.11
Experience	11	10.38
Translation	4	7.11
Office Work	7	6.10
Filing Skill	7	5.75
Voice - Speech	3	5.00

CHAPTER V

The Formula

Practically every formula for vocational competency has the same meaning and seeks to obtain the same general results. The results from the questionnaire and the interviews suggest a formula emphasizing the following five areas:

1. Personal Appearance
2. Potentiality
3. Background and General Training
4. Skills
5. Personal Characteristics

1. Personal Appearance

Since 96% of those interviewed evaluate applicants by the results of pre-employment tests and by interviews it is essential that candidate should make a good initial showing. The first thing the employer does is to look at the applicant. Any experienced employer is able to turn away many applicants whose appearance shows that they are unsuited to employment in his business. "Good Looks" do help -- employers are, after all, human. However, with care, anyone can have the kind of appearance that counts in getting a job.

2. Potentiality

Why is potentiality important? In normal times, employers are in a position to reject all but the most promising candidates for business occupations. The potentially successful business employee is expected to possess the ability to learn quickly and to deal with complex situations. Since all employers reserve their right to the three-month probation period, it behooves a new employee to make his apprenticeship period as short as possible.

3. Background and General Training

One businessman has submitted an excellent statement on "What the Business Man Wants of Commercial Course Graduates"¹:

- A. "The ability to understand and use languages
 - a. The ability to understand and to translate into action instructions which are given, and to give proper instructions to others.
 - b. The ability to express thoughts clearly and accurately in words and ability to understand the thoughts of others from their words.
 - c. The ability to spell correctly
 - d. The ability to write in a clear, legible handwriting.

- B. The ability to understand the principles of Arithmetic and to perform arithmetical problems rapidly and correctly.
- C. The Ability to make use of a good knowledge of Geography.
- D. The ability to see present events in their historical perspective."

Background has many connotations. It may mean the right family connections. Presumably if the applicant lives in the right neighbourhood with the right parents, many of the desirable qualities looked for will exist in a reasonable degree. To others, background means reading, writing, and speaking intelligently and accurately, with some degree of mental discipline. Most of our commercial schools neglect the problem of an appropriate cultural setting. It is true that we must educate our students for work -- and we know how to train people in the simple vocational skills -- but we must also make our young people critically minded and socially minded, so that they may live satisfying lives based on a flexible social intelligence.

1. Fernald, Henry B., Business & Business Education, Eleventh Yearbook, The Commercial Education Association of the City of New York and Vicinity. pp. 103-106

4. Skills

What skills are to be taught? What standards of school achievement shall be established?

Although certain skills may be acquired after practice in an office, it is preferable for the applicant to have these skills in the first place.

Office managers generally expect certain skills of all beginners in the type of work usually assigned to them. The beginner should be a capable typist, able to do simple posting, checking, filing, and able to operate the ordinary office appliances. He should also have a good knowledge of shorthand and be able to transcribe his notes accurately and intelligently.

The Multiple Skills Committee¹ made the following resolution showing what is required from a pupil to develop a multiplicity of skills in order to gain initial employment and to hold the position.

"Each commercial student is required to major in one and minor in another of the following commercial fields:

- (1) Accounting; (2) Secretarial; (3) Clerical practice (4) Distributive Occupations."

1. Huber, Monroe J., "Need for Multiplicity of Skills," Business and Business Education, Eleventh Yearbook, The Commercial Education Association of the City of New York and Vicinity, p. 77.

5. Personal Characteristics

The personal characteristics factor is extremely important. A great percentage of those who lose their jobs, lose them because of their inability to adapt themselves to the working environment. The jobs are not lost because of lack of skills.

Many character traits, such as carelessness, lack of concentration, and irresponsibility are due to not having learned to work hard, a kind of learning attitude which the school may help to develop. Certain of the traits arise from lack of social intelligence, such as deficiencies in adaptability, courtesy, and loyalty. Some such as absence, lack of ambition, carelessness etc. are due to lack of interest in the work, indicating a positive need for vocational guidance.

