AN EVALUATION OF THE BUSINESS WRITING COURSE
AT NORTH TEXAS STATE COLLEGE

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

By

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Clifton, Texas
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

This study is an attempt to evaluate the Business Writing course at North Texas State College and to determine whether the course as it is now presented meets the needs and desires of the students.

Significance of the Problem

Education which is modern aims to develop young men and women to the utmost of their potentialities and to equip them with the general skills and techniques and the specialized knowledge which will make it possible for them to do some productive work related to their capacities and interest.

To fulfill these aims, the subject matter in any field must include more than specific vocational techniques. Just as the lawyer who does not have a general knowledge of psychology, sociology, and economics in addition to his specialized knowledge of law is ill-equipped to practice law, the college student entering the business world without a knowledge of the basic principles of effective business communication is not adequately prepared to do the job commerce and industry expects of him.
Communication is an indispensable tool in modern business. Moreover, modern business considers indispensable the person who can speak and write intelligently, correctly, effectively, clearly, concisely, and interestingly. With millions of transactions occurring daily through the medium of the business letter and considering the 74.8 cents cost of each average-length dictated business letter, it is understandable that business wants persons trained in effective use of the English language to eliminate a waste of time, effort, and money. Not only does the commercial and industrial world want efficiency in letter writing but it seeks the services of the person whose letters can make friends. One correspondence specialist has prepared some 7,000 guide letters as the basis for forty-five million letters that will be produced this year by the twenty-one big-name firms that are his clients.  

A recognition of the importance of grammatically accurate and influential speech and writing has led many colleges and universities to add a business writing course to their curriculums in recent years. Furthermore, more and more organizations are adding correspondence training to their

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1R. R. Aurner, Effective Communication in Business, p. 11.  
2The Dallas Morning News, Magazine Section, July 20, 1950, p. 4.
programs. The Prudential Insurance Company of America is a notable example.

With an average of 10,000 letters a day, dictated by hundreds of correspondents in the home office alone, even a small proportion of poor letters can have a bad effect on the public's opinion of the company. Prudential's management realized that many customers and prospects get all, or most, of their impressions of the company through letters. These letters should win friends. That is precisely what The Prudential wants them to do.

With this in mind, The Prudential set up its comprehensive program for improving correspondence.3

Other firms that have on-the-job instruction in Business Writing may agree with the Fort Worth Montgomery Ward Letter Writing Instructor who says they find that people with college training in Business Writing get along better and faster in the training program than those without.4

It is generally conceded that there is strictly speaking no such thing as "business English," yet the expression persists. The tools of language are fundamental, no matter what one wishes to accomplish by their use. It is desirable to think of the Business Writing course as being a synthesis of the elements of correct, expressive English and of good business form. Furthermore, business writings are dependent more upon providing information, in securing action, and developing an understanding than they are in entertaining, amusing,


and educating the reader. The effect on the reader is entirely different from that produced by literary composition.

Letters may be mechanically perfect and technically correct as far as language is concerned and still not be effective. Business Writing can and should develop an understanding of how fundamentals already known may be used in a manner which will get results. It is not the aim of the course to develop skill in writing specialized types of correspondence. Obviously, such skill comes only through much experience and acquaintance with actual requirements in business situations. Rather the aim is the development of appreciation and moderate writing skill through training in the recognition of the need for and qualities of good business correspondence, understanding the theory of effective business writing, and application of basic principles through writing practice.

An understanding of the importance of communication is essential to success. A knowledge of good English gives one poise and confidence in his social, professional, and business activities.

More and more, college-trained men and women are filling the executive ranks of American business; and as a result the level of literacy in business is increasing sharply. It is unthinkable that a responsible officer of a business would be satisfied with anything less than high standards of English either in his own letters or in those of his subordinates. Not only is this a matter of personal pride; it is a recognition of the competitive value of good English and of the essentiality of good English in communicating ideas clearly and effectively.5

One writer has expressed the same thought in listing improvement of ability in communication as one of the ways to get a raise in pay.

Inability to express yourself is a handicap. When climbing the ladder of success, skill at dictating terse, friendly and clear letters and reports becomes more important. To aim high you'll have to present ideas and arguments without fumbling and faltering. You may be called to talk to groups of other employees, to dealers, to trade associations, and ultimately find yourself in a hall full of people, with a microphone carrying your words to many listeners.6

In attempting to provide training which will meet the challenges and requirements of American enterprise, the Business Writing course was first offered on its present level at North Texas State College in the fall of 1937. Recognizing the eminence of this comparatively new course which is now a required course for all business administration majors, it is believed that a study will reveal suggestions or recommended revisions that will make the future presentation of the course more meaningful and worth while to students and faculty.

Sources of Data
As a partial basis for the evaluation of the course, the students enrolled in the six Business Writing classes at North Texas State College during the 1950 spring semester were asked at the end of the semester to give their appraisal

of the course. This survey, made by means of a questionnaire, included opinions and recommendations of 122 students.

A second part of the survey has to do with inquiries addressed to School of Business graduates of North Texas State College who are already employed. The graduates were selected from the class rolls of students enrolled in the course during the 1948-1949 school term. It was felt that these persons were better qualified to appraise some aspects of the course from the standpoint of practical application. Forty-six of the eighty-five addressees responded.

Copies of the two questionnaires used in the survey are included in the Appendix, page 55.

The following leading textbooks in the field of Business Writing have been used to obtain ideas in the preparation of the questionnaires and as sources of information in writing.

R. R. Aurner, **Effective Communication in Business**, South-Western Publishing Company
Babenroth and Parkhurst, **Modern Business English**, Prentice-Hall, Incorporated
Hotchkiss, Kilduff, and Janis, **Advanced Business Correspondence**, Harper and Brothers Publishers
Robertson and Carmichael, **Business Letter English**, The Gregg Publishing Company
Smart and McKelvey, **Business Letters**, Harper and Brothers Publishers

**Effective Communication in Business** by Aurner is the textbook used by the Business Writing classes at North Texas, but the other textbooks also are used to provide supplementary material.
An invaluable aid to instructors of Business Writing and one that has been helpful in the preparation of this study is the bulletins published at Urbana, Illinois for members of The American Business Writing Association. This association has for its purpose the mutually beneficial exchange of information among teachers of Business Writing regarding trends, status, and techniques of correspondence.

Limitations

In considering the data, it must be kept in mind that each student included in the survey undoubtedly answered the questions according to his individual preferences, abilities, and shortcomings. Doubtless, each graduate answered with the same thoughts in mind and at the same time according to the needs of his particular job.

