A study of the problems involved and the procedures used in teaching Gregg shorthand simplified in the Catholic secondary schools in Massachusetts.

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Thesis

A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED AND THE
PROCEDURES USED IN TEACHING GREGG SHORTHAND SIMPLIFIED
IN THE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Submitted by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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1956
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere gratitude is expressed to Professor Lester I. Sluder, School of Education, Boston University, for his helpful suggestions and guidance, and to Sister Superior M. Paschal, S.S.N.D., for her generous permissions and interest in the preparation of this thesis.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem.

The major problem of this thesis was to study the problems involved and the procedures used in teaching Gregg shorthand and transcription in the Catholic Secondary Schools in Massachusetts.

Analysis of the Problem

The subordinate problems of this study were the following:

1. To ascertain the present procedures and techniques employed in teaching Gregg shorthand and transcription in the Catholic Secondary Schools in Massachusetts

2. To summarize the problems encountered in teaching shorthand and transcription, and to note the remedial measures undertaken for their solution.

3. To make recommendations for the improvement for teaching and learning procedures of shorthand and transcription based upon the data compiled.
Delimitation of the Problem

A study of the problems involved and procedures used in teaching shorthand and transcription in the public secondary schools in Massachusetts was made by Jean Crowley in 1949. This study was based on the anniversary edition of Gregg shorthand. The writer has limited the following study to Catholic secondary schools of Massachusetts which are using Gregg Simplified.

Justification of the Problem

Business teachers have been urged by employers to use every possible teaching device to produce stenographers who are intelligent and skillful in the use of the English language as well as in the separate skills of shorthand and typewriting. Therefore the emphasis on transcription has gained considerable impetus. Numerous articles on transcription including teaching techniques, content, correlation of skills with English standards, et cetera, have appeared in business education periodicals during the past two years. These have indicated growing interest and serious thinking on this subject. That something very definite must be done about the teaching of transcription is asserted by Wallace Bowman:

Much has been done to improve the teaching of beginning shorthand; a great deal has been done to improve the teaching of typewriting; but
little has been done to help us develop good techniques in the teaching of transcription. The subject has been sadly neglected by those people who are responsible for building business curriculums. Then, too, there has been a very vague idea of how transcription skill can best be developed.¹

As the goal of all instruction in shorthand is the mailable transcript, the daily writing and reading in the classroom should be the basis for the work to be done in transcription. Many teachers feel that failures in transcription do not come from inability to learn shorthand; they believe that these failures usually stem from a lack of knowledge of correct usage in English or from an inability to spell correctly. In harmony with this thinking, Wanous² presented controversial issues for solution in the teaching of transcription. He presents two points of view on the following questions: should transcription be considered a completion course after a mastery of the skills, or is it to be considered a separate skill parallel to shorthand and typewriting instructions?

Wanous also discussed the handling of English weaknesses in transcription, the nature of the mailable letter,


Undoubtedly there are in the teaching of transcription other important issues. Testing, grading, guidance, and speed and accuracy building problems are numerous and are by no means solved to the complete satisfaction of all teachers. Here, however, one is handicapped in clarifying issues as the convictions teachers are known to have regarding these problems have not often been put into print. When ideologies have had time to crystallize, a more extensive survey of transcription issues will be possible.3

Through a study of all compiled data about classroom procedures in teaching shorthand and the problems that business teachers encounter, the writer aims to establish ways and means by which the preparatory training of transcription students may consist of the skills emphasized by Mary Connelly.4

Transcription is the weaving together of many skills and habits and knowledges: writing shorthand . . . typing perfectly . . . using correct English, punctuation, and capitalization . . . understanding the significance of the material dictated . . . knowing to proofread the transcript before removing it from the typewriter, and knowing how to proofread . . . handling carbon paper and carbon copies efficiently . . . using reference books intelligently and many other techniques all of which must be exercised almost simultaneously. Students should be trained for transcription from the very first lessons in shorthand.

3Ibid., p. 322.

Organization of Chapters

In carrying out this study and reporting the findings, the following chapters were developed:

Chapter I contains an introduction to the study including the statement and the nature of the problem. Chapter II serves as a review of the related literature which formed the background for this study. Chapter III presents the procedure used in carrying out this study. Chapter IV presents the information and tables compiled from the data sheets and check lists. Based upon the findings of the study, recommendations for improving the procedures used in teaching shorthand and transcription in the Catholic Secondary Schools in Massachusetts according to Gregg Simplified were made in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II:
RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, certain representative studies of problems will be reviewed; then objectives, procedures, and standards taken from periodicals, textbooks, and other professional literature will be summarized.

Most shorthand teachers, at one time or another, suffer from a feeling of defeat and frustration. In working with the heterogeneous group which any normal shorthand class represents, the teacher must do her utmost to work harmoniously, and to instill good work habits that will lead to success in shorthand. To develop these correct habits, Sister Irene de Lourdes, C.S.J., offers these suggestions:

Let us not make the mistake of leading pupils to believe that shorthand requires but little work. While we do not want to discourage them by stressing the difficulties of shorthand, neither do we want to make little of the time and effort required for success. Students must be taught that shorthand is a challenge to one's mentality, and as such should be faced with determination and a willingness to give time and energy. Our young people are not quite the "softies" that some educators would make of them. They are capable of expending great effort for a desired end, and will do so when inspired and led by a teacher who respects her students' potentialities, and teaches accordingly.