Many offices today are rating their employees annually or even quarterly on essential qualities which have a bearing on salary and promotability. I will mention a few: personal appearance, correctness and manner of speech, conversation, punctuality, observance of working hours, steadiness of work, use (or waste) of time, sense of order, quality of work, interest and enthusiasm in work, learning ability, comprehension of verbal and written instructions, acceptance and use of helpful suggestions, attitude toward others, cooperation, consideration for others etc.

Most business teachers have formulated their own list of personal characteristics which they feel should be possessed by each of their students. Naturally, each teacher has a favored method of developing and cultivating these qualities. Many business teachers have decided that they achieve most by the method they use, but we cannot say that any one of the techniques used is the best, for much depends on the type of student and his ultimate business environment.

In conclusion, vocational competency in any particular job should be determined on five bases: personal appearance, potentiality, background and general training, skills and personal characteristics. To give consideration to only one, two, or even four of the five will result in inadequate training for the job. Inadequate training is unfair to both pupils and employers. Therefore, any teacher who professes to train pupils to the point of occupational competency must so develop his courses of study and so teach his pupils that they are able to feel confident about their standing in each of the five areas of competence.

PART III

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
AND ADMINISTRATORS IN COMMERCIAL
EDUCATION

Introduction

Part II demonstrated an apparent lack of agreement regarding the standards for success both in actual office work and in institutions training for office work. Training institutions do not agree entirely with business, and both groups are not entirely consistent within their own ranks. Even in traditional skills such as shorthand and typewriting, there is not complete agreement regarding standards. This arises mainly from the fact that there are so many peripheral skills and personal traits that contribute to the success of a good secretary. In hiring people, businessmen are not concerned with high skill standards alone; they are concerned also with the personal traits of the individual.

Not many business teachers discuss standards of student achievement and read the literature about them, and even fewer apply them in the classroom. In many business schools in Lebanon the training of students is confined exclusively to the development of skills. Further, students who go to these schools do not study all the skills - shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, filing, and office-machine operation. They may study typewriting, or shorthand and typewriting, or bookkeeping. It is hoped that the general principles recommended herein will be carefully studied and applied. Once these principles are recognized, each business school and

teacher can be responsible for establishing reasonable and attainable goals for his students.

It has been found that there are more opportunities for commercial graduates to find initial employment in clerical work (74%) than in any other area of business.¹ Clerical work in business today commands a salary comparable to other areas of initial employment. The clerical worker holds a responsible position in the office. In most of the companies which were visited, many key positions are now held by persons who started as clerks or secretaries. Had these people lacked intelligence, adaptability, and training, they would not have reached the top of the ladder. It is of paramount importance that our business graduates be prepared to take a firm grasp on the first step of the ladder, and that they should have the potentialities to climb the rest of the steps as opportunities are presented.

Although the findings of this study are not conclusive in every respect, the following three conclusions appear to be justified:

- 1) Since many business firms make use of pre-employment tests and interviews, there should be a deliberate effort to familiarize the student with the kinds of problems involved in taking performance tests.

1. See 'interview' on page 74.

- 2) The findings of this study justify instruction in essential office skills, such as shorthand, typewriting, accounting, filing and office-machine operation.
- 3) Since most of the office managers listed desirable personal traits as the chief requirement for office employment, and helped to identify important personal traits, a deliberate effort should be made to help students acquire these traits.

The present low percentage (15%) of persons discharged after the probation period is due primarily to the fact that businessmen are in need of workers, and the supply is very scarce. In normal times with the present average quality of training, this percentage would be much higher. Other reasons given for many discharges were lack of occupational skill, uncooperativeness and lack of adaptability.

CHAPTER I

Providing the Required Skills and Personal Characteristics

Clerical workers are expected to perform many duties varying from the very simple to the highly complex. The following skills and understandings are fundamental to practically all clerical jobs: Typewriting, bookkeeping or recordkeeping, arithmetic, shorthand, use of office machines, and filing.

