

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE DROP-OUTS OF
OREGON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM FIRST-YEAR
GREGG SHORTHAND SIMPLIFIED CLASSES**

by

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A THESIS

submitted to

OREGON STATE COLLEGE

**in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

June 1951

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Date thesis is presented August 4, 1950

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To Mrs. Bertha W. Stutz, the writer owes a debt of gratitude for her constructive criticism, guidance, and suggestions in the preparation of this thesis.

To the Oregon secondary school shorthand teachers who cooperated in this study by returning questionnaires, the writer is also indebted.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the commercial department of the secondary schools, one of the major problems has been that of drop-outs from shorthand classes. Superintendents have been gravely concerned with the matter, for in many schools more students have dropped shorthand before completing the course than any other subject of the curriculum.

A shorthand system only partially learned produces little return for the student's time invested and for the tax money paid by the community that supports the school. Also, dropping out of shorthand eliminates a possible future livelihood for the student and, in addition, is not psychologically healthful for the individual involved.

In some schools the situation has been somewhat remedied by screening students through prognostic tests, intelligence tests, and marks in subjects such as English grammar. Studies have shown, however, that the correlation between most prognostic tests and success in shorthand is low. Intelligence tests, also, do not serve too well in the prediction of success in shorthand, nor do school marks.

Many school administrators believe that it is undemocratic to dictate which students may or may not take a subject. Since testing is inconclusive, it is not fair to students who wish to take shorthand not to be allowed to take it on the grounds of a low score on the screening test or tests.

Commercial educators have contended that a more simplified shorthand system would reduce the number of drop-outs and would produce a larger quantity of better-trained shorthand writers. During the last twenty years, several new shorthand systems have been devised, each claiming to be easier to learn and to use. The Gregg Publishing Company, long a leader in the shorthand-system field, believes it answered the demand for a simplified system by introducing Gregg Shorthand Simplified late in 1948. This revised system succeeds the Anniversary Edition of Gregg Shorthand (7). In the simplification, many of the word-beginnings, word-endings, and brief forms were dropped. Longer but simpler forms that appeared in early editions of the system were returned.

The problem of this study is to determine the extent of and the reasons for the drop-outs from Oregon secondary school first-year classes of Gregg Shorthand Simplified.

Purpose of the Study

The Gregg Shorthand Simplified manuals were published early in 1949, enabling the publishers to send out copies to teachers interested in examining the simplified system with a view to using it the following school year. By September of that year, a good many shorthand teachers had decided to give the simplified system a trial.

The purpose of this study is to discover to what degree this simplified version of Gregg Shorthand has solved the problem of drop-outs in first-year shorthand classes in Oregon secondary schools in which the system was taught.

Location of the Study

This study was undertaken in the public secondary schools of Oregon that offered Gregg Shorthand Simplified during the 1949-1950 school year. The number of students registered in these schools ranged from approximately 35 to 2,200.

The schools are located in both urban and rural areas throughout Oregon, a state in which the main industries are agriculture, lumbering, and fishing. Attendance in school is mandatory under state law for all children until they graduate from a secondary school or until they reach the age of eighteen years.

Shorthand is taught in these schools primarily for vocational use. Some of the small Oregon secondary schools,

however, do not offer shorthand as a part of the curriculum, while others teach it in alternate years. Larger schools offer from one to two years of shorthand, although the second year is frequently combined with office practice. The State Board of Textbook Commissioners has adopted the Gregg Shorthand textbooks. Although first-class districts may select the shorthand system to be taught, Gregg is the system used in almost every case.

Source of Data

The data for this study were secured through a questionnaire¹ sent to the shorthand teachers in the Oregon secondary schools offering Gregg Shorthand Simplified during the 1949-1950 school year.

Preliminary items called for on the questionnaire were the name and approximate enrollment of the high school; requirements for entering the shorthand classes; and a statement as to whether the teacher had had fewer, more, or as many drop-outs with Gregg Shorthand Simplified as he had had with the Anniversary Edition of Gregg Shorthand.

The teachers were then asked to indicate the number of students enrolled in first-year Gregg Shorthand Simplified classes during the first semester of the 1949-1950 school year. By subtracting the number of students enrolled at the

1. See Appendix B.

beginning of the second semester, provided no students had transferred into the class from other schools during the semester, the teachers could determine the number of drop-outs during the first semester. The enrollment of the classes at the time that the questionnaire was filled out was then to be subtracted from the enrollment at the beginning of the second semester, in order to produce the second semester drop-outs. The drop-outs from both semesters were then to be totaled. The total drop-outs were finally to be classified as to the reason for their withdrawal from shorthand.

The first classification of the drop-outs was to eliminate all those students who withdrew from school to marry, to work, or to move away; those who had been expelled or suspended, those forced to leave school because of ill health; and those who graduated at the close of the first semester. This study is not concerned with this category of drop-outs.

The remaining classifications were concerned with those students who dropped out of the shorthand class, but remained in the school. The first item in this category called for the number who failed in shorthand because of irregular attendance, whether it was because of ill health, too many school activities, or skipping. "Lacked interest in the subject" was the next classification, followed by

"failed to do homework," "poor background in English," "low I. Q.'s," "no apparent memorizing ability," "physical handicaps," "transferred from other schools," and "withdrew for other reasons."

To insure maximum returns of the questionnaire, the questions were confined to one side of a sheet. The teachers filling out the questionnaire were encouraged to write any pertinent remarks that they might care to make on the reverse side of the sheet.

Procedures Used

Although the writer knew that there were several classes of Gregg Shorthand Simplified being taught in Oregon during the 1949-1950 school year, he did not know if they were of a quantity sufficient to allow a meaningful study of them to be made. The first step, therefore, was to discover which schools were actually using the simplified system.

This was accomplished by means of business-reply postal cards,¹ which were sent to all Oregon secondary schools offering shorthand as a part of the curriculum. The shorthand teacher of each school was requested to check the reply card, indicating whether his high school was teaching Gregg Shorthand Simplified, was planning to teach it the next year, was anticipating no change to Simplified, or was

1. See Appendix A.

not offering Gregg Shorthand. Should the study have to be delayed a year because of insufficient classes, the writer then would not have to make another preliminary survey.