From the first day in the shorthand class, students must be made to realize that they have chosen a subject that cannot be crammed. Each day's work counts, and must be done thoroughly and intelligently. After
all, no artist would appear before his audience to perform without having previously spent hours each day practicing. So it is with the skill of shorthand--plenty of practice goes into the making of a good stenographer. Though there will be some days when students will not do their best work, in general, they will work in proportion to what is demanded of them.²

To get and hold a stenographic job, there just isn't any substitute for shorthand skill. If the skill isn't there to begin with, the ambitious worker doesn't get a chance to show his alert mind, sterling character, and admirable personality traits. That these skills must be brought to the fore, is stressed by Byrne⁶ in her study.

In order to get that very desirable high salary, the pupil must spend a great deal of time in the learning process. Mastery of the shorthand theory does not guarantee necessarily ultimate success in the transcription of notes. Without the self-confidence that mastery of the system brings, no one ever becomes a successful stenographer. The use of written English and the use of the typewriter must be mastered, also, in order to become competent. A fast stenographer who cannot spell or punctuate correctly is not worth much; on the other hand, a slow but accurate stenographer is a handicap in a very busy office.

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Lacking valid and reliable data from business offices, teachers must resort to guesswork in deciding what to teach and how to measure the occupational competence of their trainees. To assist them in making their guesswork as nearly correct as possible, they rely on their own work experience and that of their friends, on conferences with businessmen and their office employees, and on the research studies that have been conducted in an effort to obtain information on transcription. In her research, Ruth I. Anderson gives much pertinent information to teachers who are looking for ways and means to correct the errors which, in her findings, are relevant to our field.

1. There was general agreement in the findings among the various investigators that the frequency of errors in transcription occurs in the following order: errors in punctuation, typing, grammar, spelling, capitalization, substitution of words, omission of words, arrangement of letters and mechanical details, and syllabication.

2. The investigators of the various studies generally agreed that the cause of errors in transcription was the inability of the pupils to apply punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and English usage to a practical situation in transcription.

3. The typing errors found in the transcripts included strikeovers, poor erasing, typing one word as two, adjacent letter errors, anticipation of the next letter and the omission of letters.

4. The most common punctuation errors reported were the omission of commas, the omission
of apostrophes, incorrect use of the hyphen, incorrect compounding and division of words, and unnecessary punctuation.

5. The most frequent capitalization error was the capitalization of common nouns.

6. Frequently made errors in English usage included incomplete sentences, and transcribing of meaningless sentences, and sentences in which there was a complete lack of agreement between the subject and the verb.

7. Errors in shorthand included errors in wordsigns; incorrect reading of correctly written shorthand notes; incorrect word endings and added shorthand outlines.

In 1949, Crowley made a study of shorthand-transcription teaching methods and materials by sending inquiries to 245 public secondary schools in Massachusetts. The study showed that in 175 responding schools in Massachusetts, although many teachers encouraged students to transfer from shorthand to other courses, and although one third failed the slower students, progressive teachers were using many techniques for solving the various problems in shorthand-transcription. Crowley's recommendations may be summarized as follows:

More effective guidance should be given students selecting shorthand-transcription courses.

Additional time is needed for the teaching of transcription.

More definite prerequisites should be established for shorthand-transcription courses.

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Business English should be required of students before they begin transcription, including grammar review, letter writing, spelling and business vocabulary, punctuation, and proofreading.\(^8\)

The problem in improving transcripts through increasing the ability of the pupils to conform to the conventions of written English is a major problem discussed by Eleanor Skimin.\(^9\)

Improvement will not come by following a program which merely gives opportunities to transcribe without providing teaching to bring about improvement in general abilities. The substantial ability to transcribe cannot be attained through any plan of soft pedagogy which seems to set up a functioning course without the proper foundation work laid in a conditioning course.

When teachers of transcription fully comprehend the philosophy of developing good transcribers, and when leaders in the work stop quibbling about the place where this work should be started and apply good common sense, then, and then only, will much improvement be seen in this work.

Transcription is a thought process; it demands intelligence to assimilate it. Because the high demand for stenographers is going to continue for some time, it is our business to learn how to employ techniques so that our students, with the abilities they have, can meet the goal of transcripts of the quality produced in the quantity needed by employers.

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\(^8\) Crowley, Jean Frances, *A Study of the Problems and Their Solution in Teaching Transcription in Massachusetts*, Master’s Thesis, Boston University, 1949, p. 32.

CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES

In conducting the study of the problems involved and the procedures used in teaching Gregg shorthand and transcription in the Catholic secondary schools of Massachusetts, the following procedures were used:

1. Research reports were studied to obtain background information for building the instrument.

2. A list of subordinate problems were then formulated to obtain a clear picture of the problem.

3. A check list was then prepared for the purpose of obtaining the data from the shorthand-transcription teachers in the participating schools. This tentative check list was presented to the Seminar for comments and criticism. Revisions were made in line with the suggestions.