Businessmen want workers who are intelligent and alert. They want workers who can use good English, Arabic, and often other languages. They want workers who have had training in the knowledges and skills that are basic to all clerical jobs. In general, they want employees who can produce a perfect piece of work that they can be proud of.

Personality development and an understanding of human relations is a phase of clerical training that should not be neglected. A clerical worker should know the importance of good health, a pleasant disposition, and a neat appearance. He should also know the importance of being able to work cooperatively with others. He should have a sense of responsibility and take pride in a job well done.

Businessmen are as much concerned about the development of an employable personality as they are about the development of the necessary skills in prospective office employees. Many employers hold the view that to some extent technical skill can be developed on the job, but that character traits and personality have deeper roots in previous experience. A rounded program of business education can supply experiences which help to build desirable personality and character traits, and can therefore make a contribution far more significant than mere training in skills.

It will be remembered that office managers regarded such characteristics as honesty, dependability, adaptability, and punctuality as the personal qualities of greatest importance in a new employee.

An examination of the reasons why people do not succeed on the job shows that undesirable character traits are the principal causes of discharges and deferred promotions. Undesirable traits can be changed. Those in charge of a program of instruction preparing students for clerical work should be as aware of the need for character and personality development as they are of the need to develop efficiency in the performance of standard office tasks.

To many teachers and schools success in the vocation means skill in typing, shorthand, or bookkeeping. It is true

that such skills are important, and success, to a certain extent, depends on them. But ultimately genuine success depends on such intangibles as the way a person shows his loyalty to the firm, takes instructions, meets visitors, gets along with others, keeps affairs confidential, and rises to emergencies. The appraisal of a secretary is never based on his technical skill alone, on his understanding of business procedures alone, or on his personality alone. It is based on all these together. The secretary is paid in proportion to his efficiency as a whole, integrated personality.

Since both skills and desirable personal characteristics are needed by a successful secretary, the writer wishes to give a few suggestions whereby such needs can be satisfied.

Should shorthand be taught as a mere skill, or can it be related to the improvement of personal characteristics at the same time? To the writer, shorthand means more than a skill. It is a course through which a thousand and one things can be taught. Many conceive of a secretary as a person who takes down dictation and then transcribes it. This is true, but a closer look at the process will show that the following skills all play a part:

1. the secretary must know shorthand at the required speed,
2. he must be able to read his notes intelligently,
3. he must be able to transcribe them directly on the typewriter,

4. he must know how to set up the material in a well balanced form,
5. he must know how to spell the words in English and in other languages,
6. he must know how to punctuate,
7. he must know the different forms of business letters, and where to place the address, date, signature, complementary close etc.
8. he must know how many copies to make of each letter, and
9. he must be aware of many smaller but essential features of the job.

From the point of view of personal characteristics:

1. he must know how to keep what he takes as confidential,
2. he must know how to take care of his note book,
3. he must know how to behave when he is taking dictation,
4. he must know how to appear presentable when he is asked to meet the boss or clients,
5. he must know how to ask intelligent questions if dictation is too fast or not clear,
6. he must know how and when to interrupt the dictation,
7. he must know how to take and give instructions,
8. he must know how to be ready and prompt, and
9. he must know how to assume responsibility when asked to do a job.

These are some of the things that the stenographer should know. Many of these things can be learned as part of his shorthand course. The teaching of shorthand is not and should not be confined to the skill proper. It is a learning of skills plus many other habits, traits, and practices.

Shorthand itself is a dry subject. But when coupled with the multitude of practices necessary for office work it becomes interesting and easy. It can be made a fascinating study, especially when it is integrated with other learnings. This will also help the student to learn his shorthand more efficiently, since very little learning, if any, takes place without motivation and interest. In short, the writer wishes to emphasize the point that all of the desired personal traits can and should be taught hand in hand with the teaching of shorthand.