Although the several instructors for the course make an effort to offer the course material in about the same way, there naturally will be variations in instruction which would probably cause differences in answers.

Method of Procedure

The data for this study have been divided as nearly as possible to conform with the order of presentation of course material. First, the opinions and recommendations concerning the study of the principles of grammar are considered; second, the data concerning the development of letter writing techniques are studied; third, data concerning tests are weighed;
and, finally, the data for the justification of the continu-
ance of Business Writing as a required course are reviewed.

In each division the information received from spring
enrollees and the information received from graduates is com-
pared for the purpose of evaluation.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LANGUAGE FUNDAMENTALS

Because the structural principles of the language must be fairly well mastered before a student is able to produce acceptable business writings, approximately the first six weeks of the Business Writing course are given over to a review of language fundamentals. It is generally conceded that "success in the useful art of business writing is conditioned by the writer's ability to apply the rules and principles applicable to all effective English composition."¹ For this reason, it is desirable that the student realize the soundness and validity of certain fundamental guides to writing. A command of fundamentals enables the student to write more spontaneously and confidently.

Neither does time permit nor is it the purpose to present an exhaustive study of the parts of speech, punctuation, grammatical construction, vocabulary building, and spelling. Instead, the review is given to discover students' weaknesses for the purpose of helping them overcome their basic faults and to impress upon them the necessity of a control of these fundamentals which are essential to business communication,

¹A. C. Babenroth and C. C. Parkhurst, Modern Business English, p. 5.
Along with the review the groundwork is laid for the
development of writing techniques. Students are encouraged
to look on business writing as a challenge and an opportunity
rather than an assigned task that must be completed. The
vital role that communication plays in business is stressed.
In order to develop an appreciative and willing attitude, an
effort is made to make the students become letter conscious.

Emphasis in Review of Fundamentals

In an attempt to determine whether a suitable amount of
time is allotted to this review of language fundamentals and
whether the emphasis on the several studies is properly di-
rected, the students enrolled during the spring semester were
asked to indicate their feelings concerning the review.
Their opinions are shown in Table 1.

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<tr>
<td>ATTITUDES OF SPRING ENROLLEES</td>
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<td>REGARDING EMPHASIS ON REVIEW</td>
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<td>OF LANGUAGE FUNDAMENTALS</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>Parts of Speech</td>
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<td>Punctuation</td>
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<td>Sentence Structure</td>
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<td>Vocabulary Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
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</table>
Students apparently feel that none of the studies are seriously over-emphasized. More students replied that sufficient emphasis is placed on parts of speech than on any of the other review studies. They may feel that through elementary, secondary, and early college courses and through regularly practiced customs of language in everyday living they have formed acceptable habits in the use of the parts of speech which make a review repetitious and unnecessary.

The attention given to parts of speech in the Business Writing course is not intended as an examination of grammatical theory. Even though it is true that one is unable to construct sentences with precision, accuracy, and clarity unless he has a knowledge of the relation of these practical working tools to one another, the primary purpose of the review of the parts of speech is to explain that dynamic and colorful business composition comes as a result of their skillful use.

Approximately the same percentage of students answered that not enough emphasis is placed on punctuation and sentence structure. The majority, however, indicate that sufficient emphasis is given to these acquirements.

There is a tendency toward moderation in the use of the comma in business writing except where it is needed for clearness and easy reading. Little time is given to a resume of the rules governing the use of the comma and semicolon, because it is felt that students deficient in a knowledge of these principles can enlarge the scope of their review
through the use of a good handbook of English usage. As the need for the elements of forceful sentence structure are repeated during the semester and since the significance of the need can be more readily grasped when letter composition is undertaken, time during the review is given over mainly to a rudimentary knowledge of this phase of study.

According to the opinions expressed, the study that is most lacking in emphasis is vocabulary building, with spelling ranking next.

Although it must be considered that each student undoubtedly answered with his own limitations in mind, it is felt to be significant that there is general agreement on the lack of sufficient emphasis on vocabulary building and spelling.

In accordance with their work experience, graduates were asked to indicate the part of the review which they felt should be given most emphasis. Table 2 shows the results of their recommendations.

TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parts of Speech</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Structure</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Building</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduates recommend giving less emphasis to parts of speech. Perhaps they too feel that a sufficient foundation in this aspect of language fundamentals has already been fixed through study and habits.

Those already employed feel that most emphasis should be placed on sentence structure and vocabulary building. Although a larger percentage indicated that the most emphasis should be placed on sentence structure, graduates agree with the spring enrollees that vocabulary building is lacking in emphasis.

Graduates do not place nearly so much emphasis on spelling as did the students. Students may have given insistence to spelling because they are acutely conscious of the penalties for misspelling. The prevalent practice is to make a deduction in students' grades for errors in this ability. On the other hand, graduates may have become sufficiently impressed with the necessity for correct spelling to conduct programs of self-improvement and have learned to rely on themselves in checking accuracy in spelling.

Graduates commenting on their selections of the part of the review that should be given most emphasis point out that parts of speech, punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling to a certain extent, are mastered in English courses. However, they are emphatic in stating that the ability to construct good sentences is of vital importance; therefore, this belief evidently explains why sentence structure is rated as
most important by the majority of graduates. They further commented that the ability to construct good sentences is of no great value unless one possesses an adequate vocabulary with which to express himself in a commendable manner.

Laboratory in Grammar Review

This survey included the question concerning the worthwhileness of conducting a laboratory in grammar review as shown in Table 3. No mention was made as to whether the laboratory should be a compulsory one.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
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<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Laboratory in Grammar Review</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Enrollees</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students enrolled in the course during the spring semester were rather evenly divided in their opinions. The percentage of students favoring a laboratory was 47.4 while the percentage who felt that a laboratory is not necessary was 52.6. A superior portion of graduates answered affirmatively. Their reasoning concerning the laboratory may be
attributable to the thought that a laboratory would provide the experience of more detailed, intensive study in overcoming individual difficulties.

English Prerequisites to Enrollment

A prerequisite for enrollment in Business Writing is that the student shall have completed his freshman and sophomore English courses. The required English courses are as follows: English 131-132, Grammar and Composition, Composition and Rhetoric; and English 231-232, English Literature, or English 235-236, Introduction to Literature.

To determine whether the prerequisite regarding the completion of freshman and sophomore English courses is necessary, the respondents were asked to express their opinions as to the number of years of English courses needed before enrolling in the course. Table 4 shows the expressions in regard to this prerequisite.