Of the 136 cards sent out, 111 reply cards came back, making a return of 81.6 per cent. From the 111 cards it was ascertained that 67 schools were teaching Gregg Shorthand Simplified.

The next step was to prepare a one-page questionnaire to be mailed to these 67 schools. Accompanying the questionnaire was a letter to the shorthand teacher,¹ asking for his cooperation in filling it out, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of the questionnaire. After a reasonable amount of time had elapsed, a reminder card¹ was mailed to those teachers from whom a completed questionnaire had not been received.

Fifty-two schools eventually responded, making a return of 77.6 per cent of the questionnaires mailed out. In case some of the larger schools had more than one instructor teaching Gregg Shorthand Simplified, an extra questionnaire had been sent to them. Data received under such circumstances were combined. The data from all the questionnaires were then tabulated.

1. See Appendix A.

Definition of Terms Employed in the Study

As used in this study, a "drop-out" is a student who has enrolled in a first-year shorthand class and has later withdrawn from the class before the end of the year.

An "I. Q.," or intelligence quotient, is a number denoting the intelligence of a person, determined by dividing his mental age by his chronological age.

Limitations of the Study

Standards of achievement in shorthand classes vary; failure in first-semester shorthand in one school can be considered average work in another. These standards of achievement may stem from the philosophy of the individual school or from the experience of the shorthand teacher. This study does not take into account the grading policies of the schools included herein.

Where participation in extracurricular activities depends upon a student's maintaining a specified scholastic standing and where standards of the shorthand class are high, activity-minded students are prone to drop shorthand upon encountering even slight difficulty in the subject. Fortunately, many schools do not allow indiscriminate dropping of courses once the semester is under way. The present study makes no provision for these factors.

CHAPTER II

STUDIES RELATED TO THE PROBLEM

The problem of drop-outs from beginning shorthand classes is not a recent development. It has existed since the introduction of the subject in the nation's secondary schools. The tendency has been to teach shorthand rather than to train the individual student. If he could not meet the standards of the shorthand class, he dropped the subject or failed at the end of the semester.

Dewey (5, p.29) wrote, "On a nationwide average, with wide individual variations, of course, it is fair to say that of 100 students who commence the study of shorthand in high schools, 50 will drop out before completing the course"

Bell (1, pp.35-39) found the shorthand failures in a certain large city school fluctuating within a range of 30 to 35 per cent. The superintendent doubted if this high percentage of failures could be justified economically. He raised the question as to whether or not a subject in which there were so many failures should be offered in a public school system. The teachers asserted that the lowering of standards in shorthand classes would cause the business community to speak disparagingly of the school's graduates.

Could the high percentage of failures be reduced by an employment standard? Bell says that it would not entirely

eliminate failures, but that it would decrease the high percentage of failures in advanced classes.

In this large city school, Bell continues, students were given prognostic tests in the semester preceding election of shorthand. The likely failures were then interviewed, with a view to interesting them in other fields. The failures in beginning shorthand were thereby reduced to less than 10 per cent. At the same time, departmental weekly testing showed a definite up-grading in standards of accomplishment.

Sherman (11, pp.17-18), in observing the drop-out's waste of time from a financial point of view, said, ". . . if we consider the time spent in class by each student, not counting the time used outside of class, it amounts to 10 or 12 days of 8 hours each. One may reduce the above-mentioned days to dollars and cents . . ." The student would have been better off with 80 or 90 hours of learning experience in some other business subject. "Of greater loss is the failure written on the student's record which will follow him wherever he goes, and the scar left on his personality, though probably not readily apparent to the world at large, is there, none the less."

Ratet (10, pp.8-9) contended that stenography teachers must realize and face the causes and effects of a failing grade in stenography. In a study she reported:

From a questionnaire sent to thirty-one teachers of shorthand, five high-school stenography classes, and twenty-five business men, it is evident that many common problems exist which cause students to fail, to waste time, effort, and money, and to become maladjusted in school and work.

The results of the questionnaire show, according to teachers' analyses, four major problems significant in contributing to failure:

- (1) Poor selection of students and overcrowded classes.
- (2) Poor background in vocabulary, and inability or slowness in reading English.
- (3) Poor background in English grammar.
- (4) Careless and inattentive attitude. Lack of concentration and attention to homework and classwork.

.....

Students present the following reasons for their failure as shorthand scholars.

- (1) Lack of sufficient English vocabulary and difficulty with grammar rules.
- (2) Inability to memorize, and confusion in interpreting outlines.
- (3) Too much homework.
- (4) Nervousness due to fear; the desire to write and read more rapidly than is mentally possible; and teachers' attitudes.

Ratet recommended the division of students according to their ability, the extension of the students' practice use of shorthand, emphasis on the relationship between homework

and success in shorthand, and the inclusion of a Business English class in the business curriculum.

A five-year experimental study in prognosis has been reported by Eyster (6, pp.31-34). A prognosis was made for pupils who had elected to enroll in shorthand the following semester. The shorthand teachers were not to have access to the prognosis. In making the prognosis, the following factors were taken into consideration:

1. Mental rating.
2. Average English grade during the time the pupil had been in high school.
3. Average of all grades, excluding English, during the time the pupil had been in high school.
4. Score on "Hoke's Prognostic Test of Stenographic Ability."
5. Subjective personal trait rating:
 - (a) Composite average on work-habits traits--Accuracy and Neatness, and Initiative and Self-confidence;
 - (b) composite average on character traits--Responsibleness, Dependability, Trustworthiness and Honesty, and Interest and Industriousness; and
 - (c) composite average on personality traits--Courteousness and Refinement, Tact and Graciousness, Pleasantness and Cheerfulness, and, Appearance and Grooming.

The pupils were then divided into three groups: those whose record on the five factors placed them in a group above question, those whose record was such that they might

or might not be successful in shorthand, and those for whom there was little indication of success in shorthand.