This method does not require much effort and extra time. The only prerequisite is an efficient teacher, a teacher who knows his shorthand theory well, and who is well acquainted with the required personal traits and characteristics. A separate course on good appearance, habits, honesty, punctuality, dependability etc. could be offered in business schools; but the point is that such courses, besides using extra time, are not likely to have as strong an effect on the students as the same materials would have when they are taught as an incidental part of other courses.

A very simple way to introduce a consciousness of desirable personal traits in the shorthand class, and one which the writer has been following for several years, is through the material dictated to the graduating class. Such material can be chosen to include all sorts of advice and information pertaining to the job. This material will inevitably provoke many questions which may profitably be discussed by students and teachers.

The following are some examples of material for dictation which can serve this double purpose - practice in shorthand skills, and emphasis on the personal characteristics of the employee.

The Meaning of Employment
 Advice to Employees
 What is Business Education?
 How to Enjoy Business
 Neatness Pays
 Persistence Leads to Success
 Telephone Courtesies
 What and How to Read
 Regularity, and Essential Trait
 Tact & Courtesy
 Employment Agencies
 Business Attitudes
 The Personal Interview

Posture and Poise
Habits and Mannerisms
Answering and Making Inquiries
Travel and Travel Agencies
The Functions of Letters in Business
Acknowledging Letters
How to Run Your Own Business
Shorthand Short Cuts
The Writing of Business Letters
General Principles of World Trade
The Essentials of Advertising
It's Skill that Counts
Problems Resulting from an Error
Care of the Typewriter
Dictation in School - How does it differ from
Office Dictation?
The Art of Transcription
Carbon Copies
The Office Desk
The Letter of Application

The following two articles are samples of material which can profitably be used in the double-aim approach to dictation:

Telephone Courtesies

There ought to be, and perhaps in time there will be, a recognized code of courtesy by telephone--a code that will be as generally recognized as the common civilities of social life.

It is strange that a man who would not fail to do the courteous thing if a person were calling at his office will utterly fail to manifest the same measure of courtesy in talking with the same person over the telephone. A young woman, at the request of her employer, called up another business house and asked for some information which concerned the regular business relations of the two houses. The man she talked to was the head of a department through which these relations were maintained. The answer she got was so abrupt, incomplete, and unsatisfactory that the young woman's feelings were hurt. When she reported the affair to her employer he instantly reached for the telephone and got the man and said things to him that would probably not tend to promote harmony between the two houses.

It is not improbable that if the tall and handsome young woman had appeared in person at the office or the home of the young man she called up she would have been received with all the courtesy due her. But there seemed to be other standards when meeting her by telephone.

While there are thousands of persons whose manner by telephone is no less courteous than when meeting another face to face, there are other thousands who need to remember that a human being is at the other end.

Advice to Employees

All about us, day in and day out, we are seeing things without observing. We take our work with its tools and routine as a matter of course, although it offers many possibilities for worthwhile suggestions. Too often, when we see some new improvement being made, we wonder why the thought had not occurred to us. We had our eyes open, but we were asleep. We need to wake up. Of course, there are those who miss the really big opportunities right before them, but who jump at the minor improvements and changes which would naturally be taken care of in the course of time.

The important thing to remember is that our firm can always use good suggestions. The best are those which reduce manufacturing or operating costs and those which better our products.

Our prices must be attractive. We must constantly try to reduce costs. Lower prices and better goods pave the way for increased sales, which mean more work for everyone, with continued profits and good wages.

Each worker plays a personal part in determining whether times will be good or bad. Therefore, let us give serious thought to our work today. What unnecessary things are we doing? Can we reduce the cost of anything? What would we want done differently if we ran the business?

