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## A Study to Determine why Cache County, Utah, High School Students do or do not Enroll in Second-Year Shorthand

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHY CACHE COUNTY, UTAH,  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DO OR DO NOT ENROLL IN  
SECOND-YEAR SHORTHAND

by

Rebecca B. Boswell

A report submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Business Education

Plan B

Approved:

Utah State University  
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1976

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Rebecca B. Boswell

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Wanous, the number of students enrolled in shorthand has increased steadily since 1926. However, Wanous states that the number of students enrolling in third and fourth semesters of shorthand is considerably smaller than the number of students enrolled in the first-year shorthand courses.<sup>1</sup>

Anderson's study in which the transcription of first-year shorthand students has been analyzed shows that students can learn shorthand outlines during the first year of shorthand. However, there is not enough time to acquire adequate skill in the taking of dictation or transcribing dictation to enable the students to obtain a stenographic position. In general, at the end of the one year of shorthand, research shows that not more than 11 to 20 percent of the students can transcribe mailable copy at 60 words per minute. Also from this research, Anderson indicates that students need to take more than one year of shorthand to obtain a stenographic position.<sup>2</sup> Why then do some students not enroll in the second year of shorthand?

Hagblade reports that most experienced shorthand teachers would have little difficulty compiling a list of factors they believe have an important influence upon the shorthand achievement and success of their students.

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<sup>1</sup>S. J. Wanous, "A Chronology of Business Education in the United States," Business Education Forum, XXIII (April, 1969), 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth I. Anderson and Martha D. Bright, "Let's Look at the One-Year Shorthand Program," Journal of Business Education, XXVII (November, 1951), 117.

"They might mention such possibilities as their own enthusiasm, the speed at which the students can take dictation, the time of the day the class meets, the type of shorthand system taught, ad infinitum."<sup>3</sup>

Rogers suggests that one reason for a high mortality rate of second-year shorthand students is that the students obtain a sense of failure during first-year shorthand. Some teachers use the rationale that, "Teachers should weed out the slower students who cannot keep up the pace. They will never be secretaries anyway."

The problem facing business educators and especially shorthand teachers is to determine by research the reasons that such a high percentage of first-year shorthand students do not choose to enroll in the second-year course, and to determine why some students do choose to enroll in the second-year course.

#### Statement of the Problem

This is a study to determine why students who completed first-year shorthand in Cache County, Utah, high schools during the 1973-74 school year did or did not enroll in second-year shorthand during the 1974-75 school year.

#### Importance of the Study

Studies have been completed to determine why first-year shorthand students do and do not enroll in second-year shorthand classes. According to

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<sup>3</sup>Berle Haggblade, "Does Shorthand Accuracy Affect Achievement?" Business Education Forum, XXIII (April, 1969), 19.

<sup>4</sup>Stella Rogers, "Should All Students Succeed in Beginning Shorthand?" Business Education World, LI (May-June, 1971), 12.



Rosen and Korn, one possible reason for dropout rates after the first-year shorthand class relates to the competition of shorthand with other nonskill subjects. "The necessity for repetitive drill, a basic lesson practice, and continual reading and writing practice sometimes place shorthand classes in an unfavorable position when competing for student enrollment with nonskill subjects."<sup>5</sup>

Vining indicates that students often believe that the shorthand course will prove so simple that they enroll in shorthand and then fail to devote enough disciplined study of the subject. "Shorthand teachers, in an attempt to encourage students by eliminating completely the fear of failure, often achieve the opposite of their intentions by representing the new material as amazingly simple and easy to remember."<sup>6</sup> However, there are several reasons why students do decide to enroll in a second-year course. One of these reasons is to acquire adequate shorthand and transcription skill to obtain a secretarial or stenographic position.

The importance of this study, therefore, was to determine the main reasons why students in Cache County, Utah, high schools do and do not enroll and complete second-year shorthand. The results of this study could be used to aid business teachers at the two Cache County, Utah, high schools in order to enroll more first-year shorthand students in the second year of shorthand instruction.

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<sup>5</sup>Steve Rosen and Beverly Korn, "I Like Shorthand But . . .," Business Education Forum, XXVI (May, 1972), 43.

<sup>6</sup>Jean W. Vining, "Do You Discourage Beginning Shorthand Students?" Journal of Business Education, XLVI (November, 1970), 59.

### Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the 1973-74 first-year shorthand students who did and did not enroll in second-year shorthand during the 1974-75 school year. The study was conducted only at Logan High School, Logan, Utah; and Sky View High School, Smithfield, Utah; the two high schools located in Cache County, Utah.

The main investigation was based on the students' reasons for taking and not taking second-year shorthand. There was a possibility that these reasons given were not the actual reasons.

### Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, terms were defined as follows:

1. First-year shorthand: The first two semesters (36 weeks) of Gregg Diamond Jubilee Series shorthand. The terms "beginning shorthand," and "Shorthand I" are also used in this study and are synonymous with first-year shorthand.
2. Second-year shorthand: The third and fourth semesters of Gregg Diamond Jubilee Series shorthand. The terms "advanced shorthand," and "Shorthand II" are also used in this study and are synonymous with second-year shorthand.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in this chapter will be based on four major topics: Why students enroll in shorthand, why students decide to enroll in second-year shorthand, why students decide not to enroll in second-year shorthand, and possible corrective measures that have or may be used to lower the high percentage of shorthand dropouts.