The results of the five years of the experimental study showed that of the 370 students who were indicated on the prognosis as "approved" for shorthand, only 2.4 per cent failed. Of the 138 marked as having a "fifty-fifty chance," 49.2 per cent failed. All of those students whose prognosis was marked as "not advisable" failed.

As a result of the above study, guidance service was inaugurated in the school; the same five factors in prognosis were used. "Approved" students were encouraged to do their best in this subject that they had elected. Those who had a "fifty-fifty chance" of success in shorthand were warned of the fact. Those classified as "not advisable" were discouraged from taking the subject.

While the preceding study reports good results with the use of prognosis, Leslie (9, p.339) sees little need for prognosis in shorthand. He writes:

There is certainly no value in devising a prognostic test to predict the possibility that a pupil has an ability or aptitude that we already know he has. Any pupil who has learned to read and write the English language on a tenth-year high school level has already given indisputable proof of his aptitude for learning shorthand. By learning shorthand is meant, of course, learning the shorthand symbols and outlines well enough to record dictation at 100 words a minute and to read it back satisfactorily.

No willing, co-operative, high school pupil, properly taught, can possibly fail to learn shorthand. If a high school pupil fails to learn shorthand, it is definitely because he is not willing to learn shorthand or because he is not co-operating by doing the homework assignments or because he is not properly taught.

It must be remembered, too, that the pupil's co-operation or lack of co-operation in performing homework assignments very often depends largely on the skill and competence of the teacher. If students in general fail to co-operate in the preparation of homework, it is usually a sign that the teacher is not teaching the subject skillfully and enthusiastically. The only exception to this is likely to be the lad who wants to be a truck driver or a plumber but who has been pushed into shorthand against his will. Sometimes even such a lad can be salvaged by the skillful teacher.

Commenting on prognostic tests, Tonne (13, p.300) stated:

. . . there is only one sound means of determining a person's ability to succeed in shorthand, and that is to let him take shorthand. Even this procedure is not entirely satisfactory, for many students have studied the subject at one level of the learning process and have been unsuccessful. Later on, when motivation became stronger, they have taken the subject again and have succeeded.

Brewington (4, p.296) said, "Shorthand students are now more carefully selected since the exceedingly high percentage of failures in shorthand suffers nationwide criticism."

Breuch (3) conducted an intensive study in Colorado of drop-outs from first-semester Gregg Shorthand classes, Anniversary Edition. Her investigation attempted to

determine if there was a relationship between the number of drop-outs and the method used of teaching shorthand, I. Q. scores, average high school grades, and sex. Besides seeking an analysis of reasons for drop-outs from the students involved and from the teachers of beginning shorthand, she sought the objectives of the drop-outs in taking shorthand in the first place (3, p.1). She divided her study into two parts: the Denver public schools and the other Colorado schools outside of Denver (3, pp.4-5).

Gregg Shorthand is usually taught by the Manual or Functional methods. In the Denver public schools, the drop-out ratio was 5.9 per cent less in the Functional method classes than in the Manual method classes. In the other Colorado schools, the Manual method classes showed a drop-out ratio of 1.1 per cent less than the Functional method. She found little correlation between drop-outs and I. Q.'s, average high school grades, and sex (3, p.iii).

In the Denver senior high schools, with 176 drop-outs during the first semester, the miscellaneous reason--needed at home, marriage, transferring to another school, moving, and ill health--was given by 38 students; "shorthand is too hard," 33; "I don't think I'll have any need for it," 25; "I do not like shorthand," 23; "there was too much homework," 16; "failing," 12; "I am going to work," 9; "absent too much," 7; "I do not like the teacher," 4; "I couldn't

memorize," 3; "financial reasons," 2; "graduation," 2; and "I must work and haven't time for my shorthand," 2 (3, p.76).

Of the schools outside of Denver, with 276 drop-outs out of a total of 1,651 originally enrolled, "failing" was the reason given for dropping out of shorthand by 62 students. "Too difficult" was given by 40; "no need for shorthand," 34; "miscellaneous," 33; "work," 21; "dislike of shorthand," 20; "transferred to another school," 19; "marriage," 16; "ill health," 5; "moved away," 3; "dropped school," 3; "dislike of the class," 2; "too far behind," 2; "discipline trouble," 1; and "too heavy a schedule," 1 (3, p.166).

An inadequate urge to learn shorthand, poor pupil objectives in taking shorthand, parental persuasion, poor home environment, and lack of requisite abilities for success in shorthand were the factors included in the teachers' analyses of the drop-outs (3, p.ii).

Reasons given by the drop-outs for having enrolled in shorthand in the first place, ascertained in the Denver study only, were ranked as follows: deferred vocational aim, personal use aim, parental influence, the appeal of the mystery of shorthand, and the purely vocational aim (3, p.iii-iv).

Writing on the revision of the Gregg Shorthand system, Boynton (2, p.7) said:

It is possible . . . to use up-to-date materials in the teaching of shorthand and yet be operating with a methodology and a teaching philosophy long since outmoded--one, for example, which believes that a shorthand teacher is not successful unless fifty per cent of the beginning class fails. In such a situation, the physical change to the use of new materials is only a poor token of lip service to revision, and it withers when the roots are denied the water that makes the changes necessary to its life. It is not enough, therefore, to revise shorthand materials alone. It is necessary to revise methods, too, and to know beyond question that the philosophical roots of shorthand teaching are sound and healthy and suitable for the day in which we teach.

Gress (8, pp.192-196) conducted a six-week summer-session class at Hunter College in Gregg Shorthand Simplified. The class was made up of undergraduates and some recent high school graduates. As a result of his first experience in teaching Gregg Shorthand Simplified, he concluded that its simplification enables the student to learn more easily and rapidly, basing this conclusion on his own observations, on his records, and comments of the students.