Other Suggestions

Personality Development: The clerical training teacher may begin a program of personality improvement through the use of a personality test. It is not within the scope of this study to propose a particular test, but, for the purpose, any good standardized test, or even a carefully planned teacher-made test would serve as a starting point. Almost everyone likes to take a personality test, and this procedure will start the student thinking about his strong and weak qualities. A simple self-rating scale might be used. Such a scale readily provokes discussion on how attitudes and habits may affect working relationships, and how one's appearance and mannerisms may affect others.

Versatility and the Ability to Handle Many Tasks: Clerical workers are a very important element in the machinery of business. They may be called upon to perform tasks ranging from serving as receptionist and messenger to duties involving the handling of large sums of money and making highly confidential reports. A well-prepared clerical worker should be able to handle all of the ordinary office tasks, he should be able and willing, on short notice, to change from one duty to another, and from one supervisor or environment to another.

The teacher can easily prove to the students, through examples, how many top and influential men, in business as well

as other offices, started as office boys or simple secretaries. How such men were always ready and willing to do any kind of job that needed to be done. Such an introduction will show the students of this part of the world, that it is not a disgrace to work and earn their living - unfortunately some still have this mentality. From the practical point of view there are endless opportunities, at the University and outside, for such training. The teacher can send students to the post office for telegrams, to the banks for cashing checks, to the post office to clear out parcels from customs, to travel agencies to buy tickets, to the press for proof reading, and to the different offices in his school for all sort of machine handling and routine work.

Public Relations: The ability to get along with one's fellow workers and the firm's clients is a very important part of any business job. Many problems and difficulties in business, both material and personal, grow out of misinformation or insufficient information. If the worker is able to make other persons understand clearly, and can do this pleasantly, he is a tremendous asset to his firm. Employers expect questions from an alert employee, and are grateful for the effort they imply. A new employee should not be afraid of showing his ignorance - he is ignorant of many things about the business, and everyone in the office knows it. If he fails to ask enough questions during his first apprenticeship, he will most probably bungle something

important before long, and be forced to look for a second apprenticeship elsewhere.

Teachers can help a great deal in this respect. One way is to have 'office practice', where students play roles in the classroom. The instructor, acting as executive, may give an incomplete or unclear instruction. The student is expected to ask appropriate questions until the matter is clear. Then he must communicate it to another student, who in turn reports it back to the instructor. Such devices can be infinitely varied, and the class discussion which they will cause is a valuable experience for each prospective employee.

Personal Development Through Experience: There is no class without recurring opportunities for students to work together. When these contacts are guided with a skillful hand, the student in the clerical practice class obtains practical experience in dealing with other people. Such experience is necessary because much of his later success is determined by his ability to converse and work with others. Many examples could be given, but the writer wishes to cite a few of those which are actually practiced by his students, and which involve cooperative effort. It is important to note that all of the activities mentioned are planned and carried on solely by students.

1. A challenge football match is organized between the first and second year students. The members of each class meet together to elect a captain. Then the two captains get together to decide on the day, hour, and referee. They also agree on the medals and cup to be given to the members of the winning team. Once this is done a committee is appointed by each class to collect the money and buy the medals and cup. Then all the members of the two classes are asked to go down to the field to cheer their respective teams.
2. Field trips are another example where students get to work and organize together. They hire the bus, collect money, and provide the sandwiches. Such trips need cooperative planning.
3. Students are urged to join the Commerce Society and take active part in it. There is always a Brief Business Program representative on the committee. All clerical and secretarial jobs of the Society are done by students.
4. A photography club within the Brief Business Program Department has been established, and those in it are responsible for taking pictures on various occasions. Students cooperate in the developing and printing.

5. Each year second year students form a "typing pool" where they all cooperate in getting work from students and other sources. This gives them the opportunity to contact people as well as to work together. This is strongly motivated because the students earn money for these jobs.
6. Students who know the town well have collected advertisements for the different programs and papers, charging a 10% fee.

Contacts outside the classroom are likely to be too limited in number. The writer has been following the practice of taking students to visit agents of business office machines. Such field trips serve a double purpose - in the first place the students receive instruction from the agents about the use of these machines, and in the second place they get a chance to see how clerks and secretaries behave in an office.