Why Students Enroll in Shorthand

Milham asked 40 students to evaluate shorthand and give their reasons for taking the course. The responses included some of the following: (1) Shorthand is fascinating; (2) personal use in college; (3) prepare to become a court reporter; (4) learn a new language; (5) prepare to become a legal secretary; (6) wonderful way to write; and (7) helps in other classes.<sup>7</sup>

Many students enroll in shorthand to acquire a marketable skill to gain employment. The Educational Development Laboratories of McGraw-Hill recently conducted a status study of shorthand to find out what the job market is now for the shorthand writer. EDL obtained data from advertising sections of large newspapers throughout the United States. Most jobs did not specify an educational level for job entry. However, over 90 percent of the secretarial positions required shorthand rates from 60 to 100 words for job entry.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>George E. Milham, "Students Evaluate Beginning Shorthand," Business Education World, XLVI (November, 1966), 20

<sup>8</sup>"Shorthand . . . Circa, 1972," Today's Secretary, 75 (October, 1972), 32.

According to Lemaster, the need for shorthand writers in business is increasing every day. In the United States, there are now three million secretaries and their ranks grow by 500 daily. A conservative estimate indicates that over three quarters of these secretaries are shorthand writers. Their jobs range from executive secretarial positions to stenographer-typist positions. Lemaster continued to show that the need for secretaries is great by referring to an article in the New York Times in June, 1971. The article stated that even though the United States was in an economic recession and jobs were usually hard to find, secretaries and clerical workers were still needed.

Though the shortage of skilled office help--secretaries, stenographers, typists, bookkeepers, and accounting clerks--has been recognized for several years, its persistence into a period of hard times is causing a great deal of puzzlement and speculation. The problem is not unique to New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, and other cities . . . .<sup>10</sup>

These and other similar studies show the need for shorthand writers. Many students see this need and enter shorthand courses so they will be able to obtain employment.

#### Why Students Enroll in Second-Year Shorthand

In a followup study by Rogers of second-year shorthand students, Rogers discovered that a changing philosophy was emerging. Those students who were

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<sup>9</sup> A. J. Lemaster, "The Present and Future Outlook for Shorthand," Business Education World, 52 (January-February, 1972), 20

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

not high achievers in first-year shorthand still enrolled in and benefited from second-year shorthand. The followup study was made of the employment histories of these shorthand students who had persisted through two years of shorthand and transcription passing each time with a poor grade.

Following graduation from high school, they found positions where speed requirements were not too stringent and other office duties were involved. For these individuals, the second year in shorthand provided them with the key to self-esteem, independence, and a feeling of being needed by someone. There came the realization that a need for shorthand exists for students with modest abilities as well as for the more talented.<sup>11</sup>

Sanders encourages his students to continue their shorthand beyond the first year. Second-year shorthand is needed to prepare students to become qualified secretaries.

Qualified stenographers and secretaries are in wide demand today. Many secretarial openings are going unfilled. Employment managers are complaining that, unfortunately, not enough people are making the effort to learn shorthand.<sup>12</sup>

#### Why Students Do Not Enroll in Second-Year Shorthand

The classified section of almost every newspaper in the country contains proof of the need for good stenographers, yet the shorthand dropout rate is still high. Why?

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<sup>11</sup>Rogers, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>A. W. Sanders, "The Value of Learning Shorthand," The Balance Sheet, XLIII (January, 1962), 225.

Unfortunately, it is often a school policy to make first-year shorthand unnecessarily difficult in order to "weed out" all but the most desirable students. This policy was justified by the fact that the students who finally graduated from the program were "topnotch" and were in demand by business firms. Because of this, Schmidt observed in one particular school that 75 percent of the first-year shorthand class did not enroll in second-year shorthand. If this 75 percent of average or below average students was given a chance to obtain a marketable skill, the purpose of business education--to train people to be economically productive individuals--could be met.<sup>13</sup>

A study by Johnson found that out of seven Los Angeles metropolitan high schools, only 25 percent of the original shorthand students who signed up for first-year shorthand enrolled in second-year shorthand. Of the other students, 20 percent dropped first-year shorthand after the first semester, 40 percent graduated from high school, and 15 percent chose not to take second-year shorthand.<sup>14</sup>

Teachers as well as students have many reasons why they think students do not enroll in second-year shorthand. The reasons given by teachers in Los Angeles included the following:

1. Inability to react to sound.
2. Lack of ability in reading, English, and spelling.
3. Students with low I. Q.'s who are unable to grasp content.

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<sup>13</sup> Audrey Schmidt, "Shorthand Dropouts," Business Teacher, 45 (January-February, 1968), 33.

<sup>14</sup> Azalee Johnson, "A Solution to the Shorthand Dropout Problem," The Balance Sheet, XLIII (March, 1962), 297.

4. Students dislike homework.
5. Scheduling difficulties of college preparatory students prevented them from taking the second-year course.
6. Class was too large.
7. Too many student absences.<sup>15</sup>

It is interesting to note that students give different reasons for not enrolling in second-year shorthand. In this same study by Johnson, the most frequently stated reasons by students were that the class moved too fast and it was boring.

Crank, Crank, and Hanrahan conducted a study in Illinois in the spring of 1970 in an attempt to determine the reasons for the great difference in enrollment between the first-year shorthand and second-year shorthand classes. Thirty-eight Illinois public high schools participated in this study by having their students complete a questionnaire. Three hundred and six juniors and sophomores not intending to enroll in second-year shorthand for various reasons participated in this study.

The most numerous and frequent response given for not enrolling in second-year shorthand related to a feeling of lack of success in first-year shorthand. Many of these students did not feel they were achieving as much as they should.

The second most significant reason for not enrolling in second-year shorthand was lack of interest on the part of the student. Other reasons given by students were related to success, to scheduling conflicts, and to personality problems.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Floyd L. Crank, Doris H. Crank, and Mary Frances Hanrahan, "Why Don't Beginning Shorthand Students Go On?" The Balance Sheet, LIII (January, 1972), 153.