**TABLE 4**

| PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS FAVORING ONE YEAR OR TWO YEARS OF ENGLISH COURSES AS A PREREQUISITE TO BUSINESS WRITING |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Respondents                                    | One Year | Two Years |
| Spring Enrollees                               | 49.6     | 50.4      |
| Graduates                                      | 39.1     | 60.9      |
Again, spring semester enrollees were almost evenly divided in their opinions as to whether one year or two years of English should be required as a prerequisite to enrollment. The greater number of graduates feel that two years of English should be completed before being allowed to enroll. This is particularly interesting since only the freshman year of English is devoted to the study and use of language fundamentals. Perhaps the respondents feel that the second year of English would provide a better background for the course because of the opportunity to become well read in creative, imaginative writing.
CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF LETTER WRITING TECHNIQUES

After approximately the first six weeks of the semester have been devoted to a review of the language fundamentals, the remainder of the semester is utilized in business composition with letter writing as its basis.

Phases of Study

In promoting development in writing ability, the following phases of study are considered: psychology in letter writing, letter layout, mechanics of expression, familiarity with the simpler types of letters, familiarity with the more complex letters, and familiarity with application letters.

Psychology in letter writing.--The psychological aspects of letter writing deal with human behavior--instincts, feelings, emotions, reason. The effective letter writer can and must give attention to psychology because he must be aware of those appeals that may be used to best advantage in approaching, influencing, or persuading his reader.

Psychology in letter writing is fundamentally the expression of courtesy and the "You" attitude. Nearly everyone recognizes the necessity for courtesy, yet an understanding of its true application is not universal. One purpose of business writing should be to impress upon the student's mind
the meaning of real courtesy in writing. He must recognize
the necessity for sincerity and a genuine desire to be help-
ful and to please. This does not evidence itself in the mere
expressions of \textit{Thank You} and \textit{Please} which are usually associ-
ated with courtesy. The course should instill into the student
the growing characteristic of business in general—courtesy
for its own sake as well as for its larger returns.

The presence of courtesy is based upon the "You" attitude.
Effort should be directed to the student's realization that
mechanical courtesy and discourtesy are not possible when the
letter is written with the outlook of the one who is to re-
ceive it in mind. The development of this general character-
istic which should be common to all types of correspondence
is another aim of the Business Writing course. The use of
monotonous words and phrases is an indication of indifference
and indirectly of laziness. The effect upon the reader of
letters showing such a careless attitude is not positive.
Routine expressions give the reader the impression that he is
being given only routine service and that there is no real
interest in him as an individual.

The mere substitution of \textit{You} for the too frequently used
\textit{I} and \textit{We} does not suffice; instead, a sincere attempt to
visualize the person to whom the letter is being sent will
result in a normal \textit{You} expression. Visualization in letter
writing does not necessarily refer to a picture of the
physical characteristics of the person addressed, but rather to a perception of his understanding of and outlook upon the subject of the letter.

Letter layout.--Letter layout refers to the form and placement of the letter on the stationery.

Among leading business organizations there is a tendency to develop, to establish, and to conform to good usage in letter practice. Good usage is set by the practice of leading authorities and by the weight of preference of leading business enterprises. The approved modern practice of leading firms assigns to the letter a physical structure composed of certain parts, each of which is considered essential. Letter layout refers to the arrangement of these several essential parts.¹

There is no one correct form for the business letter.

Many forms are acceptable, but one or two have top rating (1) because in mere number they are most widely used, and (2) because they are preferred by business organizations noted for producing excellent letters. The weight of use by well-known organizations gives both popularity and authoritative sanction to a few forms.²

Mechanical perfection in form and placement is vital to the success of a letter because it produces the critical first impression received by the reader.

Since the ability to typewrite is one of the prerequisites for enrollment in the Business Writing course, students enter the course with a knowledge of the accepted standard forms of letter placement; but the fundamental necessity for

¹R. R. Aurner, Effective English in Business, p. 47.
²Ibid., p. 36.
following placement rules which have resulted from the evolution of a set of principles based upon what has been found to be most adequate from the standpoint of artistic arrangement, simplicity, and usefulness, is stressed. The appreciation of good form with special reference to the selection of the style best suited to the particular letter or organization should take on new meaning to the student with the realization of the importance of letter layout.

Mechanics of expression.--Mechanics of expression not only refers to the meaningful review of the principles of English composition which are essential to business communications and to the constant effort which is exerted to insure their correct usage and consistent application. Mechanics of expression also includes the study of variety in sentence and paragraph structure for the purpose of replacing obsolete, stereotyped, and provincial expressions in business communications with a style of writing which is vivid, colorful, and effective and at the same time possessed of a tone of personal interest and solicitation.

Mechanics of expression gives consideration to specific factors of letter construction such as the strategic positions of the first and last sentences in a letter. The importance of the first sentence of the letter can be shown by comparing it with the impression created by a first contact with an individual. The same resemblance between a personal meeting and the letter can be seen with reference to the last sentence. The directness and skill with which the leave-taking
is executed influence the final impression as much in writing as in personal business relationships.

Simpler types of letters.--The simpler types of letters are those involving routine, everyday transactions. Examples of such everyday transactions are found in orders, remittance and acknowledgment letters, inquiries and answers to inquiries, announcements, business invitations, and appointments.

Modern business realizes that, no matter how small the monetary amount involved or how routine the situation, there is an opportunity for every letter to serve as the company's ambassador of goodwill. The superficial answer to inquiries, the curt dismissal or the inadequate adjustment of complaints, and the brusque acknowledgment of letters that characterized business correspondence in the past, have disappeared among up-to-date organizations. Realizing that bad letters, or the use of one wrong word, might cause the loss of many thousands of dollars' worth of business, executives today are painstaking in their efforts to make sure that even routine matters are handled in accordance with the concept of letter writing as a sales medium.

All letters in this category should be characterized by a positive approach, even in those cases where requests must be denied and even in order letters, the most simple letter of this type.

A study of the simpler letters involves a consideration of the qualities of letters which make them vital. These
powers are essential to the content of all letters whether their purpose is to inform, request, order, buy, sell, or adjust. They are generally referred to as the C's of business correspondence. Various writers on the subject do not agree always on the number of C's, but almost without exception they include clearness, conciseness, correctness, and courtesy. The others sometimes mentioned are completeness, consideration, concreteness, character, and coherence.