Another arrangement has been to send the graduating class students to various offices in the town. The writer is in constant touch with the various companies and business houses which usually employ the graduates of the Brief Business Program. Whenever these places are in need of new employees, an arrangement is made through the personnel manager to send the students for a training period. Such a period varies between 2 months and 3 weeks, depending on when vacancies are

available. The students who go for such training are excused from attending certain classes. This depends on the nature of work and achievement of the student. In most cases no salary is paid to the students, but they are often assured that they may have a job in the office to which they go for training.

Whenever this arrangement was not possible jobs were available from the various University offices, and the students volunteered to do them. This work varied from typing addresses on envelopes, typing drafts for "Outlook" articles, cutting stencils for the Registrar's Office, typing cards, helping in filing various materials, running stencils on the mimeographing machines, etc. This training has proved to be very helpful to the students. All those who helped in offices felt that class work and office work were very different, and realized how inexperienced they were.

While visiting commercial schools in the United States the writer was struck by the method used in one Los Angeles school: There are two classes in this business school. It is similar in its program to the Brief Business Program of the American University of Beirut. But the interesting thing about it is that students, during the two years, get a considerable amount of experience in actual office work. It is run as follows:

First Year

Students study in the morning only. They take the various subjects and skills required. In the afternoon they actually run the school. They act as secretaries, bookkeepers, cashiers, telephone operators, registrar, etc. Naturally, this is done under the skillful supervision of the teachers and the administration.

Second Year

Each morning students are sent to various business houses in the vicinity. Where possible, each student is sent to a job in which he is especially interested. Such students are paid, but not according to the regular scale of employment. In the afternoon they come to school for the regular course work.

There is no need to dwell on the obvious advantages of such an arrangement. The writer has been approaching various firms here, and it is hoped that very shortly a similar arrangement may be possible in Beirut.

Accuracy: Early in the clerical program, students need to learn the importance of accuracy in all operations. Clerical workers must learn that either the finished product is useable or it is not useable. Students and teachers alike must realize that penalizing a job for errors so that the

students get a grade of 80 or 70 does not render the work useable, and in reality it is worthless in the business office. Business has one standard - namely, useable, or mailable material.

The role of the teacher is to emphasize the meaning of accuracy, its seriousness, its importance, and its consequences. Mistakes are usually made in arithmetic - division, multiplication, subtraction and addition. They are also made in bookkeeping when copying or transferring figures. Typing is also a fertile ground for mistakes. Students may not realize the seriousness of a misplaced figure or decimal point, or of a wrongly typewritten word. But when the teacher calls their attention to it, and the consequences of what they call silly or minor mistakes, they will then realize the gravity of the situation. A mistake may mean a loss of hundreds of thousands of pounds. It is the teacher's responsibility to stress accuracy and train students to acquire that habit. **Special** accuracy drills in figures, in copying, and in typing, should be introduced even at the expense of speed, until the students develop the habit of being consistently accurate.

CHAPTER II

Characteristics of Business Teachers

Just as business must keep abreast by meeting change with change, so must the business education program that expects to serve the needs of business. Business educators are the people chiefly responsible for the success of their students. What special characteristics, therefore, should business educators have?

1. Business Experience: The effective business educator has supplemented his academic knowledge with as much outside business experience as possible. Many years of teaching has led the writer to the conclusion that it would be difficult to overestimate the value of actual business office experience for the business teacher who wishes to teach effectively. Only through direct experience can the business teacher guard against emphasizing the unimportant at the expense of the important, and make the content of business education courses convincing and graphic by means of first-hand examples. This experience becomes more and more important when the available textbooks are either American or British. Such books use examples of business practice in America and Europe. It is true that

the profit motive is the same everywhere, but there are many business organizations in the western countries which are not found in Lebanon. Since we are training our students for clerical work which should meet the needs of local businessmen, it is clear that American or European texts must be richly supplemented by the teacher's local business experience.