### Corrective Measures

If high shorthand success is indeed required by students, teachers must find correct methods to help their students achieve.

In his study, Ryals found that the need for stenographers is so prodigious that businessmen are willing to accept students who can take dictation at a meager 50 words a minute. Ryals goes on to say that the teacher and the teacher-training institutions are basically responsible for the success or failure of most shorthand students. The way in which a teacher plans his lesson will affect the amount of learning that will take place. He recommends that courses offered by teacher-training institutions in methods of teaching shorthand should place special emphasis on techniques for the improvement of teaching first-year shorthand. This could help reduce the mortality rate of shorthand students.<sup>17</sup>

Haggblade found that those students who write the greatest percentage of outlines for the high frequency words according to the rules of Gregg theory, achieve best in shorthand as determined by the criterion test that was used. "Phrase ability and quality of shorthand penmanship have relatively low relationships to shorthand achievement. Transcribing speed is highly related to shorthand achievement."<sup>18</sup>

Eiken found that test anxiety is a factor determining achievement in shorthand. She also discovered from her study that students experiencing low shorthand

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<sup>17</sup>Timothy Ryals, "A Second Look at the Teaching of First-Year Shorthand," The Balance Sheet, 51(February, 1970), 256.

<sup>18</sup>Berle Haggblade, "Factors Affecting Achievement in Shorthand," Journal of Business Education, XLI (March, 1965), 252.



text anxiety tend to perform better on shorthand tests than do those experiencing high shorthand test anxiety. Students reporting high shorthand test anxiety made significantly more errors on the test than did students with low shorthand test anxiety.<sup>19</sup>

Another suggestion by Crank is that constant reinforcement should be given to students who express doubts about their possible success in second-year shorthand. This reinforcement and encouragement should begin in the first-year course.<sup>20</sup> Business teachers can help students to know their own abilities and to know whether the study of second-year shorthand is advisable to them.

Crank also states that business teachers have a challenge in public relations.

Students, counselors, faculty, parents, and administrators need to be made aware of the need for secretarial workers who are skilled in shorthand performance, the necessity for most students to have an opportunity to study advanced shorthand, and the variety of job opportunities which exist in shorthand-related classes.<sup>21</sup>

Most likely, a student who becomes discouraged and behind in first-year shorthand will not continue the course into the second year. Rogers suggests that this problem of discouragement can be avoided by giving the student another chance by using an individual study plan which allows him to maintain

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<sup>19</sup>Shirley A. Eiken, "The Effect of Test Anxiety on Achievement in First-Year Shorthand," Journal of Business Education, XLII (October, 1966), 42.

<sup>20</sup>Crank, p. 156.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

his own pace. By doing this, Rogers was able to save a number of shorthand students who would have given up completely and dropped the course.<sup>22</sup>

Banks used a similar approach by recycling her students. If a student misses a class in the beginning stages of shorthand, he may easily become discouraged and drop out. By giving him a chance to start over in a new class after a six-week period, a student has another opportunity to succeed in first-year shorthand and increase his desire to enroll in additional shorthand classes.<sup>23</sup>

Bell gives a very different, yet interesting, answer to the shorthand drop-out problem. He believes two years of shorthand is too long.

In order to complete the full shorthand cycle, a student finds it necessary to register for shorthand courses over a two-year period. If, at the end of the first year, the student decides the time normally devoted to shorthand during the second year could be used more profitably in another business course, he discovers that his shorthand skill is not yet good enough to meet the requirements of business, and if he does not want to waste the time devoted to the study of shorthand during the first year, he must follow the course of study through the entire two-year program.<sup>24</sup>

In this case, the learning of shorthand can become a test of endurance. If the student cannot endure the second year, the benefits derived from the first year's study are of little practical value to him.

Research has shown that a stenographer who can take dictation at 100 words a minute for three minutes will be able to take dictation of 75 percent of

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<sup>22</sup>Rogers, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup>Querida M. Banks, "Recycling Shorthand Students," The Balance Sheet, LIII (March, 1972), 352.

<sup>24</sup>Dermont Bell, "Shorthand: Two Years Too Long," Journal of Business Education, XXXV (February, 1959), 199.

the dictators she is likely to encounter in the business world.<sup>25</sup> Bell believes that 100 words a minute can be accomplished in the first year if the following requirements are met. This would eliminate a need for second-year shorthand.

1. Orientation: If the students can be prepared for the shorthand class, they will start the class with the conviction they are expected to progress and they will.

2. Student motivation: If a teacher is able to motivate his students properly, there will be little difficulty in teaching them how to write 100 words a minute by the end of the first year.

3. Hard work: The students will always be challenged.

4. Timetable: A schedule should be followed in order to achieve the minimum goal of 100 words a minute by the end of the first year.<sup>26</sup>

Literature has shown that shorthand is still relevant. Students have recognized the importance of shorthand in employment and enroll in the subject for this reason. Students also enroll in shorthand to help them in other classes and for future use in college.

Many businessmen feel that students should enroll in second-year shorthand to gain the skills necessary to obtain employment. This is probably the main reason shown in the literature why students decide to take more than first-year shorthand.

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<sup>25</sup>Lloyd V. Douglas (Ed.), The Business Education Program in the Expanding Secondary School, Revised Edition, United Business Education Association of Secondary School Principals, 1957, p. 77.

<sup>26</sup>Bell, p. 199.

