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PREVIEW

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A TENTATIVE COURSE OF STUDY FOR FIRST-YEAR TYPEWRITING
IN EL PASO HIGH SCHOOL, EL PASO, TEXAS

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IN EL PASO HIGH SCHOOL, EL PASO, TEXAS

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PREVIEW

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Typewriting instruction in El Paso High School is designed to fit the needs of students for both vocational and personal use. These needs are apparent, as typewriting is a basic subject used by all business employees regardless of the type of work in which they are engaged. It is the most useful of all business subjects as a tool for many personal needs while in school, and in the after school life of an individual.

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to write a course of study for the first year of typewriting in El Paso High School; (2) to give some principles of skill learning as applied to typewriting; (3) to explain the essential skill-building procedures used in typewriting instruction; and (4) to discuss the importance and evaluation of the skill subject.

Importance of the study. The importance of typewriting as a basic business subject is realized by former students of El Paso High School. In a survey of graduates from 1936 to 1946 of the top ten, middle ten, and low ten grades, typewriting was listed as first on the list of commercial subjects that should be emphasized. Of 339 courses names as being ones which helped to prepare students directly or indirectly for

present occupations, Commercial subjects were listed first. The ratings were: Commercial 79; English and Speech 67; Mathematics 54; Science 44; Languages 27; Social Science 24; and Miscellaneous 44. In the same survey, Commercial was listed first as courses the graduates would take for present or other earning capacities if they could return to high school. The listing was as follows: Commercial 102; English and Speech 30; Mathematics 27; Science 22; Languages 36; Social Science 25; and Miscellaneous 53.¹

From an analytical study of the uses of typewriting reported by five hundred men, 82.2 per cent of all cases learned to typewrite in the secondary school. Of this number 78.8 per cent used their skill for vocational uses, 60 per cent for personal uses and 44.2 per cent for both vocational and personal uses.

The vocational usages of typewriting reported were in the following categories: correspondence, miscellaneous forms, accounting records and statements, reports, cards, lists, and general typewriting. The three areas of personal use were in order of frequency: letters, school work, and miscellaneous.²

¹ Thula Hardie, A Survey of the Opinions of Students Graduated from the High Schools of El Paso As Related to Their Secondary Training, 1936-1946, The El Paso Public School and The El Paso Branch of American Association of University Women, (Schools Print Shop, 1949), pp. 42, 67.

² Rose Ann Schneider, "An Analytical Study of the Applied Usages of Typewriting Skill as Reported by Five Hundred Men," National Business Education Journal, 17:43-7.

Typewriting has use in the after school life of an individual, as evidence given in the survey. It is useful in so many occupational areas, as well as personal fields, that as varied a program of instruction as possible should be offered. The author has attempted to prepare a course of study to include a varied program for the instruction of typewriting. Since the one in use is out-dated, she has tried to include material which will meet the needs of the students of El Paso High School.

Procedures used in the study. Realizing the importance of the study, the author did much research before writing this paper. Theses on courses of study from Texas and New Mexico along with high school courses of study were carefully examined. Books, magazine articles, monographs, pamphlets, theses, and dissertations were studied and used in compiling the information given on skill-building techniques and procedures.

Organization of the study. The study is divided into twelve major divisions. They are: Chapter I, The Introduction; Chapter II, Psychology of Skill Building; Chapter III, Skill-Building Procedures; and Chapter IV, Production and Evaluation. The Course of Study is divided into seven divisions. They are: Chapter V, Introduction to the Course of Study; Chapter VI, Basic Techniques; Chapter VII, Sustained Skills; and Chapter VIII, Problem Typing, are the first semester of

the first year of instruction. While Chapter IX, Business Letters; Chapter X, Personal Problems; and Chapter XI, Tabulation and Special Problems, represent the second semester of the instruction period. This material has been prepared to aid the teacher in presenting instruction in an interesting and instructive manner to the students of first-year typewriting in El Paso High School.

PREVIEW

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGY OF SKILL BUILDING

Typewriting is an exacting skill subject; however, the learning process can be made very interesting. An understanding of the learning process aids in the appreciation of the skill-building procedures used in making the subject interesting.

Psychology of skill learning. There are three basic points of view in regard to the learning process. The first point of view is that learning is brought about primarily by drill, the second considers learning as being incidental to application, and the third regards learning as a rhythm made up of a sequence of consolidations and applications.¹

The first idea that any skill is best developed through a sequence of carefully planned drills is objected to because it assumes that learning is produced by sheer routine repetition. This method yields diminishing returns as it goes on; still, drill should be used in formal skill building. The belief that skill should be picked

¹ James L. Mursell, "The Rhythm of Learning," Psychology Applied to Skill Building, B. E. W. Service Booklet No. 23. The Business Education World, pp. 15-6, September 1943.

up incidentally with application has been very popular with many in different phases of education. This method does not lend itself to skill-building subjects, as it tends to put the learner in baffling situations before basic skills are learned.

Mursell² believes that our learning is a prolonged rhythm. He states:

All our psychological findings indicate that the learning process should be regarded as a prolonged rhythm of consolidations and application, with elements alternating and interweaving with each other, and neither at any time being entirely out of the picture.