Clearness obviously is necessary for the success of any business letter, yet the ability to express ideas clearly is not easy nor inherent but comes only through training and experience. There should be a recognition of the importance of writing a letter which will require only one reading not only as a matter of consideration of the value of the reader's time but also as a reflection of the mental ability and carefulness of the writer.

A second quality which students should be directed toward attaining in letter writing is conciseness. This characteristic which is very important is too often confused with brevity. It would be better to describe it as being the opposite of wordiness. While this implies brevity, it does not suggest briefness at the expense of completeness. It aims rather at saying what one has to say in as few words as possible without in any way sacrificing the other qualities of a good letter.
Some mention of correctness has already been made in connection with the mechanical characteristics of letters. It is not only a matter of courtesy to the reader but also an indication of pride in personal achievement and care in retaining goodwill for the company for the writer of a letter to see to it that the mechanical features of his letter present a good appearance. Furthermore, incorrect grammatical construction or word usage may prove to be costly by creating a bad impression. The reader may be adversely affected by mistakes which resulted from carelessness. Although correctness implies care in the general appearance and form of the letter, it means fundamentally accuracy of information. All statements made should be thoroughly checked to be sure they are unquestionable, complete, and not exaggerated. The creation of a reputation for dependable service rests upon the adherence to these principles of correctness.

The quality of courtesy has been discussed in connection with the psychological aspects of business writing.

More complex letters.--Mastery of the fundamentals of the simpler kinds of correspondence should give the students the confidence necessary for progress in successfully applying the principles of good letter writing to the more complex types--letters of special appeal such as sales, collection, credit, and adjustment letters. These letters are more difficult because of the personal or emotional factors involved.
Application letters.--In the study of application letters the student learns first of all that the real purpose of the application letter is to stimulate interest sufficient to lead to an interview. How to create such interest may be shown first by the importance of the general good impression to be created by attention to details such as the quality of the stationery used, its color and size, the neatness of placement and of the typewriting. The importance of these qualities has already been pointed out to some extent in the general introductory material in the course, but their direct application here can be brought to the attention of the student very forcibly since it is something which will concern his particular welfare when he, himself, is applying for a position. The significance of correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are readily recognizable to the student in this connection, too, because of their bearing upon his success in obtaining the desired job.

Not only does the study of application letters include the three necessary parts to be considered in any complete enumeration of qualifications, namely: education, experience, and personal qualifications; but the study further includes analysis of the advisability in general and in special instances of supplying supplementary information which may be of interest. This refers to the question of incorporating in the letter mention of the indirectly related abilities or
interests which may help the prospective employer to interpret the personality of the applicant or to evaluate his general background.

The study of application letters is not complete until consideration is given to the correct preparation and use of the data sheet. The desirability in some cases of modifying the structure of the application letter by making it simply a brief introductory sales letter accompanied by more detailed information in the form of an enclosed data sheet is indicated.

Evaluation of Phases

For the purpose of evaluating the various phases of study throughout the course and in order to determine which phase or phases should be allotted more time, each spring semester student included in the survey was asked to rank the following in the order in which he felt the course had been of consequence to him: psychology in letter writing, letter layout, mechanics of expression, familiarity with the simpler types of letters, familiarity with the more complex letters, and familiarity with application letters.

Table 5 gives the ranking of the several phases of study by the spring semester students. They were asked to rank the studies by numbering 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. If any two or more studies were considered of equal value, these were given the same number. In tabulating the data, the rankings are
TABLE 5

RANKINGS ON IMPORTANCE OF SIX PHASES OF THE
BUSINESS WRITING COURSE BY SPRING SEMESTER STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Psychology in Letter Writing</th>
<th>Familiarity with Complex Letters</th>
<th>Familiarity with Simpler Letters</th>
<th>Mechanics of Expression</th>
<th>Familiarity with More Application Letters</th>
<th>Rank Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table shows the rankings and weight assigned to each phase of the business writing course by spring semester students.
weighted inversely; first place selections are given a weight of 6, second place ratings are given a weight of 5, third place rankings are given a weight of 4, fourth place evaluations are given a weight of 3, fifth place rankings are given a weight of 2, and those reflecting sixth place in importance are given a weight of 1.

Students considered psychology in letter writing the most valuable phase of study. This is understandable because they soon discover that practical business psychology must be employed in written messages. It is constantly brought to their attention that letters may be intellectually perfect in content and structure, that they can be clear, concise, complete, and pointed, yet so faulty in tone, so defective in emotional appeal that they are totally lacking in drawing power. Familiarity with application letters was chosen as second in importance. Students are interested in the study of application letters because they can see a more direct personal advantage in having a knowledge of them. Letter layout was ranked as almost of equal importance with familiarity with application letters. Since appropriateness, orderly arrangement, and correctness of the essential parts of the letter and over-all attractiveness are emphasized again and again, it is also understandable that this study is given a superior ranking in value.

Each graduate was asked to rank the same studies, with the exception of mechanics of expression. The rankings given by the graduates are shown in Table 6.
TABLE 6
RANKINGS IN IMPORTANCE OF SIX PHASES OF THE BUSINESS WRITING COURSE BY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS GRADUATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Psychology in Letter Writing</th>
<th>Letter Layout</th>
<th>Familiarity with Simpler Types of Letters</th>
<th>Familiarity with More Complex Letters</th>
<th>Familiarity with Application Letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduates also give first place ranking to psychology in letter writing. They selected letter layout as second in importance, with familiarity with application letters third.

Judging from the similarity between the rankings by both students and graduates of the phases of the Business Writing course, it appears that psychology in letter writing, letter layout, and familiarity with application letters are considered the most valuable phases of study.

Methods of Developing Writing Techniques

Beginning with those letters which are simplest from the standpoint of construction, actual writing is combined with a study of psychological principles applicable to letter writing. Effort is made to lead the students to see that each letter is a substitute for a personal contact and that the appearance of the letter is as important as the individual's appearance in an interview. Not only should it become evident to them that the initial impression created by mechanical perfection or lack of it is vital, but also that the manner of presentation of subject matter reflects the writer's intelligence and personality. This, in turn, leads to the consideration that an individual writing for a company holds for a time the responsibility of creating a favorable attitude toward the company as a whole and not toward himself alone.
Mailing of letters.--For the purpose of emphasizing clearness, definiteness, and courtesy in even routine letters, students enrolled in the Business Writing course are usually required to compose and mail at least one letter of inquiry which will draw a personally dictated reply. The students get firsthand evidence of the manner in which the business writer takes care of routine matters, and often they are agreeably surprised to find their own letters much better in wording and tact. As indicated by the percentages in Table 7, both students and graduates approve of this procedure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Enrollees</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the greater number of both students and graduates endorse this activity, one student suggested that the initial letter or letters be mailed earlier in the semester in order to allow sufficient time for follow-up letters if they are necessary.