However, students do not always enroll in second-year shorthand for such reasons as discouragement and boredom. The high shorthand dropout rate is a concern to business educators and employers who need competent stenographers and secretaries. Suggestions have been posed by many people in the field, and teachers have tried numerous ways to promote student shorthand achievement and encourage first-year shorthand students to continue their shorthand careers. Some possibilities that have been suggested are (1) training shorthand teachers to improve first-year shorthand instruction, (2) teaching students high frequency words, (3) lowering test anxiety, (4) reinforcing and encouraging students, (5) having a good public relations program, (6) using an individual study plan, (7) recycling shorthand students, and (8) shortening the length of the shorthand program to possibly one year.

Literature indicates that many of these solutions have been tried with some success, yet the problem of shorthand dropouts remains to be solved.

CHAPTER III  
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

First-year shorthand students and second-year shorthand students were asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire to obtain their reasons for enrolling or not enrolling in second-year shorthand. The questionnaire was administered by a psychologist to the students at the two Cache County, Utah, high schools. The psychologist used scripts which gave instructions for completing the questionnaire. These scripts were provided by the investigator.

A pilot study, using ten previous shorthand students not included in this study was conducted for the purpose of testing and revising the administration scripts.

The administration procedures of the questionnaire consisted of the following:

- (1) The psychologist read the script to the students and monitored the students as they completed the questionnaire.
- (2) The psychologist reviewed the students' responses, asking them to amplify or clarify those responses which, in the judgment of the psychologist, were not sufficiently specific or clear.

Class rosters for first-year shorthand classes at the Cache County, Utah, high schools during the 1973-74 school year were reviewed to identify the students who took first-year shorthand during that school year. These former

first-year shorthand students who were in attendance during December, 1974, and who were not enrolled in second-year shorthand, were identified as one population group in this investigation. Class rosters for second-year shorthand classes at the two high schools during the 1974-75 school year were also reviewed to identify the students who were taking second-year shorthand. These students who were in attendance during December, 1974, and who were enrolled in second-year shorthand were identified as another population group in this investigation.

The actual questionnaire responses by students who enrolled in second-year shorthand were categorized into three groups by the investigator. These groups consisted of personal reasons for taking second-year shorthand, career reasons for taking second-year shorthand, and school reasons for taking second-year shorthand. In some instances, value judgments had to be made by the investigator.

The actual questionnaire responses by students who did not enroll in second-year shorthand were categorized into two groups by the investigator. These groups consisted of personal reasons for not taking second-year shorthand and school reasons for not taking second-year shorthand. In some instances, value judgments had to be made by the investigator. The results were reported using frequency and percentage calculations.

## CHAPTER IV

## FINDINGS

The data presented in this chapter were drawn from responses to questionnaires completed by 46 shorthand students from Cache County, Utah, high schools. Students included in this study were those who did and did not enroll in second-year shorthand during the 1974-75 school year.

The results of this study showed that of 46 students who completed first-year shorthand, 29 enrolled in second-year shorthand and 17 did not enroll in second-year shorthand. This was a 37 percent dropout rate of shorthand students in Cache County, Utah, high schools after the first year of shorthand.

The responses to the questionnaires were divided into two major categories: (1) Why students enrolled in second-year shorthand, and (2) why students did not enroll in second-year shorthand.

Why Students Enrolled in Second-Year Shorthand

The reasons for taking second-year shorthand were many and varied. Students gave a total of 82 reasons why they did enroll in second-year shorthand. The investigator of this study took these 82 reasons given by the students and divided them into three categories: personal reasons, career reasons, and school reasons.

Students listed personal reasons most frequently as to why they enrolled in second-year shorthand. Out of the possible 82 reasons given, 43 (52.44

percent) were personal. Students listed career reasons 26 times (31.71 percent), and school reasons 13 times (15.85 percent). Discussion will follow on each of these three main reasons.

Table 1. Main reasons students enrolled in second-year shorthand

Reason	Number of times listed	Percentage
Personal	43	52.44
Career	26	31.71
School	13	15.85
Total	82	100.00

#### Personal reasons

As shown above, students listed personal reasons for enrolling in second-year shorthand more often than they listed school or career reasons. Of these personal reasons, enjoyment of shorthand was listed most frequently. Enjoyment was given 9 times by students. Typical responses given by students on the questionnaire were, "I took Shorthand II because I enjoy it," or "I took Shorthand II because I enjoy writing shorthand."

The next personal reason listed was for the objective of gaining accuracy and speed in the writing of shorthand. This reason was given 8 times. Other personal reasons listed more than once were to have a challenge, to increase knowledge of English, to take an easy subject, to have the teacher, to make



parents happy, and to follow in sister's footsteps. Those reasons listed once are shown in Table 2 along with those already mentioned.

Table 2. Personal reasons for taking second-year shorthand

Reasons	Number of times listed	Percent of personal reasons	Percent of total reasons
To obtain enjoyment and fun	9	20.93	10.98
To obtain accuracy and speed	8	18.60	9.76
To have a challenge	4	9.30	4.88
To increase knowledge of English	3	6.96	3.65
To take an easy subject	3	6.96	3.65
To have the teacher	2	4.65	2.44
To make parents happy	2	4.65	2.44
To follow in sister's footsteps	2	4.65	2.44
To gain self-discipline	1	2.33	1.22
To follow through with motivation given by teachers	1	2.33	1.22
To justify taking first-year shorthand	1	2.33	1.22
To learn new things	1	2.33	1.22
To get idea of business world	1	2.33	1.22
To enjoy achievement	1	2.33	1.22
To satisfy curiosity	1	2.33	1.22
To increase typing ability	1	2.33	1.22

Table 2. Continued

Reasons	Number of times listed	Percent of personal reasons	Percent of total reasons
To satisfy thinking that every girl should take shorthand	1	2.33	1.22
To feel superior to those who don't know shorthand	<u>1</u>	<u>2.33</u>	<u>1.22</u>
Total	43	100.00	52.44

#### Career reasons

Students listed career reasons for enrolling in second-year shorthand 26 total times. Reasons related to employment such as getting a good job and becoming a secretary were listed 18 times. Employment was the most frequently given response by students of all the reasons in any category. Examples of actual responses were, "I wanted to learn how to write shorthand and I hope it will help me get a better job when I graduate," and "To become a secretary and be able to use it in an office."