Creation, not routine, is the secret of learning; so in typewriting, the learner should try to create in himself the action patterns of the expert. He should concentrate upon the pattern of action or behavior, rather than upon the results.³ Learning can be compared to putting together a piece of machinery, not from blueprints, but by trial and error. The pupil tackles one part of the process of learning and another until he fits the whole mechanism of his skills into a finished product.⁴

² Ibid., pp. 16-7.

³ James L. Mursell, "Creation, Not Routine, Is the Secret of Learning," Psychology Applied to Skill Building, B. E. W. Service Booklet No. 23, The Business Education World, pp. 5-8, September 1943.

⁴ Mursell, op. cit., p. 18.

According to Harms,⁵ there are three stages of skill learning in typewriting. The first stage is the imitation and straight-copy period, the second is when ideas of creative design begins to emerge, and the advanced stage is one of form and design.

Tidwell⁶ points out that early psychologists thought of motor learning as the building of habits much as one builds a house, that is, by adding one brick to another. They believed that a wrong response not only destroyed the habit, but built an undesirable habit. The newer conception compares learning to the growth of a plant in which the organism changes as it acquires a skill.

Principles of teaching motor skills. The psychological principles of skill learning should be used in teaching typewriting. Rowe⁷ lists seven important principles, which he interprets in terms of typewriting. They are: (1) conditions for learning should be ideal; (2) the learner, as well as the teacher, must be aware of goals and objectives;

⁵ Harm Harms, Methods in Vocational Business Education, (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1949), p. 330.

⁶ Fred Melvin Tidwell, "The Psychological Aspects and Conflicting Practices in the Methodology of Typewriting," (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Leland Stanford Junior University, Stanford, 1947), p. 82.

⁷ John L. Rowe, "Some Principles of Teaching Motor Skills," Business Teacher, 27:12-5, September-October, 1949.

(3) imitation is a factor in acquiring a motor skill; (4) purposeful repetition is essential to the development of skill; (5) provide for individual differences; (6) provide for effective motivation; and (7) provide for relaxation in skill-building activities.

Since skills are best learned under favorable conditions, practice should be given in the best physical and emotional atmosphere. Teachers can help set the stage for learning by seeing that this atmosphere prevails. Basic skill practice should be given as nearly as possible to the setting in which it is to be used. The room should be well-lighted and ventilated, and it should be equipped with ample supply space and up-to-date machines and equipment. Although it is difficult to eliminate outside causes of tensions; the teacher can often minimize these influences by being cheerful in the classroom. A pleasant voice can do much to bring about close relationship between the teacher and pupil.

A teacher can aid the learner by demonstrating the various techniques used in the learning process. It is easier to learn by seeing how a thing is done than by being told how it is done, for it is difficult to describe physical motions.

A student should understand the purpose and expected outcome of the goal he is to accomplish. He should know what progress he is making, and what standing he has in a

group. The goals and objectives should be set up jointly by the teacher and pupil. They should be within reasonable attainment, so the skill will not be retarded by discouraging progress.

The learner must like his work, so the subject should be made as interesting as possible. Effective motivation devices ward off the monotony of learning. Repetition of material is essential, but it should be discontinued when it ceases to be effective.

Students are willing to devote the necessary time and energy to accomplish a skill if they believe the skill should be learned. There are times, however, especially in the initial training periods, when relaxation is necessary. Tensions often result from eagerness to acquire correct techniques which will give accuracy and speed. These tense, nervous reactions are detrimental to skill-building progress.

Since no learning curve will apply to all, each should be treated as an individual by giving consideration to his particular difficulties. Yet, it is not necessary to treat each student as an individual apart from other individuals, as this is not sensible nor practical. Each student should not be permitted to exaggerate his own uniqueness, for he should strive to work with others as a group.⁸

⁸ Herbert A. Tonne, Principles of Business Education, (Chicago: Gregg Publishing Company, 1947), p. 174.

The teacher has two functions in directing the learning of the student, according to Stuart.⁹ The "knowledge-learning" function is making the student aware of what the learner needs to know. This is done by demonstration by the teacher and follow-up by the student during the keyboard learning period. The "skill-acquiring" practice provides the student with automatized-letter sequence and word patterns, and from these two stages he passes into advanced skills.

According to Fries,¹⁰ if there is to be effective teaching of typewriting, the teacher should understand the psychological principles which must be applied to the skill. He has this to say about laws of learning:

The law of exercise and the law of effect are examples: the more often a person does a thing, the more readily he does it in the future; and a person tends to do again the thing which gives him satisfaction. These two principles are interdependent, and it is evident from the law of exercise that the more a pupil practices an act, the more readily he does it in the future; while the law of effect clearly shows us that he will be more willing to practice if the practice gives him satisfaction. This suggests the problems of motivation, of exterior factors affecting the learning situation, and of teacher personality. Likewise, an understanding of the learning of skills as a whole, of the factors that should govern practice

⁹ Esta Ross Stuart, "Basic Principles Upon Which Correct Typewriting Teaching Techniques Are Built," The National Business Education Quarterly, 8:14, March 1940.

¹⁰ Albert C. Fries, "Developing Speed and Accuracy in Typewriting," Improved Methods of Teaching the Business Subjects, (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1945), p. 35.