2. Professional Development: The effective business educator makes extensive use of the literature available in the field. While it is true that such literature is not published in and for Lebanon, the various professional magazines and periodicals, American and otherwise, can be a great help to business teachers here. This does not mean merely subscribing to the publications. It means a painstaking study of the literature. It means actually trying out new methods which are suggested, and which seem appropriate to the needs of our business. The professional publications are of a very practical nature. They serve to keep teachers abreast of changes which affect the business world everywhere.

3. Affiliation with Outside Groups: Effective teaching in business education also depends on the teacher's willingness to emerge from his academic shell in order to affiliate with numerous business and civic groups. The

obvious value here is a practical one, a matter of contacts. The more people we know who are closely connected with business or who actually employ those trained in business-course skills, the more perceptive we become.

These contacts are the pipeline through which we receive valuable information on changes in current practices and needs in local business offices. The information we get enables us to counsel our students and guide them into specific areas of study - even on occasion, into specific places of employment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the first part of this thesis an attempt was made to justify the demand for commercial training in Lebanon. The survey of the Lebanese economy showed that the sectors which contribute most to the national income are those which require skilled office workers.

The second part of the study, using interview and questionnaire techniques, identified the various competencies which are required by business men in Lebanon today. These may be summarized as follows:

1. Appearance
2. Potentiality
3. Background and General Training
4. Skills
5. Personal Characteristics.

The last part of the study dealt mainly with suggestions to help schools, teachers, and administrators to provide the required competencies as efficiently as possible. Particular attention was paid to the development of personal characteristics, since it was established that these are of great importance to business men. Business schools in Lebanon today generally neglect the development of these characteristics entirely, preferring to concentrate on pure skills. This study will, it is hoped, show that a concern with the personal characteristics of office personnel is far more likely to contribute to effective commercial education in Lebanon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adler, John, The Fiscal and Monetary Implementation of the Development Program; Yale Institute of International Studies, Frederick S. Dunn, Director, New Haven Connecticut, March 31, 1949.
- Allen, Frederick, Business Employments; Ginn and Company, New York, 1916.
- Badr, Albert, Income Arising from Trade Sector; Economic Research Institute, American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1950 (Script)
- Beard, Miriam, A History of the Business Man; New York, Macmillan Co. 1938
- Bossard, James & J.F. Dewhurst, University Education for Business; Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931.
- Drake, Frances, Manual of Employment Interviewing; American Management Association, New York, 1953.
- Faunce, F.A. & F.G. Nicholas, Secretarial Efficiency; The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1949.
- Gregg, John Robert, Applied Secretarial Practice; The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1949.
- _____, The Private Secretary; The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1948.
- Guillaume, Alfred, Islam; Edinburgh, R. & R. Clark Ltd., 1954.
- Haynes, Benjamin, Tests and Measurements in Business Education; Cincinnati, South Western Publishing Company, 1940.
- Huber, Monroe, Need for Multiplicity of Skills; The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1941.
- Hutchinson, Lois Irene, Standard Handbook for Secretaries; McGraw-Hill Book Co. Inc., New York, 1947.
- James, Edmund, The Education of Business Men; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1936.

- Kirk, John, George Mumford and Mark Quay, General Clerical Procedures; Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1955
- Lewis, Bernard, The Arabs in History; N.Y. Hutchinson, (Hutchinson's University Library. General History), 1950.
- Matthews, Roderic D. and Matta Akrawi, Education in Arab Countries of the Near East; American Council on Education, George Banta Publishing Co., Menasha Wisconsin, 1949.
- McAllister, Quentin, Business Executives and the Humanities; Chapel Hill, 1951.
- McNair, Malcolm, The Case Method of the Harvard Business School; McGraw-Hill, New York, 1954.
- Nurkse, Ragnar, Problems of Capital Formation in Under Developed Countries; Oxford, Blackwell, 1953.
- Rice, Louis, Alfred Boyd and Blair Mayne, Instruction Manual - Business Mathematics for Colleges; South Western Publishing Company, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1954.
- Royal Institute of International Affairs, The Middle East; London, 1950.
- Salem, Khalil, Foreign Exchange Practices in the Economy of Lebanon; American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1955. (Script)
- Sayigh, Yusuf, Economic Development of Lebanon, its prospects and Problems; Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 1955.
- Shepherd, Hilton, Vermon Musselman and Eugene Hughes, Introduction to Modern Business; Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1956.