Students also said they enrolled in second-year shorthand because they were planning to continue the business field in college. This reason was listed 4 times. Other career reasons such as helping prepare to teach shorthand, getting farther in the business world, using shorthand at present jobs, and learning other secretarial skills were also listed. These career reasons are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Career reasons for taking second-year shorthand

Reasons	Number of times listed	Percent of career reasons	Percent of total reasons
To obtain employment; become a secretary	18	69.23	21.95
To continue business in college	4	14.37	4.88
To help prepare to teach shorthand	1	3.85	1.22
To get farther in business world	1	3.85	1.22
To use shorthand at present job	1	3.85	1.22
To learn other secretarial skills	<u>1</u>	<u>3.85</u>	<u>1.22</u>
Total	26	100.00	31.71

#### School reasons

Students listed school reasons 13 times. Several students enrolled in second-year shorthand to obtain English credit. This reason was listed 6 times. Other reasons given were to help get parttime work in college, to help in high school classes, to help in college classes, and to fit into the high school class schedule. These reasons are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. School reasons for taking second-year shorthand

Reasons	Number of times listed	Percent of school reasons	Percent of total reasons
To obtain English credit	6	46.16	7.31
To help get parttime work in college	2	15.38	2.44

Table 4. Continued

Reasons	Number of times listed	Percent of school reasons	Percent of total reasons
To help in high school classes	2	15.38	2.44
To help in college classes	2	15.38	2.44
To fit into school class schedule	<u>1</u>	<u>7.70</u>	<u>1.22</u>
Total	13	100.00	15.85

Why Students Did Not Enroll in Second-Year Shorthand

Seventeen high school students gave a total of 20 reasons why they did not enroll in second-year shorthand. The investigator of this study divided these reasons into two main categories: personal reasons and school reasons. Of the 20 reasons given, 11 were personal and 9 were school. See Table 5.

Table 5. Main reasons students did not enroll in second-year shorthand

Reason	Number of times listed	Percentage
Personal	11	55.00
School	<u>9</u>	<u>45.00</u>
Total	20	100.00

### Personal reasons

Several students felt they did not have the time to complete shorthand homework assignments so they did not enroll in second-year shorthand. They gave this reason 6 times. Other reasons given twice each were simply that students did not like first-year shorthand and they were not interested in becoming a secretary. One student stated she could not keep up with the class.

Table 6. Personal reasons for not taking second-year shorthand

Reasons	Number of times listed	Percent of personal reasons	Percent of total reasons
Lack of time to do homework	6	54.55	30.00
Did not like first-year shorthand	2	18.18	10.00
Not interested in becoming a secretary	2	18.18	10.00
Could not keep up with class	<u>1</u>	<u>9.09</u>	<u>5.00</u>
Total	11	100.00	55.00

### School reasons

Scheduling problems such as "I didn't take shorthand because I couldn't fit it in my schedule," and "I was going to take it, but I am in a marching group which takes the same hour" were listed 7 times by high school students. Other school reasons listed once each were the need for other credits and the decision to take office simulation instead.

Table 7. School reasons for not taking second-year shorthand

Reasons	Number of times listed	Percent of school reasons	Percent of total reasons
Scheduling problem	7	77.78	35.00
Need other credits	1	11.11	5.00
Took office simulation instead	<u>1</u>	<u>11.11</u>	<u>5.00</u>
Total	9	100.00	45.00

In summary, it was found that students enrolled in second-year shorthand for three main reasons: personal, career, and school. Of the personal reasons, students listed enjoyment of the subject and accuracy and speed development most frequently. Of the career reasons for enrolling in second-year shorthand, students listed employment. This single reason was given more times than any other personal, career, or school reason. And, of the school reasons for enrolling in second-year shorthand, students listed obtaining employment as the main reason.

Students did not enroll in second-year shorthand because of personal and school reasons. Scheduling conflicts were the main school reasons and the amount of time to do homework was the main personal reason students did not enroll in second-year shorthand.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was undertaken to determine the reasons why high school students in Cache County, Utah, did and did not enroll in second-year shorthand. Forty-six students from Cache County, Utah, high schools participated in the study by completing an open-ended questionnaire which asked them to list their reason or reasons why they did enroll in second-year shorthand or why they did not enroll in second-year shorthand.

After completing one year of shorthand, students have many different reasons why they do or do not enroll in additional shorthand classes. During the 1974-75 school year, 29 out of a possible 46 high school students enrolled in second-year shorthand. These students, when asked why they did enroll, gave 82 reasons for taking the course. These reasons were divided by the investigator into three areas or groups: (1) personal reasons were listed 43 times, (2) career reasons were listed 26 times, and (3) school reasons were listed 13 times. Students listed the reason of employment (which was categorized under career reasons) more than any other single reason for enrolling in second-year shorthand. It was listed 18 times or 21.95 percent of the total reasons given for enrolling in second-year shorthand.

During the same school year, 17 Cache County, Utah, high school students did not enroll in second-year shorthand. The dropout rate of the

original 46 students after one year of shorthand was 37 percent. These students gave 20 reasons why they did not continue with shorthand. These reasons were divided by the investigator into two main areas or groups: (1) personal reasons were listed 11 times, and (2) school reasons were listed 9 times. Students listed scheduling problems more than any other single reason for not enrolling in second-year shorthand. Scheduling problems (categorized under school reasons) were listed 7 times or 35 percent of the total reasons given for not enrolling in second-year shorthand.