Group reading and criticism of letters.--Throughout the semester a portion of some class periods is used in group reading and criticism of letters written by the students.
The purpose is to develop the students' ability to detect and correct errors in written communication and to edit and proofread copy accurately. To disclose whether this time is profitably spent, the respondents were asked to give their views regarding this practice. Table 8 indicates the results.

**TABLE 8**

| OPINIONS REGARDING TIME SPENT IN GROUP READING AND CRITICISM OF LETTERS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Respondents                     | Yes | No |
| Spring enrollees                | 83.6 | 16.4 |
| Graduates                      | 87.0 | 13.0 |

Evidently those taking the Business Writing course feel that they benefit from constructive criticism offered by their classmates as well as benefiting from reading and criticizing the writing efforts of others. At the same time, a student's confidence in the teacher's grading is built up if he hears his fellow students make the same suggestions that the teacher has made.

Each spring enrollee was asked if he would object to his reading before the class a letter that he had prepared as an out-of-class assignment. The percentage of students replying that they would not object was 86.6 while 13.3 per cent said that they would object. Those disapproving of this assignment may have done so because of timidity or because of a feeling of lack of ability.
Collecting actual business communications.—A detailed study of rules for writing is valueless unless the student has a definite desire to improve the quality of his letters. In order to show the need for improvement in the quality of business letters, the class is encouraged and sometimes required to collect actual business communications for class examination and discussion. The stereotyped words and phrases of many business letters are pointed out; the students are encouraged to make original, although certainly not eccentric, substitutions for the jargon which once sufficed to carry a business message but is now considered objectionable. Ability to be critical of uninteresting, standardized expressions is the first step toward the development of freshness in composition. Table 9 shows the percentage of those answering affirmatively regarding the time spent in this manner and the percentage of those answering negatively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Enrollees</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Judging from the fact that the majority recommended the collection of actual business communications for class
examination and discussion, those taking the course probably feel that this activity stimulates the development of ingenuity in replacing hackneyed words and over-used phrases in poor examples and in imitating the appeals found in good letters. Tangible illustrations for the purpose of observing the wide differences in quality between letters of different companies and individuals and for the purpose of evaluating the strength and weaknesses of specific examples of correspondence make the study more significant. It is felt that this majority answer in favor of this activity is indicative of its worth-whileness when it is considered that a collection of letters is sometimes difficult for students to obtain.

Preparing letters under pressure of time.--Considerable time is spent during the semester in having students prepare letters in class within a limited amount of time. It is believed that writing under pressure of time is conducive to the development of rapid, accurate writing and at the same time more nearly approximates actual business conditions. One of the major objectives of education is to correlate instruction with business needs and practices so that a student may be equipped to take his place in the business world with a minimum of necessary adjustment and on-the-job training. To meet this objective, the speed factor in writing letters must be satisfied. Assignments to be written in longhand within a limited amount of time do much toward helping the student solve business problems rapidly in an original,
well-organized way. Table 10 shows the results of opinions concerning letters written in class.

TABLE 10

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE WRITING OF LETTERS IN CLASS UNDER PRESSURE OF TIME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Enrollees</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there is agreement in favor of this manner of developing writing techniques, those approving this method are not as much in the majority as on other procedures. This may be because students find that preparing assignments in class under pressure of time is one of the most difficult accomplishments.

Dictating letters.--Very little time is spent in the practice of dictating letters. It has already been mentioned that developing students' speed in composing business letters is highly desirable. Allowing them unlimited deliberation on too many letter problems is getting them into a dangerous habit. Because it is felt that not only would class work in dictating letters develop a desirable business technique but also that it is a means of evaluating oral English and impromptu talking, the question was asked whether considerable
time should be spent in this practice. The opinions concerning this practice are shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF DICTATING LETTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Enrollees</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This suggestion was vetoed by the greater number of respondents. However, those graduates whose positions require the dictating of letters reply that the lack of this practice is one of the major weaknesses of the course.

**Library research.**—Another means used for evaluating oral English is the giving of prepared talks before the class. The purpose here is not to evaluate oral English in terms of what is commonly called "public speaking" but in terms of correct business usage. Occasionally the students are asked to write short papers on various topics which are assigned for the double purpose of evaluating the ability of the student to write effectively and to test his knowledge of the topic about which he writes. Assignments of this kind also give the student experience in the development of ideas. In determining the extent of the value of this procedure, the question was asked whether those having had the course feel
that library research work as preparation for activities of this kind would have been helpful. Again this suggestion was vetoed as shown by the following tabulation.

**TABLE 12**

OPINIONS REGARDING LIBRARY RESEARCH WORK IN CONNECTION WITH ORAL REPORTS, ESSAYS, ETC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Enrollees</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority signifying disapproval of work of this kind is not overwhelming, but their comments indicate that they think oral reports are a "headache." Their argument against this method of study is that the reports generally accomplish nothing except that they make the giver of the talk nervous and the class inattentive. They further argue that unnecessary time is taken in having each student meet this assignment and that the allotted time could be better spent in letter writing.

Laboratory in letter writing.--Those included in the survey were asked to indicate whether they think a laboratory in connection with letter writing would be helpful. In asking the question the frequency of laboratory classes or the length of time devoted to each session was not mentioned. The response to this question is shown in Table 13.
TABLE 13
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS FAVORING AND REJECTING THE SUGGESTION OF A LABORATORY IN CONNECTION WITH LETTER WRITING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Enrollees</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although both spring enrollees and graduates were in favor of a laboratory, the percentage of graduates answering affirmatively is greater than that of the spring semester students. It is interesting to note that the majority of spring semester students desire a laboratory in the development of letter writing ability whereas they did not favor one in connection with the review of language fundamentals. Graduates recommend a laboratory in both studies. This may be attributable to the fact that graduates have had more time to realize how they could have profited from practice and instruction in addition to regular class work and assignments. The majority of affirmative answers leads one to believe that students do not object to extra hours of work when they feel the time is well spent.