In a survey by the Gregg Publishing Company (12, p.1) in early 1950, questionnaires were sent out to a select group of Gregg Shorthand Simplified teachers. One hundred twenty questionnaires were returned by teachers in 66 high schools, 36 colleges and universities, and 18 private business colleges. The 120 teachers and schools represented all sections of the country. In answer to the question, "How did the number of drop-outs in the Gregg Shorthand Simplified class compare with the number of drop-outs you

experienced with the Anniversary Edition?" 14 high school teachers said, "Considerably fewer drop-outs." "Fewer drop-outs" was marked by 21 high school teachers; "same number of drop-outs," 20; and "more drop-outs," 2.

"After one semester of Gregg Shorthand Simplified, what is your feeling regarding total accomplishments of present students as compared to total accomplishments of former students using Anniversary Edition covering same period of instruction?" Thirty-five teachers replied, "Present students accomplished considerably more"; 24, "Present students accomplished more"; 5, "Present students accomplished same"; 2, "Present students accomplished less."

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The first part of this study of drop-outs of Oregon secondary school students from first-year Gregg Shorthand Simplified classes will deal with requirements for entering shorthand. Following the requirements is the section with data concerning frequency of drop-outs, handled in groups according to school enrollments. A classification of the drop-outs into the various reasons for dropping is then presented, followed by a comparison of the effects upon the number of drop-outs in schools in which Gregg Shorthand Simplified was taught.

Requirements for Enrolling in Shorthand

Data were received from fifty-two schools of all sizes; enrollments ranged from 35 to 2,200. Shorthand class enrollments varied from 4 to 186. Although shorthand is generally considered a terminal subject and although some schools offered but one year's study in it, students with simply junior standing registered for the course in at least 76.9 per cent of the schools included in this study, as shown in Table I. Two schools, or 3.8 per cent, allowed sophomores to take shorthand. One school, or 1.9 per cent, permitted seniors only to study shorthand. Another school was considering requiring senior standing. Three schools,

TABLE I

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTERING SHORTHAND

Requirement	Number of Schools Making Requirement in Each Enrollment Group						Totals	Percent
	0-100	101-200	201-300	301-500	501-1000	1001-2200		
Sophomore standing		1	1				2	3.8
Junior standing	6	7	9	5	5	8	40	76.9
Junior standing with one year of typing				1	1		2	3.8
Junior standing with Turse Shorthand Aptitude Test for screening					2		2	3.8
Junior standing with I. Q. for screening						1	1	1.9
Junior standing with average English grade					1		1	1.9
Senior standing				1			1	1.9
Requirements not stated	1	1	1				3	5.7

or 5.7 per cent, failed to indicate shorthand entrance requirements.

Three schools, or 5.7 per cent of the schools, had testing requirements. One school required a Turse Shorthand Aptitude Test score of 300, in addition to junior standing. The percentile rank corresponding to total raw scores on this test for a score of 300 is the forty-third percentile (14, p. 6). This particular school had 22 students in its shorthand class. Except for three transferring to other schools, every student completed the year.

Another school also used Turse's test for screening. Sixty students had signed up for the class; the thirty students highest in the test were allowed to take shorthand if their interest in it and their English grades were satisfactory. In spite of the screening, three dropped through lack of interest before the end of the second week. During the first semester, one student withdrew from school, while another student, one with a low I. Q., dropped the subject.

In one large school, all of the 126 students entering shorthand were given individual conferences; those students with low I. Q.'s were discouraged from taking the subject. If the parents insisted, the student was permitted to try the course. Of the six students who were advised not to enter shorthand, but who did so, three withdrew in about the third week, while "the other three--at parental insistence--

continued until they realized that they just could not do the work." The students in this school were not allowed to change from one course to another unless it was for some good reason; therefore, there were no other drop-outs, aside from those mentioned above.

Two schools, or 3.8 per cent, required that the students be at least juniors with one year of typing credit. Another school, or 1.9 per cent, asked that the shorthand students be juniors or seniors with at least an average grade in English.

Frequency of Drop-Outs

In the fifty-two schools offering Gregg Shorthand Simplified during the 1949-1950 school year, there were 1,771 students enrolled in shorthand at the beginning of the first semester. Drop-outs during the semester amounted to 236, or 13.3 per cent, as is shown in Table II. Classes are combined into six groups in the table, according to school enrollments: schools with 0-100 students, 101-200 students, 201-300 students, 301-500 students, 501-1000 students, and 1001-2200 students.

As might be expected, more students in the larger schools dropped shorthand than those in the smaller schools. The shorthand drop-out ratio, however, was greatest in the schools with enrollments of 301-500 students. The drop-out ratio for the first semester in that group was 27.5 per

TABLE II
 FREQUENCY OF DROP-OUTS FROM SHORTHAND CLASSES
 BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS DURING FIRST SEMESTER

School Enrollment	Shorthand Enrollment	Number of Drop-Outs	Drop-Out Percentage	Percent of Total Enrollment
0- 100	58	4	6.9	0.2
101- 200	139	23	16.5	1.3
201- 300	190	25	13.2	1.4
301- 500	182	50	27.5	2.8
501-1000	288	55	19.1	3.1
1001-2200	914	79	8.6	4.5
Totals	1,771	236		13.3

cent, while 8.6 per cent was the ratio for schools with enrollments of 1001-2200 students. The smallest drop-out ratio, 6.9 per cent, was found in the 0-100 group. The 501-1000 enrollment group had drop-outs amounting to 19.1 per cent of its shorthand enrollment; 101-200, 16.5 per cent; 201-300, 13.2 per cent.

During the second semester, 26 of the 1,530 students enrolled in shorthand dropped the course, a drop-out ratio of 1.7 per cent. No new theory was presented during this semester; the objectives were dictation speed-building and consolidation of the theory given the preceding semester.

TABLE III

FREQUENCY OF DROP-OUTS FROM SHORTHAND CLASSES
BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS DURING SECOND SEMESTER

School Enrollment	Shorthand Enrollment	Number of Drop-Outs	Drop-Out Percentage	Percent of Total Enrollment
0- 100	54	0	0.0	0.0
101- 200	116	5	4.3	0.3
201- 300	166	7	4.2	0.5
301- 500	132	1	0.8	0.1
501-1000	232	8	3.4	0.5
1001-2200	830	5	0.6	0.3
Totals	1,530	26		1.7

Table III shows the total drop-outs from shorthand classes by school enrollments during the second semester. The 101-200 enrollment group led with a drop-out ratio of 4.3 per cent. The 301-500 enrollment group evidently did a thorough job of eliminating the poorer students during the first semester, for it lost only 0.8 per cent of its students during the second semester. The 201-300 group had 4.2 per cent drop-outs; 501-1000, 3.4 per cent; 1001-2200, 0.6 per cent; 0-100, no drop-outs.