### Conclusions

1. Students enrolled in second-year shorthand more for personal reasons than for career or school reasons as evidenced by the fact that 43 of the total 82 responses given were personal.

A. Of these personal reasons, students listed enjoyment and fun as the main reasons for enrolling in second-year shorthand. This was shown by students' listing this reason 9 times.

B. It appeared that students also seemed to have a drive to increase their shorthand accuracy and speed and to challenge themselves. This is shown by the fact that students listed "to obtain accuracy and speed" 8 times and "to obtain a challenge" 4 times.

C. It may be possible that students increase their English knowledge by enrolling in second-year shorthand because 3 students listed and felt shorthand would help them increase their knowledge of English.



D. There are a variety of other personal reasons students listed for enrolling in second-year shorthand. "To take an easy subject" was listed 3 times; "to have the teacher" was listed twice; "to make parents happy" was listed twice; and "to follow in sister's footsteps" was listed twice.

2. Students enrolled in second-year shorthand more for career reasons than they did for school reasons as shown by the fact that 26 of the reasons were career.

A. The largest single reason (including personal, career, and school reasons) was to obtain employment and become a secretary as evidenced by the fact that 18 students enrolled in second-year shorthand because they wanted to use it on the job either immediately after high school or after college.

B. It is possible that students felt shorthand would help them because they were going to continue their business studies in college as shown by the fact that 4 students listed "to help continue business studies in college."

3. Students enrolled in second-year shorthand for school reasons fewer times than they did for personal or career reasons as evidenced by the fact that only 13 reasons were related to school.

A. Of the school reasons, students enrolled in second-year shorthand to obtain English credit as shown by the fact that 6 students listed this reason.

B. Several students also felt shorthand would help them in college and in high school as shown by the fact that 2 reasons given were to help them in college and in high school as shown by the fact that 2 reasons given were "to help get parttime work in college"; 2 reasons given were "to help in high school classes"; and 2 reasons given were "to help in college classes."

4. There is no clear indication as to whether students do not enroll in second-year shorthand for personal or school reasons because the results showed that 11 reasons for not taking second-year shorthand were personal and 9 reasons were school.

A. It appears that the lack of time to complete homework assignments is the greatest personal reason why students did not enroll in second-year shorthand as evidenced by the fact that this reason was listed 6 times.

B. Evidence also indicates that some students do not like shorthand and some are not interested in becoming secretaries. These reasons were listed twice each.

C. It appears that scheduling problems were the main school reasons why students did not enroll in second-year shorthand as evidenced by the fact that this reason was listed 7 times by students.

#### Recommendations

1. Business teachers should continue to recruit high quality students and promote the secretarial field in order to get students into the shorthand program by developing a good public relations program. This could be done by:

- A. Advertising the school business program to students.
- B. Showing students what jobs are available in this field and the demand for secretaries and stenographers.
- C. Promoting vocational education week.
- D. Maintaining an active youth organization to get the students involved.
- E. Providing high quality instruction.

2. Further effort should be made to provide an exceptional shorthand program in order to keep students interested in shorthand. This may be accomplished by:

- A. Hiring high quality shorthand teachers who understand the subject, who have had work experience where they have used shorthand, and who can keep the shorthand class challenging and interesting.
- B. Maintaining a pleasant room atmosphere where students can experience an office setting yet remain relaxed.
- C. Using audio-visual equipment where appropriate to enhance the teaching.
- D. Letting students experience simulated on-the-job experience in the class.
- E. Allowing first-year shorthand students to use the typewriter for some transcription.
- F. Investigating and implementing the possibility of allowing students English credit for taking second-year shorthand.

3. Counselors and teachers should take a closer look at the shorthand dropout rate and try to reduce it by:

A. Studying the school schedule to identify and change any class conflicts.

B. Avoiding possible scheduling conflicts by offering second-year shorthand at the same time as first-year shorthand by using an effective shorthand tape laboratory.

C. Helping students develop efficient study habits to reduce the time spent to complete homework assignments.

D. Determining specific problems students are having in first-year shorthand and helping the students overcome them.

4. Conduct a similar study in a larger county where more high school students could participate:

A. To determine if there are other reasons why students do enroll in second-year shorthand.

B. To determine if there are other reasons why students do not enroll in second-year shorthand.

5. Conduct a similar study to determine shorthand dropout rates in other areas of the state and country:

A. To determine what areas have high dropout rates and the characteristics of these areas.

B. To determine what percentage of students drop out of shorthand after the first year.

6. Conduct a similar study using a closed-ended questionnaire instead of a open-ended questionnaire in order to catagorize and tabulate data more objectively.

7. Conduct a study to determine if second-year shorthand is necessary in order to gain an adequate shorthand speed to enter the employment field. This study could also determine the shorthand speeds required by today's businessmen.

8. Conduct a study of other shorthand systems besides Gregg Shorthand:

A. To determine if ~~any of these~~ other shorthand systems could be learned with the same amount of accuracy in less than a two-year period.

B. To determine if other systems would influence the reasons why students do and do not enroll in second-year shorthand.

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## APPENDICES



Appendix A

Script Used for Students Not Enrolled in Second-Year Shorthand

Following is the script used by the psychologist given to the 1973-74 first-year shorthand students who did not enroll in second-year shorthand.

SCRIPT:

Many students who take first-year shorthand decide not to take second-year shorthand. We are asking you to help in an investigation to identify the reasons why students do not take second-year shorthand. Please list your reasons and give specific examples. For instance, if this were a study to determine why you do not play baseball, do not merely state that it is boring or not interesting. You would instead give specific reasons such as, "I cannot hit the ball very well, the game moves too slowly, there is not much physical activity involved," or "I have to take a music lesson when my friends play baseball."