Number of Letters Required

The students just completing the course were asked to express their opinions concerning the number of letters that
would be appropriate to write during the semester. They were asked to choose either 8, 12, 15, 20, 25, or 30 letters. The number choosing either 8 or 12 was negligible; .8 per cent suggested 8 letters while 2.5 per cent recommended 12 letters. One student gave as the reason for his selection of the small number that he believes it is better to learn well how to write a few letters instead of attempting to write a quantity of letters. Both 15 and 30 letters received 17.5 per cent approval as the appropriate number. The majority, 35 per cent, chose 20 letters, while 25 letters was selected by 26.6 per cent of the students. Since 20 to 25 letters is approximately the number usually assigned during the semester, choice of these two numbers by the largest group of students may be due to this reason.

Several leaders in the field of Business Writing estimate that it is necessary for effective learning to have the students write approximately 10 letters per semester hour, or a total of 30 letters during the semester.\(^1\)

The exact number for any teacher to assign will depend on the interest and ability of the students and the complexity of the problems. Just as a course can be given a bad reputation through assigning too little work, interest, enthusiasm, and even learning can be hampered with too much work.

In discussing the things teachers need to do to achieve the goals of education in general and of the Business Writing course in particular, one authority believes a little more emphasis should be given to the routine type of letter that the student will use when he first goes into business. Also, more work might be done with the correspondence that is typical of small-town business, and perhaps not so much time given to the types of correspondence that are familiar only to the large mail order houses and other large business organizations.²

Another professor thinks that letters relating to orders, terms, delivery, complaints, and inquiries should have preference over sales letters in respect to the number of papers written. He feels that sales letters are too specialized for satisfactory handling by students in a first course in business writing. They are, furthermore, the type of letters that would more likely be handled in business by professional sales letter writers than by office personnel to whom letter writing is usually a secondary skill.³

If the suggestions of these two teachers prominent in the field of Business Writing are followed in assigning fewer complex and specialized forms of letters, it is believed that 30 letters could be written satisfactorily by most classes.

CHAPTER IV

GRADING

At the conclusion of the review of language fundamentals, a comprehensive objective test is given over the material. The tests that follow throughout the semester are primarily of the objective type, also. The number given during the semester and the weight given to test grades in arriving at semester grades have been left to the discretion of the individual instructor. In order to have some uniformity in determining grades, the students were asked to express their opinions concerning the weight that test grades should carry.

Nine per cent of the students answered that they felt that tests should determine one-fifth of the grade, 27.9 replied one-fourth, 25.4 replied one-third, 32 per cent responded one-half, while 5.7 per cent suggested two-thirds.

The choice by the larger number of students of one-half as the proper weight to give to test grades is probably influenced by the knowledge that most tests given are objective ones covering textbook material. Since 40 per cent of the spring enrollees and 34.8 per cent of the graduates answering the questionnaire objected to writing letters in class under pressure of time, it is presumed that those taking the course find objective tests less difficult than a letter problem test.
It is believed that if several or all of the tests given were letter problems, the weight suggested for tests in arriving at final grades would be of lesser value.

One student recommended that "after the first six weeks of grammar study, all tests should be of the performance type. The student should be required to put into practice the letter writing principles he has learned, and he should not be required to enumerate various facts taken from a textbook. Tests, then, would be more valid and should carry more weight."

Another student answered that "test grades are of little value in determining whether a student has learned enough in a course for an A, B, C, etc.; tests cannot measure the knowledge the student gets from a course."

Apparently the students at North Texas who feel that the "test of what one has learned in business letter writing is writing business letters" are not alone in their feelings. One professor says his students voice the same opinions with regard to tests. He further says that his students earnestly argue that examination grades should be assigned little value.\(^1\)

The same writer, who gives letter problems for tests, has found that giving the test grades a relative value of about one-fourth in determining semester grades is satisfactory to both students and instructor.\(^2\)

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\(^2\)Ibid.
CHAPTER V

STATUS OF THE COURSE

Possible Changes in Presentation and Requirements

Lecture course.--Since it is a commonly accepted privilege of students to comment on the difficulty and amount of work required in various courses, it is interesting to find that, without exception, those included in the survey do not favor changing the Business Writing course to a lecture course.

Regarding the change to a lecture course incorporating the history and psychological aspects of business writing, the respondents replied that "history is of little importance in learning to carry on present day business communications. The history of business writing is not of enough practical value; changing the course to a lecture course stressing the history would make the course less functional."

Students agree that the psychological aspects of business writing should be emphasized, but their opinions are that the desirable method of studying business psychology is through putting to practice by writing letters the psychological aspects applicable to various types of letters.

A summary of the expressions concerning the changing of the Business Writing course to a lecture course is: "Actual
practice serves as a partial substitute for experience. The 'learn by doing' method is preferred, because only in this way will a student develop originality and ability, and at the same time discover his weaknesses. Nothing is better than the application of what one has learned."

**Senior standing.**--At present the prerequisites for enrollment in the Business Writing course are the completion of the freshman and sophomore English courses, the ability to type, and that a student be of junior standing. The question was asked whether it would be recommended that a student be of senior standing before being allowed to enroll for the course. Of the students enrolled during the spring semester 8.3 per cent answered affirmatively while 91.7 answered negatively. A larger number of graduates, 21.7 per cent, feel that a student should be of senior standing; 78.3 per cent feel that one should not be required to be of senior standing.

Those in favor of requiring students to be of senior standing comment that this classification is desirable "because knowledge gained from the course will be fresh on the students' minds at the time they enter the business world. Below the classification of senior much will be forgotten."

Those opposing the requirement comment that letter writing should be learned by the students as early as possible, because the knowledge gained from the course will be helpful in other courses. "Any student could profit by a directed
study of business writing since he will necessarily soon and perhaps frequently come in contact with it in one or more of its forms." Furthermore, "if one were required to wait until he is a senior to enroll in the course, there might be conflicts which would present a difficulty." The consensus appears to be that one should be allowed to take the course just as soon as he has completed the required English courses.

An interesting comment made by several students is that some may not graduate before going into the business world; therefore, these students should have an opportunity to benefit from taking the course.

It is also interesting to learn that several of the students waited to take the Student Use of English test until after taking the Business Writing course. Every graduate of North Texas State College must have his writing examined and approved by the Committee on Student Use of English before his graduation. Appointments for the examination may not be made until a student has reached junior standing.