The percentages of shorthand drop-outs for the year are shown in Table IV. Schools with enrollments of 301-500 had

TABLE IV
 PERCENTAGES OF DROP-OUTS FROM SHORTHAND
 CLASSES DURING YEAR BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

School Enrollment	First Semester Drop-Out Percentage	Second Semester Drop-Out Percentage	Drop-Out Percentage During Year	Percent of Total Drop-Outs
0- 100	6.9	0.0	6.9	1.5
101- 200	16.5	4.3	20.1	10.7
201- 300	13.2	4.2	16.8	12.2
301- 500	27.5	0.8	28.0	19.5
501-1000	19.1	3.4	21.9	24.0
1001-2200	8.6	0.6	9.2	32.1
All groups	13.3	1.7	14.8	100.0

a 28 per cent drop-out in their shorthand classes. The remainder of the schools ranked in this order: 501-1000 enrollment, 21.9 per cent dropped out; 101-200, 20.1 per cent; 201-300, 16.8 per cent; 1001-2200, 9.2 per cent; and 0-100, 6.9 per cent. The total drop-out for all groups was 14.8 per cent.

A distinction is needed between those students who simply dropped shorthand but remained in school and those students who dropped shorthand in leaving school. Table V lists the number and percentage of shorthand students leaving school in the various enrollment groups.

TABLE V
 SHORTHAND STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

School Enrollment	Shorthand Enrollment	Left School	Percent Leaving School	Percent of Total
0- 100	58	1	1.7	1.2
101- 200	139	15	10.8	17.4
201- 300	190	19	10.0	22.2
301- 500	182	15	8.2	17.4
501-1000	288	18	6.3	20.9
1001-2200	914	18	2.0	20.9
All groups	1,771	86	4.9	100.0

Of the 1,771 students enrolled in shorthand at the beginning of the first semester, 86, or 4.9 per cent, had left school by the end of the year. This includes midyear graduates. Of the total drop-outs in shorthand, 32.8 per cent, or approximately one out of every three drop-outs, was due to the students' withdrawal from school.

Reasons for Dropping Shorthand

The frequencies of reasons for drop-outs from Gregg Shorthand Simplified classes in the 0-100 enrollment-group schools are given in detail in Table VI. One student withdrew from school, 1 lacked interest in the subject, 1 failed to do homework, and 1 had transferred from another school. The average number of drop-outs from shorthand per school was less than 1. The average class enrollment was 8, enabling the teacher to give considerable individual attention to each student.

TABLE VI

FREQUENCIES OF REASONS FOR DROPPING SHORTHAND IN SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 100 OR LESS

School Enrollment	35	45	48	66	71	85	96
Shorthand Enrollment	7	8	8	10	4	7	14
Reason for Dropping							
Withdrew from school		1					
Lacked interest in the subject			1				
Failed to do homework			1				
Transferred from other schools				1			
Totals	0	1	2	1	0	0	0

TABLE VII

FREQUENCIES OF REASONS FOR DROPPING SHORTHAND IN SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 101-200

	School Enrollment	140	147	150	160	170	200	200	200	200
	Shorthand Enrollment	19	22	8	13	11	22	16	12	16
Reason for Dropping										
Withdrew from school		1	9			1				
Midyear graduates							1	2		1
Skipping			1							
Lacked interest in subject			1		1					4
Failed to do homework				2	1					
No apparent memorizing ability		1								
Transferred from other schools		1								
Other reasons								1		
Totals		3	11	2	2	1	1	3	0	5

Table VII shows the frequencies of reasons for dropping shorthand in schools of the 101-200 enrollment group. The average shorthand drop-out from these schools was 3 students. Eleven students left school; 9 were from one school alone. Lacked interest in the subject was the second-ranking reason with 6 students. Midyear graduation accounted for 4 students; failed to do homework, 3; skipping, 1; no apparent memorizing ability, 1; transferred from other schools, 1; and other reasons, 1.

Table VIII gives the frequencies of reasons for dropping shorthand in schools with enrollments of 201-300. The average number of drop-outs was 3 per school. Seventeen students left school. Failing to do homework was the reason given for 4 drop-outs; midyear graduation, 2; irregular attendance because of ill health, 2; lacked interest in the subject, 2; no apparent memorizing ability, 1; and other reasons, 4.

The number of drop-outs entered on the questionnaire in the blank allotted to "other reasons" was sometimes classified. "Changed program" was a reason given in several instances; it has been added to the reasons listed on the questionnaire and is included in the tables dealing with drop-outs in the groups with enrollments of 301 to 2,200.

Some interesting data are shown in Table IX, frequencies of reasons for dropping shorthand in schools with

TABLE VIII

FREQUENCIES OF REASONS FOR DROPPING SHORTHAND IN SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 201-300

School Enrollment	210	210	220	220	235	245	250	250	275	279	286
Shorthand Enrollment	17	23	15	14	8	9	20	15	13	30	26
Reason for Dropping											
Withdrew from school		5	2	1			1		2	4	2
Midyear graduates										2	
Irregular attendance (ill health)	1				1						
Lacked interest in subject							1		1		
Failed to do homework					1		1				2
No apparent memorizing ability											1
Other reasons	1							2			1
Totals	2	5	2	1	2	0	3	2	3	6	6

TABLE IX
 FREQUENCIES OF REASONS FOR DROPPING SHORTHAND
 IN SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 301-500