Use the questionnaire form that has been provided to list your reasons. All information you give us will be kept confidential and used only for this particular study.

Appendix B

Script Used for Students Enrolled in Second-Year Shorthand

Following is the script used by the psychologist given to the 1974-75 second-year shorthand students who did enroll in second-year shorthand.

SCRIPT:

Many students who take first-year shorthand also decide to take second-year shorthand. We are asking you to help in an investigation to identify the reasons why students do take second-year shorthand. Please list your reasons and give specific examples. For instance, if this were a study to determine why you like to play baseball, do not merely state that it is fun or interesting. You would instead give specific reasons such as, "I hit the ball very well, the game moves quickly, there is physical activity involved," or "I like to get out in the sun."

Use the questionnaire form that has been provided to list your reasons for taking second-year shorthand. All information that you give us will be kept confidential and used only for this particular study.

Appendix CQuestionnaire Used by Students Not Enrolled in Second-Year Shorthand

Please give and explain fully the reason or reasons why you did not enroll and take second-year shorthand.

Appendix DQuestionnaire Used by Students Enrolled in Second-Year Shorthand

Please give and explain fully the reason or reasons why you did enroll and are taking second-year shorthand.

Appendix EActual Reasons by Students Who Enrolled in Second-Year Shorthand

I am taking Shorthand II because I am going to major in business administration next year in college, and I want to get some of my classes taken during high school. I also enjoyed Shorthand I and the teacher, and was interested in continuing in shorthand. I have a job at the bank, and I had had to take dictation so I am glad I have continued.

Because I don't like English and so I used this for my English credit.

Last year when I took Shorthand I, I thought it was really interesting and I thought I needed more practice in it.

One of the main reasons is I can do shorthand a lot easier than I can do English so I took it because I could get an English credit. And also, it helps me sometimes in my other classes when we have to take notes, and I think it is fun.

I took Shorthand II because I enjoy it and it is fairly easy for me. I have considered teaching shorthand or other business courses and I feel it was a good idea to take it.

I am not planning to be a full-time secretary, but I do feel that it would be very beneficial taking shorthand classes for college and as a parttime job to make extra money, and I feel Shorthand II would put me in that position. I also like shorthand and I have done well in it. This is another reason for my continuation in shorthand. It also gives you an idea of what the business world is like.

I took shorthand out of curiosity and because "shorthand and type are two things every girl should have." I really enjoyed the class. I did very well and learned a lot. So I decided to take Shorthand II for the following reasons:

1. To make my speed faster and improve style
2. To learn other secretarial skills covered in that class
3. I enjoy writing shorthand
4. I do it well
5. It was one of the classes I could fit into my schedule
6. I like the teacher.

My mother insisted--she said you don't learn enough shorthand to use it on the job in beginning shorthand. You need the extra speed and transcription practice that you get in advance class. I don't know if I agree, but that's my reason.

Main reason is so I can learn more and get a faster speed so I can be a secretary or stenographer. It makes me feel "talented" in a way and sort of superior to other people (who don't know it). Comes easy for me and I can excel in something.

I took Shorthand II because I needed English credit and I didn't want any English classes. I also took it because it will really help me to get a job knowing I can take shorthand.

I enjoy achieving--going up in speed. I can see how far I have progressed. I am interested in becoming a secretary.

I wanted to learn how to write in shorthand and I hope it will help me get a better job when I graduate. I think it is fun and it has helped me a lot in my other classes. I have increased my typing ability also.

I enjoyed my first year very much because it was sort of a challenge for me to see how high of a speed I could get up to. I also took Shorthand II because it counted as an English credit. It isn't particularly hard, once you catch on, so it didn't scare me away. I also took it because I like working in an office position and shorthand is required for a secretary.

To become a secretary and able to use it in an office. Also, to make my Dad happy. It also counted English credit; more or less I thought it would be fun.

I took Shorthand II because I am planning to go into secretarial science and I need to know shorthand. I also took it because it gave me an English credit and I would rather have shorthand than another English class that wouldn't do me any good. I also need to know shorthand so I can do good in the college I am planning to attend which is a business one.

I am interested in obtaining a job as a secretary or in this line of work. I took Shorthand II to improve my skills so that I would be able to obtain such a job.

When I ended my year in Shorthand I, I was not at the goal I desired so I took Shorthand II to improve speed so I might get a job. It also helps me with business letters that will help me on the job.

1. The business teachers motivated me with their excitement.
2. I would like to get a well-paying job, and I enjoy trying to progress and build speed.
3. I enjoy English, and my shorthand experiences have given me a chance to broaden my knowledge and usage of the language.
4. I plan on continuing my business education at a university, and my Shorthand II class provides a necessary stepping stone.

I am taking Shorthand II because, to me, it is a challenge. I want to become more accurate and to build my speed. I am also taking it because I want to get a secretarial job when I get out of school and shorthand is a vital skill in business. Shorthand is also different and it is fun to be able to write faster and in a different way. Shorthand is challenging and it offers me something besides an hour to fill up.

I am taking it to improve my skills in shorthand; possibly to the point of being able to get a job in business without further schooling.

1. I thought I might would like to pursue a career as a secretary or as something in an office.
2. I thought that I would like to learn shorthand better and pick up my skill, and speed.
3. I learned that in the secretarial block class that you learned a lot about English also and I needed it!
4. I like shorthand and both of my sisters went on into advanced shorthand and because of this got good jobs. They suggested it to me.

Because it teaches you self-discipline. You have to do your homework in order to pass the course. It will help you if you go on to college. If you don't go on to college, you can get a job right out of high school. I think it is fun. I like to do things like this.