4. A letter of transmittal explaining the purpose and importance of the study was prepared.

5. Permission to contact the schools was obtained from the School Superintendents of the four Dioceses of Massachusetts. Mailing lists were also procured.

6. One hundred sixty-seven check lists and letters of transmittal were sent to the shorthand-transcription teachers in the Catholic secondary schools in Massachusetts to obtain information for this study.

7. Follow-up reminders were sent to the schools not replying.

8. Data from the questionnaires returned from 105 teachers were tabulated and analyzed.
9. A summary and conclusions were formulated based on the findings of the study.

Some of the steps in conducting this study are explained more fully in the following paragraphs.

As Massachusetts is divided into four dioceses, permission to contact the shorthand teachers in their secondary schools was obtained from the following Diocesan School Superintendents: Rt. Rev. Timothy F. O'Leary of Boston, Rev. Edward J. Gorman of Fall River, Rt. Rev. Walter G. Connell of Springfield, and Rev. John J. O'Brien of Worcester. (Appendix A, p. 34.)

On October 15, 1955, the letters of transmittal (Appendix B, p. 35.) and the revised questionnaires were sent to 167 shorthand teachers representing 104 Catholic secondary schools in Massachusetts to obtain information for the study. The questionnaire consisted of a check list containing nine questions to be checked by the business department head. (Appendix D, p. 37.) It concerned information about enrollment and general data, and a four-page check list containing sixteen questions to be answered by each shorthand teacher in the school. (Appendix E, p. 38.) The individual teacher's questionnaire was divided into two parts: Part I requested information as to the number of students taught, number of classes taught, semesters devoted to the study of shorthand, and the courses taken for professional improvement. In Part II of the individual teacher's questionnaire, the following questions were asked concerning problems met in
teaching shorthand transcription:

1. Check your chief student problems in teaching shorthand-transcription.

2. In your judgment, what are the greatest difficulties in teaching transcription?

3. How do you cope with students of low mental ability?

4. What methods do you use as motivating influences?

5. How do you take care of individual differences?

6. Give the techniques you use for increasing writing speed in shorthand.

7. Give techniques for increasing reading speed of shorthand notes.

8. What teaching techniques do you use with students who have difficulty reading their own notes?

9. What techniques do you use in teaching brief forms?

10. What do you do with students who are poor in spelling?

11. What do you do with students who have difficulty with syllabication?

12. What do you do with students who have difficulty with punctuation?

13. What do you do with students who have trouble identifying paragraphs?

14. What techniques do you use to develop proofreading?

15. What do you consider a passable rate of transcription on new material of average difficulty after one year's work in a transcription class?

16. Do your secretarial students do work for the members of the staff?
All of these questions could be answered by checking one of several possible responses. At the end of each question, space was provided for any additional techniques which the teacher might like to suggest. The questionnaire followed the pattern of that used by Crowley.¹⁰

By November 15, 1955, ninety-four answers had been received. A follow-up card was sent as a reminder to those who had not yet replied. (Appendix C, p. 36.)

Eleven additional questionnaires were received after the follow-up, making a total of 105, or a return of 62 per cent. The data obtained from the questionnaires will be tabulated and summarized in the next chapter. A list of the schools which replied to the questionnaire is given in Appendix F, p. 39.

¹⁰Crowley, Jean Frances, op. cit., Appendix E, p. 38.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Of the 167 shorthand teachers to whom questionnaires were sent 105, or 62 per cent, replied. These teachers represented 77 Catholic secondary schools in Massachusetts. From the responses received from 105 teachers, the following data were compiled.

TABLE I

AVERAGE PER CENT OF BUSINESS ENROLLMENT COMPARED TO TOTAL ENROLLMENT OF THE SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total School Enrollment</th>
<th>Business Enrollment</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Average % of Business Enrollment Compared to Total School Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-499</td>
<td>10-99</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999</td>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-1499</td>
<td>200-299</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-1999</td>
<td>300-399</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I shows the average business enrollment compared to the total enrollment in the school. The total enrollment ranged from 35 to 1722 students in the 73 schools replying. The business enrollment on the average increased with the size of the school. As the school enrollment increased, the average percentage of business students increased from 29 per cent to 62 per cent.
## TABLE II

### AVERAGE PER CENT OF BUSINESS ENROLLMENT COMPARED TO TOTAL ENROLLMENT AND AVERAGE PER CENT OF SHORTHAND I AND SHORTHAND II STUDENTS COMPARED TO BUSINESS ENROLLMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Enrollment</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Average % of Business Enrollment Compared to Total School Enrollment</th>
<th>Average % of Shorthand I Students Compared to Business Enrollment</th>
<th>Average % of Shorthand II Students Compared to Business Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-99</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-299</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-399</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II shows the average business enrollment compared to the total enrollment in the school, and the number of students in shorthand I and shorthand II as compared to the business enrollment. The business enrollment ranged from 10 to 378 students in the 73 schools replying. The business enrollment on the average increased with the size of the school. As the business enrollment increased, the average percentage of shorthand I students decreased from 45 per cent to 40 per cent, and the average percentage of shorthand II students decreased from 38 per cent to 27 per cent. The decrease in enrollment in both of these courses may be caused by inadequate guidance and lack of some type of prognosis.
TABLE III