School Enrollment	330	350	360	360	400	425	425
Shorthand Enrollment	26	26	40	43	17	10	20
Reason for Dropping							
Withdrew from school	2	7		3	2		
Midyear graduates	1						
Irregular attendance		2					
Ill health	1					1	
Lacked interest in subject	1			2			1
Failed to do homework				10			2
Poor background in English				2			1
Low I. Q.'s						1	
No apparent memorizing ability				4			
Physical handicaps				5			
Changed program						1	
Other reasons		2					
Totals	5	11	0	26	4	1	4

enrollments of 301-500. One school had 40 students enrolled in shorthand and had no drop-outs, while another school with 43 shorthand students ended the year with 26 fewer. The

TABLE X

FREQUENCIES OF REASONS FOR DROPPING SHORTHAND
IN SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 501-1000

School Enrollment	530	530	550	600	706	779	800	900	900
Shorthand Enrollment	23	26	31	22	58	10	34	54	30
Reason for Dropping									
Withdrew from school	3	1	2	3			1	2	2
Midyear graduates			3					1	
Irregular attendance									
Ill health							1		
School activities						1			
Skipping								1	
Lacked interest in subject		3	2		1		1	7	
Failed to do homework							1	3	
Poor background in English			1						
Low I. Q.'s		1	1					5	
No apparent memorizing ability						1			
Physical handicaps			2						
Transferred from other schools			1		1				
Changed program							1	5	
Other reasons					4			1	
Totals	3	5	12	3	8	0	5	25	2

average number of drop-outs for this group was 7. Withdrawals from school totaled 14. Failed to do homework was the reason given for 12 drop-outs; physical handicaps, 5; no apparent memorizing ability, 4; lacked interest in the subject, 4; poor background in English, 3; irregular attendance in general, 2; irregular attendance because of ill health, 2; midyear graduation, 1; low I. Q.'s, 1; changed program, 1; and other reasons, 2.

As shown in Table X, 14 shorthand students withdrew from school in the 501-1000 enrollment group. Fourteen students lacked interest in the subject; 7 had low I. Q.'s; 6 changed their programs; 4 were midyear graduates; 4 failed to do homework; 2 had physical handicaps; 2 transferred from other schools; 1 had irregular attendance because of ill health, 1 because of school activities, and 1 because of skipping; 1 had a poor background in English; 1 had no apparent memorizing ability; and other reasons, 5. The average number of drop-outs was 7 per school; the range of drop-outs was from 25 to 0.

In the 1001-2200 enrollment group, the reason most frequently given for dropping shorthand was failure to do homework. From Table XI it may be seen that 25 drop-outs were so classified. Low I. Q.'s accounted for 16 drop-outs; withdrawal from school, 14; lacked interest in the subject, 8; midyear graduation, 4; transferred from other schools, 3;

TABLE XI

FREQUENCIES OF REASONS FOR DROPPING SHORTHAND
IN SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 1001-2200

Enrollment:									
School	1050	1200	1233	1300	1400	1500	1630	2000	2200
Shorthand	55	126	155	83	135	57	63	54	186
Reason for Dropping									
Withdrew from school			3	1	3	1	2	4	
Midyear graduates	4								
Irreg. attendance							1		
Ill health						1			
Skipping						2			
Lacked interest in subject					2	3			3
Failed to do homework	1		2	5	4				13
Low I. Q.'s		6		9	1				
No apparent memorizing ability					1				
Transferred from other schools				2					1
Changed program							3		
Other reasons					2			1	3
Totals	5	6	5	17	13	7	6	5	20

changed program, 3; irregular attendance because of skipping, 2; irregular attendance because of ill health, 1; irregular attendance in general, 1; no apparent memorizing ability, 1; and other reasons, 6. The average shorthand drop-out was 9 per school; the range of drop-outs was from 20 to 5.

Table XII gives a rather complete picture of the drop-out data by school-enrollment groups. "Withdrew from school" was the reason most frequently given for dropping shorthand, accounting for 27.1 per cent of the total drop-outs in this study. Failure to do homework caused 18.7 per cent of the drop-outs; lack of interest in the subject, 13.4 per cent. The remainder of the reasons ranked in this order: low I. Q.'s, other reasons, midyear graduates, changed program, no apparent memorizing ability, physical handicaps, transferred from other schools, irregular attendance because of ill health, poor background in English, irregular attendance because of skipping, irregular attendance in general, and irregular attendance because of school activities.

TABLE XII

FREQUENCIES OF REASONS FOR DROPPING GREGG SHORTHAND SIMPLIFIED

Reason for Dropping	Enrollment Group													
	0- 100		101- 200		201- 300		301- 500		501-1000		1001-2200		Totals	
	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.
Withdrawn from School	1	25.0	11	39.3	17	53.1	14	27.4	14	22.2	14	16.7	71	27.1
Midyear graduates			4	14.3	2	6.2	1	2.0	4	6.3	4	4.8	15	5.7
Irregular Attendance							2	3.9			1	1.2	3	1.1
Ill health					2	6.2	2	3.9	1	1.6	1	1.2	6	2.3
School activities									1	1.6			1	0.4
Skipping			1	3.6					1	1.6	2	2.4	4	1.5
Lacked interest in subject	1	25.0	6	21.4	2	6.2	4	7.8	14	22.2	8	9.5	35	13.4
Failed to do homework	1	25.0	3	10.6	4	12.6	12	23.5	4	6.3	25	29.7	49	18.7
Poor background in English							3	6.0	1	1.6			4	1.5
Low I. Q.'s							1	2.0	7	11.1	16	19.0	24	9.2
No apparent memorizing ability			1	3.6	1	3.1	4	7.8	1	1.6	1	1.2	8	3.0
Physical handicaps							5	9.8	2	3.2			7	2.7
Transferred from other schools	1	25.0	1	3.6					2	3.2	3	3.6	7	2.7
Changed program							1	2.0	6	9.6	3	3.6	10	3.8
Other reasons			1	3.6	4	12.6	2	3.9	5	7.9	6	7.1	18	6.9
Totals	4	100.0	28	100.0	32	100.0	51	100.0	63	100.0	84	100.0	262	100.0

Effect upon Drop-Outs

Twenty-five teachers, or 48.1 per cent of those returning questionnaires, said they had had fewer drop-outs with Gregg Shorthand Simplified than with the system previously taught. Twelve teachers, or 23.1 per cent, believed that they had had as many drop-outs with Gregg Simplified. Questionnaires from 15 schools, or 28.8 per cent, did not indicate how teaching Gregg Simplified affected the number of students dropping shorthand. In several cases this is accounted for by the fact that the teachers had not taught shorthand before the 1949-1950 school year.