Periodicals:

United Business Education Association, Business Education Forum; The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1956. Monthly.

Business Education World; The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1955 - 1956. Monthly.

Today's Secretary; The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1946 - 1957. Monthly.

News & Views; South-Western Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1954-1957. 4 times per year.

A B S T R A C T

The study of "Commercial Education in Lebanon" is divided into three parts. The first part - "The Need for Commercial Training" - is a survey of the Lebanese economic condition and development. It shows how the geographic situation of this country, and its land structure has directed its economy towards trade.

Beirut has come to assume a leading importance in the trade of the Arab East. This is due to its geographic situation, and its being accessible by land, sea, and air as well as the government's policy of establishing a free foreign exchange market and lessening of restrictions on Lebanese foreign trade as well.

The table showing the different sectors that contribute to the national income of the countries lists trade as the most important item. Trade accounts for something around 30% of the national income. This fact has encouraged the influx of foreign capital and business institutions. It has also attracted capital investments. Banks with foreign and local capital have been greatly increased in Lebanon as a result. Thus we see that during the last ten years Lebanon has witnessed a rapid change in its economic, social, and educational fields. Obviously new regulations and laws had

to be stipulated to fit the new developments. Also more personnel and trained people in the different lines of work were required to help in the execution. Businessmen have found themselves too busy to do the routine and bookwork. They have come to realize the advantages of specialization and division of labor, and thus felt the need of more help. The demand for people trained in office and bookwork has increased considerably. And since our commercial schools are limited in number there will always be a shortage of skilled workers.

The Second Part of the study is concentrated on the kind of requirements, and qualifications to be found in those clerks. This was done through the use of interview and questionnaire techniques. The questionnaire was prepared in such a way as to convey the exact need of the different business houses in town. Forty-five various business places were visited and interviewed. A study of this questionnaire and the results of the interview portray that most businessmen put more emphasis on personal characteristics than skills. They have expressed the idea that skills can be acquired while in service, but habits and traits should be the concern of schools and homes. The results of the questionnaire and interviews are as follows:

1. Appearance
2. Background and General Training
3. Potentiality
4. Personal Characteristics
5. Skills.

In the third part an attempt was made to give some practical suggestions to schools, teachers and administrators with regard to the teaching of skills and characteristics. These suggestions are being actually followed and practiced by the writer, and are giving satisfactory results. One of the suggestions is to teach the personal characteristics as an integral part of the teaching of advanced shorthand. The reason for that is because neither shorthand alone, nor personal characteristics, is enough to give the necessary qualifications, and also as separate courses they are not impressive and interesting. By combining the two together, the teacher as well as the students will have more ground for discussion and at the same time the dictation becomes more interesting. Thus the skill will be learned better and the incidental learning of the personal characteristics will also be learned and stressed more. This suggestion requires a careful selection of material which will meet this purpose.

The other suggestion is directed to the teachers of commercial courses. Here three main points are stressed if teachers are to be more effective in their profession.

1. Business Experience: The effective business teacher must supplement his academic knowledge with as much outside business experience as possible.

2. Professional Development: The effective business teacher makes extensive use of the literature available in the field.

3. Affiliation with Outside Groups: The effective business teacher must be willing to emerge from his academic shell in order to affiliate with numerous business and civic groups. The information teachers get from such affiliation enables them to counsel their students and guide them into specific areas of study - even on occasion, into specific places of employment.