PREDICTIVE FACTORS USED BY SCHOOLS IN SELECTING SHORTHAND-TRANSCRIPTION STUDENTS AND PER CENT OF FAILURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Predictive Factors</th>
<th>Average % of Failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Students' Average Marks and I.Q.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>English Grades</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>No standard required</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III shows the predictive factors used in selecting students for shorthand-transcription classes. The majority of the schools used some kind of selectivity in determining students for shorthand and have signified that these factors have been fairly satisfactory. In the 32 schools using the students' average marks and I.Q.'s as predictive factors, a rate of 10 per cent failure was shown; in the 16 schools using the students' English grades, a rate of 5 per cent failure was shown. One school each used the Turse Aptitude Test, the California Occupational Test--Advanced A, the shorthand predictive test from the Psychological Corporation, New York, and foreign language marks as their selective factors. Nineteen schools which have no selective standards showed a failure of 12 per cent.

The above data indicate that there is a definite need for better prognostic measures in the field of shorthand-transcription. Because of the small number
of schools reporting, no valid conclusions can be drawn concerning the predictive value of the prognostic factors discussed in the foregoing paragraph.

Education of Shorthand Teachers

Of 79 teachers who reported their educational background, 68 had devoted two semesters to the study of shorthand, four teachers had spent one semester, two teachers had spent three semesters, two teachers had spent four semesters, one teacher had spent five semesters, and two teachers had spent six semesters in studying shorthand.

Out of approximately 101 replies, 57 teachers had taken courses in methods of teaching shorthand, and 44 teachers had taken courses in methods of teaching transcription.

Division of Classes and Teaching Load

Eighty teachers answered that they taught an average class of 30 students in shorthand I, 76 teachers taught an average class of 27 students in shorthand II, and 25 teachers taught an average class of 25 students in secretarial practice.

Shorthand I was taught by 91 teachers who answered the questionnaire, shorthand II by 85 teachers, and secretarial practice by 61 teachers.
With the exception of two of the 77 schools contacted, all schools taught the Gregg Simplified System of Shorthand. The other two schools taught the Gregg Anniversary Method.

Problems Concerning the Teaching of Shorthand-Transcription

According to 54 teachers, the greatest problem in teaching shorthand-transcription was that the students lack a knowledge of English grammar. Forty-six teachers indicated that the students cannot spell their shorthand notes accurately, and 39 teachers stated that the transcription time was too limited. Other problems presented by teachers were: lack of perseverance in the students, bad erasures, inability to pick up grammatical errors in dictation.

In order to cope with students of low mental ability, 48 teachers grouped their classes so that the slower students might receive extra help, 31 teachers advised their slower students to change to another course, and seven teachers had their students repeat the course. Other replies to the problem of what to do with the low-ability students were: to review lessons through the use of a tape recorder, to advise students to practice home dictation, and to send them to summer school.

As motivating influences, 79 teachers stressed job standards, 75 teachers used the bulletin board to display successful and improved students' work, 72 teachers used charts to show students' progress, and 38 teachers
entered their students in both local or national competitive fields. Other teachers used the Gregg tests and Gregg dictation records, others invited businessmen to lecture to their students stressing job requirements, and other teachers encouraged their students to devote extra time in school where extra drill is provided under supervision.

To take care of individual differences, 78 teachers met this problem through dictation procedures, 46 teachers provided adequate remedial work, 44 teachers gave extra credit for extra work, and 29 teachers divided their classes into groups according to progress. The tape recorder and plenty of blackboard work were suggested by other teachers to meet this problem.

Techniques for Teaching Shorthand

To increase writing speed in shorthand, 80 teachers recommended frequent preview of difficult material, 72 teachers had their students copy from shorthand plates, 71 teachers had their students practice easy or familiar material, 59 teachers had their students set a goal in speed and attempt to reach it, and 58 teachers used the pyramid plan for building speed. Other techniques recommended were: 5 teachers recommended having the students do hand drills in the air, 5 teachers recommended having the students write shorthand notes of what others are reading from the previous night's lesson,
10 teachers recommended beginning timed dictation as soon as possible, and 5 teachers recommended tracing from shorthand plates 20 words per minute faster than the material is to be dictated.

The reading speed of shorthand notes was increased by 85 teachers by having their students spell the shorthand words they cannot read, by 79 teachers by having their students read extensively from shorthand plates, by 63 teachers by previewing difficult words in the material before reading, and by 44 teachers by having their students read familiar material very frequently.

Other methods recommended for increasing reading speed were: having timed reading even for beginners, building confidence in the students by having them read their own notes, reviewing prefixes frequently, giving individual training, dictating short new paragraphs.