Table XIII shows how the teachers' opinions of success in reducing drop-outs with Gregg Simplified varied in the schools in different enrollment groups. Teachers in the 301-500 enrollment group did not fare as well with Gregg Simplified as did the other groups; two teachers had fewer drop-outs, while 4 had as many as with the previous system taught. Incidentally, this is the same enrollment group that had a drop-out ratio of 27.5 per cent.

TABLE XIII

EXTENT OF DROP-OUTS WITH GREGG SHORTHAND
SIMPLIFIED COMPARED WITH SYSTEM PREVIOUSLY TAUGHT

School Enrollment	Extent of Drop-Outs		
	Fewer	As Many	Not Stated
0- 100	6		1
101- 200	4	1	4
201- 300	6	3	2
301- 500	2	4	1
501-1000	3	1	5
1001-2200	4	3	2
All groups	25	12	15
Percentage	48.1	23.1	28.8

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drop-outs from first-year shorthand classes have been of concern to business educators and school administrators for many years. A simplified shorthand system has often been conceived as a solution to the problem. Gregg Shorthand Simplified was made available to shorthand teachers in time to be used during the 1949-1950 school year.

The problem of this study has been to determine the extent of and reasons for the drop-outs from Oregon secondary school first-year classes of Gregg Shorthand Simplified. The purpose has been to discover to what degree this simplification of Gregg Shorthand has solved the problem of drop-outs.

The study was undertaken in the public secondary schools of Oregon that offered Gregg Shorthand Simplified during the 1949-1950 school year. A postal card survey was made to determine which schools were teaching Gregg Shorthand Simplified.

The data for this study were secured through a questionnaire sent to the Oregon secondary schools offering Gregg Simplified. The questionnaire called for the requirements for entering shorthand; the first- and second-semester shorthand enrollments and drop-outs; the reasons for students dropping shorthand; and a statement as to

whether the teacher had fewer, more, or as many drop-outs with Gregg Simplified as with the system previously taught. These data were then tabulated according to school-enrollment groups.

Of the total enrollment of 1,771 Gregg Shorthand Simplified students in the fall of 1949, only 262 students, or 14.8 per cent, did not complete the course. During the first semester, 13.3 per cent of the students taking shorthand dropped the class. The second semester toll was 1.7 per cent. Of these 262 students, 86, or 32.8 per cent of those dropping shorthand, were students who graduated at midyear or who left school to marry, move, work, and so forth. This left a drop-out of but 9.9 per cent of the total shorthand enrollment, that could be attributed to the student's reaction to the subject matter, the classroom, and the teacher.

Failure to do homework was the second-highest reason for dropping shorthand, next to leaving school; forty-nine drop-outs, or 18.7 per cent, fell in this classification. Next in line with 35 drop-outs, or 13.4 per cent, was the lack of interest in the subject. Twenty-four drop-outs, or 9.2 per cent, were attributed to low I. Q.'s; 18, or 6.9 per cent, other reasons; 10, or 3.8 per cent, changed program; 8, or 3 per cent, no apparent memorizing ability; 7, or 2.7 per cent, physical handicaps; 7, or 2.7 per cent,

transferred from other schools; 6, or 2.3 per cent, irregular attendance because of ill health; 4, or 1.5 per cent, poor background in English; 4, or 1.5 per cent, irregular attendance because of skipping; 3, or 1.1 per cent, general irregular attendance; 1, or 0.4 per cent, irregular attendance because of school activities.

The highest shorthand drop-out average, 28 per cent, was in the schools with an enrollment of 301-500. Schools with 501-1000 students averaged a 21.9 per-cent drop-out; 101-200, 20.1 per cent; 201-300, 16.8 per cent; all schools, 14.8 per cent; 1001-2200, 9.2 per cent; and 0-100, 6.9 per cent.

In over 75 per cent of the schools, the only requirement for enrolling in shorthand was junior standing. Three schools, or 5.7 per cent, used testing for screening prospective shorthand students. Two schools, or 3.8 per cent, required one year of typing credit in addition to junior standing. Two schools, or 3.8 per cent, allowed sophomores to take shorthand, while one school, or 1.9 per cent, restricted the studying of shorthand to seniors.

Twenty-five schools, or 48.1 per cent, had fewer drop-outs with Gregg Shorthand Simplified than with the system previously taught, according to the teachers filling out the questionnaires from those schools. Twelve schools, or 23.1 per cent, had as many drop-outs as before. Fifteen schools,

or 28.8 per cent, did not make a statement comparing the effect upon drop-outs from Gregg Shorthand Simplified with systems previously taught.

Conclusions

This study justifies the following conclusions:

1. Gregg Shorthand Simplified has decreased the number of drop-outs from first-year shorthand classes, usually without screening the prospective students.
2. Aside from students leaving school, failure to complete homework is the most common reason for dropping first-year Gregg Shorthand Simplified.
3. Students often enroll in shorthand without having the lasting interest requisite to acquiring a skill in the subject.
4. The size of the school has no particular bearing upon the number of drop-outs from its shorthand classes.

Recommendations

Based upon the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should always stress the role that homework plays in developing shorthand skill.
2. Teachers using other shorthand systems and experiencing difficulty in reducing drop-outs would do well to give Gregg Shorthand Simplified a trial.
3. Students desiring to enroll in shorthand should receive information concerning the nature of the subject, the necessity for homework, and the opportunities awaiting the successful shorthand student.
4. Teachers experiencing an excessive number of drop-outs should review their own methods of teaching in order to discover any shortcomings.
5. The shorthand teacher should do everything in his power not only to win over disinterested students, but also to maintain the interest of the rest of the class.