Because I am sure that it will give me a better opportunity to get a better job. Also because I feel it is quite challenging and helps you to become better thinkers, better listeners, and better at all aspects of English.

I am very much interested in the field and plan to make it a profession if necessary. I am taking it now so I will be that much farther ahead when I enter college. I am fairly good in these skills and enjoy them very much, especially typing!

The main reasons I decided to take Shorthand II was I felt I needed the extra practice and help to develop my speed and mastery of the skills of shorthand. I want to be able to become good enough that it will be beneficial to me, and I think this extra year is definitely going to help me. Also, in Shorthand I there is not enough time to build speed as much as adding another year to this. I feel this helps better prepare me for a business job.

I liked shorthand and I did pretty good in it, so I though I would try Shorthand II. Both my older sisters are secretaries, they enjoy it, so I thought I would try it, too,. Shorthand II is needed to be an efficient secretary. Also, I thought it would be a waste of a whole year if I just took Shorthand I and not Shorthand II.

I took Shorthand II mainly for the reason that when I graduate from high school I want to go on to college. In order to do this I must work while I go to school and I feel that my shorthand skill would help me greatly in finding a good job. I also took it because I thought it was fun. I like learning to do new things. This is sort of like learning a new language. I found it to be very interesting. I also learned about many other things related to shorthand (and sometimes not related). It helps me stretch my interest out into much broader fields. I enjoy the challenge it offers.

I want to be able to get a job after graduation from high school, using my shorthand skill. I took Shorthand II to increase my skill and therefore get me a good job (hopefully). Also, I plan to major in business education at college and the more classes I have taken in high school in this field, the better I will be to go to college.

I am taking Shorthand II because:

1. I feel it would help me get a better paying job.
2. I enjoy doing it for the most part.
3. I felt I could get farther in the business world with a knowledge of shorthand skills.



Appendix FActual Reasons by Students Who Did Not Enroll in Second-Year Shorthand

Mainly because I didn't take enough interest in Shorthand I. Thinking about Shorthand II, it will probably be harder.

I enrolled twice in Shorthand I and dropped out both times. My time was too important to spend 1-2 hours each night to learn one subject. I'm enrolled in six subjects and that's too much time for one thing. Shorthand is good to have, but not interesting.

I enjoyed taking shorthand, but my goal in life isn't to be a secretary. I took Shorthand I to get the basics--just so I would know how to write it. It isn't important to me to have all the details, and write at the fastest speed. I like to write shorthand, and it helps me in my physiology class when I take notes. So I didn't take Shorthand II because I really don't need it, and I needed to fit in other classes.

The reason I didn't take Shorthand II is because I couldn't read the outlines and I couldn't keep up with the speed we were supposed to be on. Otherwise, I really liked shorthand.

I did not take Shorthand II because I don't have the time to go home and complete an assignment twice, reading it carefully and really understand what I am writing. Shorthand is the type of class where you should do more outside classwork in order to gain something out of it and the time just isn't there.

If there hadn't been an office simulation class, I would have taken Shorthand II, but I felt that by taking the office class I would be able to improve my shorthand as well as learning additional secretarial skills.

I didn't feel I was the business type. I really didn't enjoy typing and shorthand too well last year. It wasn't boring, it is just a subject that some people enjoy and some don't. I have sort of changed my ways now though, and I am thinking of going to a college and major in business. I just didn't particularly like shorthand, although I thought it was kind of fun because it was like learning a new language.

I didn't take Shorthand II because I had more important things to me as an individual that I wanted to take plus my required classes in school to graduate. Therefore, I couldn't fit it into my schedule.

I didn't take Shorthand II because I couldn't fit it in my schedule. I could have taken it in place of English but there were too many English classes that I wanted to take and couldn't have if I had taken Shorthand II. I really liked shorthand when I was in it. I had a very good teacher, but I decided to take Shorthand II in the summer or next year when I go to school. Shorthand requires a lot of time. I just didn't feel I would have the time with the other classes I have.

I work and do not have time to do the amount of homework that is required for Shorthand II. I really would have liked to take this class though, if I wasn't working.

I have to take a cheerleading class the same hour they have Shorthand II.

The reason was not because I didn't like it. To take Shorthand II you have to take a two-hour class. I couldn't fit the two hours in my schedule because I wanted to take competitive sports class. I decided that I could further my shorthand education in college if I was still interested by then. I liked Shorthand I.

Well I didn't like all the work involved. Maybe I would have liked it better if I didn't have a parttime job. I'd hear that Shorthand II was even more work than Shorthand I. I really did enjoy shorthand. It was lots of fun. Another reason I didn't take Shorthand II is because it's a block class and I'm more interested in home economics than anything else. I have a two-hour block class in cooking so I couldn't fit it into my schedule.

At the first of the year I really enjoyed shorthand a lot. But I worked too. And I found it harder and harder to keep up with both. Later in the term I decided I wasn't very interested in it and didn't want an office job. So I dropped it. But now I sometimes wish I'd kept with it and maybe I would of changed my mind and enjoyed an office job. I don't know.

When I signed up for Shorthand I in my junior year, I was hoping to take Shorthand II when I was a senior. I found out later I did not have enough of the right credits to graduate if I did take it.

I was going to take it, but I am in a marching group which takes the same hour as Shorthand II. I think a lot of kids don't take it because of the homework every night.

I am in a marching group. The hour I wanted and the only hour it was taught I am in the marching group class. Because I don't want to drop the marching group, I am forced to not enroll in the class. If it would have been taught different hours, I would have taken it.

VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of

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Report: A Study to Determine Why Cache County, Utah, High School Students  
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