To assist students who have difficulty reading their own notes, 86 teachers stressed proportion of shorthand outlines, 75 teachers had the students copy from shorthand plates, and 42 teachers gave penmanship drills. Other techniques recommended were: blackboard drilling, constant reviewing, reading other students' notes, writing shorthand letters in longhand, reading, sounding, and supplying the vowels under the assumption that "seeing" often helps. All teachers agreed that regular reading from the students' own notes, in class and out, was of the greatest benefit.
In the teaching of brief forms, 80 teachers gave daily review, 35 teachers grouped similar brief forms together, and 36 teachers indicated brief forms when dictating to the students. Other techniques recommended were: having a brief-form spelling bee, having students encircle the brief forms in homework, using drill cards, using brief form records, and building phrases of brief forms.

In order to help students who are poor in spelling, 56 teachers had students practice spelling difficult words, 47 teachers penalized heavily for spelling errors, 37 teachers dictated difficult words and had students type them repeatedly, and 29 teachers had students keep notebooks of misspelled words. Other techniques recommended were: stressing the use of the dictionary, and having the students type the troublesome words as a warm up. The using of spelling cards, the stressing of spelling rules, the administering of spelling tests, correcting the misspelled words, and then retesting were other solutions recommended to help students who are poor in spelling.

To take care of the students who have difficulty with syllabication, 69 teachers gave typing drills requiring the division of words, 63 teachers stressed syllabication rules, and 33 teachers assigned dictionary work. Other techniques recommended were: training the students not to syllabicate, using the dictionary, penalizing heavily for incorrect syllabication, and stressing
spelling in syllables. One teacher emphasized the fact that drill work along this line should be covered in the English course.

In teaching students who have difficulty with punctuation, 76 teachers had the students read the material back supplying punctuation, 74 teachers reviewed punctuation rules, 50 teachers had students insert correct punctuation, and 43 teachers gave special remedial work on punctuation. Additional techniques recommended to help students who have difficulty with punctuation were: stressing the use of the marginal reminders, typing sentences containing correctly punctuated material on a particular point, diagramming sentences, using Gregg workbooks, and having students give reasons for punctuation.

In order to help students who have trouble identifying paragraphs, 68 teachers emphasized paragraphs to students in the beginning stages, 62 teachers had students insert paragraphs in practice material. Other teachers stressed opening and closing paragraphs, others let the students arrange the new paragraphs themselves, others changed their tone of dictation for a new subject.

To develop accurate proofreading, 80 teachers read the material and had students check their own work, 59 teachers gave a penalty for not finding the errors, 54 teachers had the students read each other's work, and 22 teachers gave extra points if the students find all their errors. Other techniques used were: proofreading twice,
once for accuracy in spelling, and the second time for meaning, having students practice the same material until correct, mimeographing material (with errors) for testing and giving a double penalty for unchecked errors, posting on the bulletin board actual letters and newspaper clippings with the caption, "Can you spot the error?" One teacher deducted 35 per cent for each transcription error.

Twenty words per minute was suggested as a passable rate of transcription on new material of average difficulty after one year's work in a transcription class by 12 teachers, 25 words per minute by 10 teachers, while 15 words per minute was given by six teachers, and 30 words per minute by four teachers. Ten teachers stated that after one year's work in a transcription class, the students should be able to pass the 60-word dictation test for five minutes, seven teachers stated that the 100-word dictation test should be passed, and five teachers said that the 80-word dictation test should be passed.

Sixty-seven teachers responded that their business students did work for the members of the staff, while 17 teachers answered that their business students did not.

Additional Teaching Techniques

On the last page of the questionnaire, the responding teachers were asked to give from their personal experience in the classroom any technique not mentioned which they
used for the improvement of teaching shorthand-transcription. The following table was compiled from their answers, and listed according to the rank of the item based on the frequency of response.

**TABLE IV**

**TEACHING TECHNIQUES SUGGESTED BY THE RESPONDENTS BUT NOT LISTED ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Suggested Techniques</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Greater stress should be placed on the use of the dictionary.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Formal transcription should be started as early as possible in shorthand I.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Have the students read back their own notes from their home assignments.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Stress sentence structure and punctuation from the very beginning of the students' writing of shorthand.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Have the students repeat the letter or article until he can transcribe it from his own notes.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Give a business English course which stresses intensive work in spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and good usage.</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Have a constant review of basic materials.</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Encourage more participation in contests; it helps penmanship and makes for better reading.</td>
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TABLE IV (cont'd.)

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<thead>
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<th>Rank</th>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Allow more time to teach an unlimited business vocabulary without cutting down on transcription or dictation time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Use the blackboard more frequently.</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Bridge the gap between typing from straight copy and typing from shorthand notes, by using the competent typist test with the transcription of the same test. A few timed writings from straight copy is a positive approach which helps build confidence as well as reduce errors. When the pupils return to the shorthand copy, they have a feeling that they know what is coming.</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Dictate model letters received through the mail and actual letters to be mailed.</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Have more reading.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Use the tape-recording machine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Use mailable transcript test from &quot;The Business Education World.&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
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The three most listed techniques were: greater use of the dictionary, an early beginning of formal transcription in shorthand I, and more stress on basic English.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this study were to investigate the problems involved and the procedures used in teaching shorthand and transcription in the Catholic secondary schools in Massachusetts, and to determine procedures to be used in solving the common problems which shorthand teachers encounter.