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APPENDIX A**CORRESPONDENCE**

March, 1950

Fellow Teacher:

I am interested in knowing whether or not your high school has been teaching Gregg Shorthand Simplified during this school year, 1949-1950.

Please indicate the information concerning your school on the attached card. I shall appreciate the return of the card for record-checking purposes, even if you do not offer Shorthand in your school.

Sincerely,

Date _____

_____ High School is. . . .

_____ Teaching Gregg Simplified this year.

_____ Planning to teach it next year, 1950-1951.

_____ Anticipating no change to Simplified.

_____ Not offering Shorthand.

Signed: _____

Commercial Department
Corvallis High School
Corvallis, Oregon

Dear Fellow Teacher:

Thanks for returning the card that I mailed to you recently. I wanted to know if enough teachers in Oregon were using Gregg Shorthand Simplified this year to warrant a study of the results.

So now I reward you for your cooperation by sending you one of those unwelcome questionnaires!

To lessen the pain, I have tried to make the questionnaire as simple as is consistent with the purpose of the survey: Why did those students who dropped out of your Gregg Shorthand Simplified classes do so?

You lost no students all year? Fine! Please return the questionnaire appropriately marked, noting number of students, etc.

You lost several students as you did with the Anniversary Edition? Then, in your opinion, why did they drop? You may include on the back side of the questionnaire any pertinent remarks.

I want you to know that I do appreciate your cooperation. I realize that you are busy, especially at this time of the year, but may I have your report sometime during the next three weeks?

Sincerely yours,

Lee Spitznogle

Corvallis High
June 2, 1950

The response to my recent questionnaire on drop-outs with Gregg Shorthand Simplified has been gratifying. May I have your report soon, if it isn't already in the mail?

Sincerely yours,

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

DROP-OUT QUESTIONNAIRE, FIRST-YEAR GREGG SHORTHAND SIMPLIFIED CLASSES

Compiled by _____ Date _____
 High School _____ Approximate Enrollment _____
 Requirements for entering Shorthand: (Soph)(Jr)(Sr) _____
 I believe I have had (fewer)(more)(as many) drop-outs with Simplified.

- A. Number of students enrolled in first-year Gregg Shorthand Simplified classes during First Semester, 1949-1950 (either Manual or Functional Method): _____
- B. Number enrolled at the beginning of the Second Semester: _____
- C. Number of students who withdrew from Gregg Simplified during First Semester: _____
- D. Present enrollment in first-year Gregg Simplified classes: _____
- E. Drop-outs during Second Semester from Simplified classes: _____
- F. Total drop-outs from Gregg Simplified during school year: _____

Breakdown of Item F Above (Total Drop-outs from Gregg Simplified):

Give number of students who

- Withdrew from school during year (___ were mid-year graduates): _____
- Failed in Shorthand because of irregular attendance: _____
 (Ill health ___, school activities ___, skipping ___)
- Lacked interest in subject: _____
 (Such as "Mother made me take it.")
- Failed to do homework: _____
- Had poor background in English: _____
- Had low I. Q.'s: _____
- Had no apparent memorizing ability: _____
- Had physical handicaps (including poor coordination, etc.): _____
- Transferred from other schools: _____
- Withdrew for other reasons: _____
- Total Drop-outs: _____

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATING HIGH SCHOOLS AND SHORTHAND INSTRUCTORS

PARTICIPATING HIGH SCHOOLS AND SHORTHAND INSTRUCTORS

Albany	Miss Clara Voyen
Arlington	Mrs. Gertrude Ditto
Bend	Miss Mary Bugar
Central Point	Miss Martha Boshears
Cleveland (Portland)	Mrs. Solona Preer
Condon	Mrs. Neddra DeLaney
Corvallis	Mr. Lee Spitznogle
Cottage Grove Union	Miss Marilyn Litch
Cove	Mrs. Elizabeth Eckel
Dayton Union	Miss Elizabeth Marsh
Elkton	Mrs. Mayme LaVoy
Eugene	Miss Zilda Hayes
Grant (Portland)	Mrs. Ruby Mishler
Hermiston Union	Mr. Gilbert E. Henry
Independence	Mrs. Ruth T. Reich
Jefferson (Portland)	Mrs. Faye Chavez Mrs. Audrey Coons Miss Alice Johnson
Klamath Falls Union	Miss Dorothy Bailie
Lebanon Union	Miss Genevieve Piluso
Milwaukie Union	Miss Blanche Mellinger
Molalla Union	Mrs. Dorothy Del Ridings
Myrtle Creek	Miss Joanne McKinney
Myrtle Point Union	Miss Geraldine Lininger
Nehalem Union	Mrs. Hans Herchenhein

Newberg Union	Mrs. Mary E. Hein
Newport	Miss O. Frydenlund
North Bend	Mr. L. M. Landrith
Nyssa	Miss Margery Nihart
Ontario	Miss E. Root
Oregon City	Miss Rosine Garfield
Rainier Union	Miss Helen M. Wray
Reedsport Union	Mrs. Clara Borrevik
Rogue River	Mrs. Margaret B. Stockman
Roosevelt (Portland)	Miss Katherine F. Murphy
Salem	Miss Elizabeth Hogg
Scappoose Union	Miss Edna M. Jesseph
Seaside Union	Mrs. Margrette E. Miller
Sheridan	Mrs. Phyllis Bass
Sherwood Union	Mrs. Venita Boutwell
Springfield	Mrs. Barbara Mayer
Taft	Mrs. Lucille S. Borigo
Talent	Mrs. Irma Parr
Tigard Union	Miss Nellie Elwert
Tillamook	Miss Vida Abrams
Toledo	Mr. A. C. Crews
University (Eugene)	Miss Mae Lorenzen
Vernonia Union	Miss Dorothy Yocum
Waldport	Mrs. Cora W. Bryant
Warrenton	Mrs. Theodora M. Gibson

Washington (Portland)

Wheeler Union

Willamette (Eugene)

Woodburn

Miss Doris Hageman

Mrs. Vivian Blair Reagan

Mrs. Inez Loveless

Miss Leona Hopkins