Required course.—Students and graduates agree almost to the person that the course should continue as a required course for business majors. Of the spring semester students 97.5 per cent agree that the course should be required and 2.5 per cent do not think so. Among the graduates 97.8 per cent say the course should be required and 2.2 per cent say it should not be. Some respondents commented that the course should not only be required of all business majors but of all students.
The majority of graduate students recommended that the course be extended to a required two-semester course, while the majority of students did not recommend this change. The percentage of graduates in favor of the change was 54.3 with 45.7 per cent not favoring the change. The difference in opinions among students was more pronounced with 34.7 per cent against the change as opposed to 65.3 per cent in favor of it. Those opposing the change feel that "the principles of letter writing can be presented adequately in one semester; the student is on his own after he has learned the essentials. The offering of a second semester course is desirable for those wanting further study, but the decision about taking the course should be left up to the individual."

Some in favor of making the course a required two-semester course feel that students would profit from an additional semester in that they would gain control of and needed confidence in their letter writing ability. Several suggested that two semesters should be required of secretarial science majors particularly.

It was recommended by several favoring two semesters that the first semester be given over primarily to theory and that the second semester be devoted to intensive letter writing activities.

Practical Value of the Course

Because it was felt that graduates who are already employed could provide more information concerning the usefulness
of the course, graduates were asked three additional questions pertaining to the practical value of the Business Writing course. Those already employed are in a better position to judge whether the desirable business slant is present in the teaching of the course; that is, whether the spirit, terminology, practices, and workable procedures of business are sufficiently included.

One question asked if the addressee in his employment had made direct use of the knowledge gained from the course; 84.8 responded that they had made direct use of the knowledge and 15.2 answered that they had not. The number answering in the affirmative is indicative of the value of the course since the respondents represent various positions in the business world.

In answering the question as to whether they feel that business writing ability is helpful in gaining promotions with the firms they represent, 69 per cent answered "yes" and 31 per cent answered "no." Again, the majority of graduates answering in the affirmative is indicative of the importance of a knowledge of communication in present day business activities.

As a final question in the evaluation of the course, graduates were asked to express an opinion regarding the practical value of the course by checking one of the following: one of the most valuable courses taken in college, somewhat above average value, average value, somewhat below
average value, of very little value. The greatest number of graduates, 57.8 per cent, indicated that they considered the course one of the most valuable taken in college; 37.8 per cent ranked the course somewhat above average value; 4.4 per cent said the course possessed average value. "Below average value" and "very little value" were not used by any of the respondents in evaluating the practical value of the course.

Although the students enrolled in the course during the spring semester were not asked to express opinions concerning the practical value of the course, a number of them voluntarily commented that they considered the Business Writing course one of the most valuable courses that they had taken.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Review of English Fundamentals

In summarizing the data regarding the review of English fundamentals, it appears that those who have had the Business Writing course feel that most emphasis should be placed on sentence structure, vocabulary building, and spelling. Answers and comments indicate that the outstanding weakness of this part of the course is the lack of emphasis given vocabulary building.

If the opinions of the persons who are already on the job are considered more valuable from the viewpoint of practical application, then two years of English should be required as a prerequisite to enrollment in the course since the spring semester students were almost evenly divided in their opinions.

Furthermore, the majority of graduates expressed the thought that a laboratory in connection with grammar review would be helpful while the majority of spring enrollees did not favor one. Perhaps those who completed the course long enough ago to have had time to look back and consider the ways in which they could have benefited more from the course
feel that a laboratory in grammar review would have provided a more thorough knowledge of this part of the course.

Development of Letter Writing Techniques

Concerning activities in the development of letter writing techniques it was indicated by a large majority that the actual mailing of letters written by the students is considered of value, particularly when the letters are written early enough in the semester to insure the students ample time to receive replies.

Also, a large majority approve of the practice of spending class time in group reading and criticism of letters written by students. Moreover, most of the students enrolled in the course during the spring semester replied that they would have no objection to reading before the class a letter that was prepared as an out-of-class assignment.

Evidently students feel that the good and bad points of letter writing can be effectively brought out by a study of actual business communications as they endorsed the collection of business letters for class study and examination.

Preparing letter assignments in class under pressure of time is approved as a method of developing writing techniques, but the number expressing approval is not as large as that for other activities.

The giving of considerable class time to the practice of dictating letters was vetoed by the majority. Perhaps if the
question had read "little" time or "some" time rather than "considerable" time the response would have been more favorable.

Neither was there acceptance of the suggestion of library research in connection with oral reports, essays, etc. The objection appears to be a dislike for oral reports and a lack of time for this kind of assignment; students prefer to spend the time in letter writing.

The majority believe that a laboratory in connection with letter writing would be of value.

In evaluating the several phases of study, the importance of psychology in letter writing, familiarity with application letters, and letter layout received the most points. This indicates that perhaps more time and emphasis should be given these studies.

Twenty and twenty-five letters were the numbers given preference as the appropriate amount of letter assignments for the semester.

Test Grades

The choice by the majority of students of one-half as the proper weight to give to test grades in determining semester grades is probably influenced by the fact that most tests given are objective ones covering textbook material. It is believed that if several or all of the tests given were letter problems, the weight suggested for tests would be of less value.
Status of the Course

Regarding the changing of the present status of the course, those included in the survey emphatically do not favor changing the course to one stressing the history of business writing, the psychological aspects of business writing, etc. They want to learn the principles of letter writing through application.

Neither do they recommend requiring that a student be of senior standing before being allowed to enroll in the course. The consensus is that one should be allowed to take the course as soon as he has finished his required two years of English.

According to the opinions expressed the Business Writing course should be continued as a required course for all business majors.

There is diversity of opinion concerning extending the course to a required two-semester course. Graduates are of the opinion that the course should be a required two-semester course, while the majority of students enrolled during the spring semester did not recommend this change.

Practical Value of the Course

Most graduates have found that the knowledge gained from the Business Writing course has practical value in the business world regardless of the position held. The majority replied that they have made direct use of the knowledge. Moreover, they feel that business writing ability is helpful in gaining promotions with their firms.
Finally, the majority report that they consider the Business Writing course one of the most valuable courses taken in college.

Conclusions

The evaluations show that students are not afraid of work. Perhaps at the moment they prefer the line of least resistance and insist that too much work is being required of them, but in retrospect they appreciate having had to work and have suggested that more work be assigned.