Shorthand Teaching Problems and Solutions

Lack of adequate data on the shorthand test indicates that more satisfactory predictive factors should be found to determine the student who is to be allowed to take shorthand. There seemed to be a definite need for a prognostic and an aptitude test which will predict achievement of the students who register for shorthand in the Catholic secondary schools in Massachusetts.

Seventy-two per cent of the respondents indicated that one of their greatest problems in the teaching of transcription was the students' difficulty with spelling; 51 per cent stated that their students were poor in English. More drill work in English, and more frequent use of the dictionary were recommended.
In order to cope with students of low mental ability, 45 per cent of the respondents grouped their classes so that the slower students received extra help; and although 38 per cent of the respondents guided failing students into other courses, over one half of the teachers suggested various procedures for solving problems encountered in teaching shorthand. These will now be discussed.

Over 67 per cent of the teachers used progress charts as motivating influences on the students, and 74 per cent stressed job standards. One successful Brother-teacher in a large boys' high school encouraged his students to devote extra time after school where their work would be done under supervision.

To provide for individual differences, 73 per cent of the teachers used different dictation procedures. Other solutions were: to give credit for extra work and to provide adequate remedial work. The use of the tape recorder was suggested as a possible solution for the individual differences problem.

Over one half of the teachers replying stressed frequent preview of difficult material as a technique for increasing writing speed in shorthand. Sixty-seven per cent had their students copy from shorthand plates. Some teachers stressed the early beginning of timed dictation.
To increase reading speed of shorthand notes, 80 per cent of the teachers replied that they had their students spell the shorthand words they could not read and 72 per cent had their students read extensively from shorthand plates. One teacher proposed frequent review of the disjoined prefixes, i.e., trans, post.

To help students who have difficulty reading their own notes, 81 per cent of the respondents stressed proportion of shorthand outlines, and 68 per cent had their students copy from shorthand plates. One other method suggested was that the student have a piece of paper handy, and write in longhand the letters read in shorthand. Then the pupil should sound the word and supply the vowels.

To teach the brief forms, over 79 per cent of the teachers gave a daily review. One teacher advocated a 100-word brief form test after Book I in which every student must get 100 per cent. Other suggestions were: a brief form spelling bee, and a drill of brief forms in dictated material.

Over one half of the teachers who replied said that they took care of the students who were poor in spelling by having them practice spelling difficult words. The majority of the respondents advocated the use of the dictionary and the use of reference books for spelling.
Methods used for helping students who have difficulty with syllabication were to give typing drills requiring the division of words, and to stress syllabication rules. Following the newer trend, some teachers trained their students not to syllabicate. One teacher penalized heavily for incorrect syllabication.

Some techniques used by teachers whose students have difficulty with punctuation were to review punctuation rules, and to give special remedial work on punctuation. One teacher recommended the diagramming of sentences in order to clarify punctuation.

To help students who have trouble identifying paragraphs, 64 per cent of the teachers emphasized paragraphs to students in the beginning, and had students insert paragraphs in practice material. One teacher stressed the opening and closing paragraphs.

Techniques used to develop proofreading by 79 per cent of the respondents were to read the material and have the students check their own work, and to give a penalty for not finding errors. One teacher gave extra points if the pupils found all the errors.

Twenty per cent of the respondents considered 20 words per minute a passable rate of transcription on new material of average difficulty after one year's work in a transcription class; 19 per cent of the teachers considered 25 words per minute as a passable rate; 19 per cent of the teachers thought that
the students should pass the 60-word dictation test; 12 per cent of the teachers thought that the students should pass the 100-word dictation test; 10 per cent thought that the students should be able to transcribe at the rate of 15 words per minute after a year of shorthand; and 8 per cent thought that the students should pass the 80-word dictation test. The remaining 12 per cent of the respondents considered 10 words per minute, 30 words per minute, and 40 words per minute as passable rates of transcription on new material of average difficulty after one year's work in a transcription class.

Over one half of the respondents answered that their students did work for the members of the school faculty.

Recommendations for Improving Teaching of Shorthand-Transcription in Catholic Secondary Schools in Massachusetts

Based upon the information gained in this study, the following recommendations were made:

Adequate guidance and testing should be provided for students who wish to select the shorthand course.

Formal transcription should begin as early as possible in shorthand I.

Closer coordination of the English and shorthand courses should be encouraged.

Shorthand teachers in the Catholic secondary schools in Massachusetts should follow a more intensive self-improvement
program principally through attending methods courses in shorthand and transcription.

Recommendations for Further Study

A study of the teaching problems in shorthand and the techniques used to solve these problems might be made of Catholic secondary schools all over the United States.

A study of the in-service training of shorthand teachers of Catholic religious orders in the United States might well be made.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Crowley, Jean Frances, A Study of the Problems and Their Solution in Teaching Transcription in Massachusetts, Master's Thesis, Boston University, 1949, p. 32--Appendix A.


September 24, 1955

Rt. Rev. Timothy F. O'Leary
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of Boston
468 Beacon Street
Boston 15, Massachusetts

Dear Monsignor:

I am making a study of the problems involved and the procedures used in teaching shorthand and transcription in the Catholic secondary schools of Massachusetts. This is being done in the interest of discovering better teaching procedures, so that the many problems we meet in our classrooms in this all-important subject may be worked out to the satisfaction of our business teachers.

To assist me in making this study, may I have your permission to send a copy of the enclosed questionnaire to the business teachers in your high schools? It will take but a few minutes of their time to check, and will be of great help to me.

If your permission is granted for my project, may I ask you to send me (or tell me where I can procure) a list of your high schools with the number of business teachers in each of them.

I shall sincerely appreciate any courtesy you may be able to extend me. I shall also be happy to send you a copy of the results if you so desire.

Yours respectfully,

Enclosure
Dear Sister:

I am making a study of the problems involved and the procedures used in teaching shorthand and transcription in the Catholic Secondary Schools in Massachusetts. The results of this study may be helpful to us as business teachers in solving the problems which we encounter in our daily classroom teaching of this all-important subject. This study is being made under the direction of Professor Lester I. Sluder, Professor of Business Education, Boston University.

Will you please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me at your earliest convenience. I have enclosed a stamped self-addressed envelope for your use.

If you prefer not to give your name on the questionnaire, please omit it. All data will be kept confidential, and neither your name nor that of your school will be used in the final summary.

Your cooperation will be sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Sister Mary Jude, S.S.N.D.

Sister Mary Jude, S.S.N.D.
Business Teacher

Enclosures 2
Dear Sister:

Over one month ago, I sent you a shorthand-transcription questionnaire, the information on which I need to complete my survey which I would like to close by December 15. Will you please answer the questionnaire and return it to me? I will greatly appreciate the information you send me.

Yours truly,
SURVEY REPORT OF SHORTHAND-TRANSCRIPTION IN THE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Part I. Business Department Head's Questionnaire

Enrollment and General Data

Name of School

1. What is your total school enrollment for 1955-56?
2. How many students do you have enrolled in the business subjects for 1955-56?
3. How many business teachers in your school teach shorthand or transcription?
4. Please list the number of students who are enrolled in each of the following subjects.
   a. Shorthand I
   b. Shorthand II
   c. Secretarial Practice
5. What is the approximate number of business students who fail each year?
6. What system of shorthand is taught in your school?
   a. Gregg Anniversary
   b. Gregg Simplified
   c. Other:
7. Please indicate the specific test which you use to ascertain the potential ability of prospective students who wish to enroll in shorthand.
   a. Turse Aptitude Test
   b. Detroit Clerical
   c. Grades in English
   d. Foreign language marks
   e. Students' average marks
8. How successful has the use of any of the foregoing factors (as mentioned in No. 7) proved?
   a. Unsatisfactory
   b. Fairly satisfactory
   c. Very satisfactory
9. How many semesters do your students devote to the following?
   a. Shorthand I
   b. Shorthand II
   c. Secretarial Practice
SURVEY REPORT OF SHORTHAND-TRANSCRIPTION IN THE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Part II. Shorthand-Transcription Teacher's Questionnaire

1. How many classes of each of the following do you teach?
   _______ a. Shorthand I
   _______ b. Shorthand II
   _______ c. Secretarial Practice

2. In each of the following classes, how many students do you teach?
   _______ a. Shorthand I
   _______ b. Shorthand II
   _______ c. Secretarial Practice

3. How many semesters did you devote to the study of:
   _______ a. Shorthand I
   _______ b. Shorthand II
   _______ c. Secretarial Practice

4. Check the courses you have taken:
   _______ a. Methods of Improvement in Teaching Shorthand
   _______ b. Methods of Improvement in Teaching Transcription

TEACHING PROBLEMS

1. Check your chief student problems in teaching shorthand-transcription.
   a. Students do not have high enough intelligence.
   b. Students are too immature.
   c. Students are not sincerely interested.
   d. Students will not spend enough time on homework.
   e. Students have a poor English background.
   f. Students have a limited vocabulary.
   g. Students have difficulty reading shorthand.
   h. Students have difficulty writing shorthand.
   i. Students have difficulty spelling.
   j. Students have difficulty typing.
   k. Students have undesirable personal traits.
   l. Students have poor work habits.
   m. Students progress at too many different levels.
   n. Other: __________________________

2. In your judgment, what are the greatest difficulties in teaching transcription?
   a. Students cannot read their notes accurately.
   b. Students cannot punctuate their notes accurately.
   c. Students cannot spell their shorthand notes accurately.
   d. Students are poor in English.
   e. Students cannot type fast enough.
   f. Students cannot type accurately enough.
   g. Typewriters are not available.
   h. Transcription is begun too soon.
   i. Transcription does not begin soon enough.
   j. The time for transcription practice is too limited.
   k. Other: __________________________
3. How do you cope with students of low mental ability?
   a. Have students repeat the course.
   b. Group the class so that slower students receive extra help.
   c. Advise students to change to another course.
   d. Other: ____________________________________________

4. What methods do you use as motivating influences?
   a. Films
   b. Student charts of progress
   c. Exhibits
   d. Demonstrations
   e. Stress job standards
   f. Entrance of students into competitive fields: local or national
   g. Return of former students at assemblies to encourage pupils by their lectures
   h. Bulletin board displays of successful and improved students' work
   i. Other: _______________________________________

5. How do you take care of individual differences?
   a. Give minimum and maximum assignments.
   b. Give alternate assignments after obligatory work is done.
   c. Give extra credit for extra work.
   d. Provide adequate remedial work.
   e. Give individual projects according to ability of student.
   f. Divide class into groups according to progress.
   g. Provide for individual differences through dictation procedures.

6. Give techniques you use for increasing writing speed in shorthand.
   a. Use pyramid plan for building speed.
   b. Give penmanship drills.
   c. Have students copy from shorthand plates.
   d. Frequent preview of difficult material.
   e. Practice easy or familiar material.
   f. Have students set a goal in speed and attempt to reach it.
   g. Other: __________________________________________

7. Give techniques for increasing reading speed of shorthand notes.
   a. Read extensively from shorthand plates.
   b. Preview difficult words in material before reading.
   c. Have students spell shorthand words they can't read.
   d. Review shorthand alphabet and phonetics.
   e. Frequent reading practice of familiar material.
   f. Other: ________________________________________
TEACHING PROBLEMS (continued)

8. What teaching techniques do you use with students who have difficulty reading their own notes?
   a. Give penmanship drills.
   b. Stress proportion of shorthand outlines.
   c. Stress placement of shorthand outlines.
   d. Have students copy from shorthand plates.
   e. Other: ____________________________

9. What techniques do you use in teaching brief forms?
   a. Give daily review.
   b. Group similar brief forms together.
   c. Give special drill based on diagnostic test results.
   d. Indicate brief forms when dictating to students.
   e. Other: ____________________________

10. What do you do with students who are poor in spelling?
    a. Have students practice spelling difficult words.
    b. Dictate difficult words and have students type them repeatedly.
    c. Penalize heavily for spelling errors.
    d. Have students keep notebooks of misspelled words.
    e. Other: ____________________________

11. What do you do with students who have difficulty with syllabication?
    a. Stress syllabication rules.
    b. Assign dictionary work.
    c. Give typing drills requiring division of words.
    d. Other: ____________________________

12. What do you do with students who have difficulty with punctuation?
    a. Review punctuation rules.
    b. Have students insert correct punctuation.
    c. Have students read material back supplying punctuation.
    d. Give special inflection of voice while dictating.
    e. Have special remedial work on punctuation.
    f. Other: ____________________________

13. What do you do with students who have trouble identifying paragraphs?
    a. Emphasize paragraphs to students in the beginning stages.
    b. Have students insert paragraphs in practice material.
    c. Lengthen pause at end of paragraphs when dictating.
    d. Give special inflection of the voice when dictating.
    e. Other: ____________________________

14. What techniques do you use to develop proofreading?
    a. Read material and have students check their own work.
    b. Have students read each other's work.
    c. Give penalty for not finding errors.
    d. Give extra points if pupils find all errors.
    e. Other: ____________________________
TEACHING PROBLEMS (continued)

15. What do you consider a passable rate of transcription on new material of average difficulty after one year's work in a transcription class? __________________________________________

16. Do your secretarial students do work for the members of the staff?
   a. Yes
   b. No

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING SHORTHAND-TRANSCRIPTION

1. From your personal experience in the classroom, will you indicate any technique not mentioned, which you may use for the improvement of teaching shorthand-transcription?
   a. __________________________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________________________
   c. __________________________________________________________

2. Do you wish to receive a copy of the findings of this survey?
   a. Yes
   b. No

If yes, give name and mailing address.

NAME

ADDRESS
APPENDIX F

CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MASSACHUSETTS
WHICH REPLIED TO SHORTHAND-TRANSCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Archdiocese of Boston

<table>
<thead>
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Our Lady of Nazareth:  Wakefield
Holy Cross Academy  Brookline
Mt. St. Joseph Academy  Brighton
Rosary Academy  Watertown
St. Anne Academy  Marlboro
Mission (Boys)  Roxbury

Diocese of Fall River

Sacred Hearts Academy  Fall River
Dominican Academy  Fall River
Holy Family  New Bedford
Jesus-Mary Academy  Fall River
Mt. St. Mary Academy  Fall River
St. Anthony  New Bedford

Diocese of Springfield

Cathedral  Springfield
Holy Name  Chicopee
Precious Blood  Holyoke
Sacred Heart  Holyoke
Sacred Heart  Springfield
St. Mary  Westfield
## Diocese of Worcester

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