The present requirements as prerequisites for enrollment in the course—junior classification, the ability to type, and the completion of two years of English courses—are satisfactory. These prerequisites may be used as the basis for recommending a change in the amount of language fundamentals taught at the beginning of the course. Since upper-division students have finished their regular composition courses, the amount of time given to the review of English fundamentals could well be shortened and drills on sentence structure, vocabulary building, and spelling could be interspersed all through the course. Learning is individual and specific, and instruction should grow out of students' needs as they work on written assignments. In this way, emphasis could be placed on the principles of business writing; talk about English fundamentals could come only when evidence of the need arises. A laboratory or conferences with the instructor could be provided for those who need remedial work.
This plan would avoid the criticism, "I thought this was to be a course in business writing and it turns out to be just another course in grammar."

As business writing is a skill building course, the same law applies for mastery that applies to the building of any skill—practice and more practice. With this in mind, a laboratory in connection with the development of letter writing techniques would be considered helpful.

Contrary to the recommendations offered by students who have had the Business Writing course, the writer specifically recommends giving the students practice in the dictating of letters. Progressive firms are looking to the colleges for their junior executive material; this forces a recognition that an increase in the students' speed in writing a business letter is highly desirable. Students will gain several valuable attributes from the practice of dictating letters. They receive a foundation in the art of dictating; they learn to think business problems through rapidly; they develop a facility with verbal expressions that they transmit to written work. Although this practice may at the time be objectionable to the students, it is believed that ultimately they will remember it as giving them something they could use.

Another specific recommendation regards the type of tests given. Since students suggest one-half as the proper weight to give to test grades in determining semester grades, this leads one to believe that the tests given are considered
easy and a means of raising semester grades. This is no re-
flection on the student but rather a reflection on the in-
structors. It is believed that a test should be given with
the thought in mind of testing writing to see if the instruc-
tors are doing an effective job of teaching writing; the
application of principles that have been covered should be
tested rather than the recitation of these principles.

The ability to write well is a widely useful and perma-
nent skill, and the ability to write effectively is essential
to the success of many business operations. The man or woman
without a knowledge of the principles and techniques of busi-
ness writing becomes an illiterate in our business society--
incapable of simple communication, robbed of the opportunity
of advancement, frustrated in his need to express himself
and impress his associates.

The Business Writing course at North Texas State College,
according to opinions expressed by a number of students who
have had the course, is giving the student a foundation in
the principles and techniques of business writing which can,
through practice and application, be expanded to meet busi-
ness demands.
APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENTS' OPINIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE BUSINESS WRITING COURSE, NORTH TEXAS STATE COLLEGE, MAY 1950

1. Please indicate by checking one of the choices whether you think too much emphasis, not enough emphasis, or sufficient emphasis has been placed on the parts listed in the first portion of the Business Writing course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Too Much</th>
<th>Not Enough</th>
<th>Sufficient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Parts of speech</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Sentence structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Vocabulary building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How much English do you believe is really needed as a prerequisite to Business Writing? One Year Two Years

3. Do you feel that a laboratory in connection with the course Grammar Review Letter Writing would be helpful? Yes No

4. Do you think the actual mailing of some letters worth while? Yes No

5. Do you think it worth while to spend class time in group reading and criticism of your letters? Yes No

6. Would you object to your reading before the class a letter that you had prepared as an out-of-class assignment? Yes No

7. Do you recommend the collection of actual business communications for the purpose of class examination and discussion? Yes No

8. Do you feel that letters should be written in class under pressure of time to more nearly approximate actual business conditions? Yes No
9. Do you feel that considerable time should be spent in the practice of dictating letters? Yes__ No__

10. Do you feel that library research work in connection with the course would be helpful? (current articles on letter writing as a basis for oral reports, articles pertaining to your major field, etc.) Yes__ No__

11. Please rank by numbering (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) the following studies in the order in which you feel the course has been of importance to you. (If you feel that any two or more of the studies have been of equal importance, give them the same number)

   a. The importance of psychology in letter writing __________
   b. Letter layout __________
   c. Mechanics of expression (grammar, punctuation, etc.) __________
   d. Familiarity with the simpler types of letters (orders, inquiries, acknowledgments, announcements, etc.) __________
   e. Familiarity with the more complex letters (sales, credit, collection, adjustment, etc.) __________
   f. Familiarity with application letters __________

12. There are approximately 45 class periods in a semester. Please check the number of letters which you believe would be an appropriate number to write: 8 __ 12 __ 15 __ 20 __ 25 __ 30 __

13. Would you recommend that the course be changed to a lecture course stressing the history of business writing, the psychological aspects of business writing, etc.? Yes__ No__

   Why?__________________________________________

14. How much weight do you think test grades should carry in arriving at grades? 1/5 __ 1/4 __ 1/3 __ 1/2 __ 2/3 __
15. Would you recommend that a student be of Senior standing before being allowed to enroll for the course? 

Yes ___ No ___

Why?______________________________________________________________

16. Would you recommend that the Business Writing course continue to be a required course for business majors? 

Yes ___ No ___

17. Would you recommend that the course be extended to a required two-semester course? 

Yes ___ No ___

Why?______________________________________________________________
QUESTIONNAIRE

GRADUATE'S OPINIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE BUSINESS WRITING COURSE AT NORTH TEXAS STATE COLLEGE

1. In accordance with your work experience, please indicate by checking the part which you feel should be given most emphasis in the first portion of the Business Writing course.

   a. Parts of speech
   b. Punctuation
   c. Sentence structure
   d. Vocabulary building
   e. Spelling

Comment: ____________________________________________________________

2. How much English do you believe is really needed as a prerequisite to Business Writing?

   One Year  Two Years

3. Do you feel that a laboratory in connection with the course Grammar Review Letter Writing would have helped you?

4. Do you think the actual mailing of some letters was worth while?

   Yes___ No___

5. Do you feel that it helped you to spend class time in group reading and criticism of your letters?

   Yes___ No___

6. Would you recommend the collection of actual business communications for the purpose of class examination and discussion?

   Yes___ No___

7. Do you feel that letters should be written in class under pressure of time to more nearly approximate actual business conditions?

   Yes___ No___

8. Would you recommend that considerable time be spent in the practice of dictating letters?

   Yes___ No___
9. Do you feel that library research work in connection with the course would have helped you? (current articles on letter writing as a basis for oral reports, articles pertaining to your major field, etc.) Yes  No

10. Would you recommend that the course be changed to a lecture course stressing the history of business writing, the psychological aspects of business writing, etc.? Yes  No

Why?

11. Please rank by numbering (1, 2, 3, etc.) the following studies in the order in which you feel the course was of importance to you. (If you feel that any two or more of the studies were of equal importance, give them the same number)

a. The importance of psychology in letter writing .

b. Letter layout .

c. Familiarity with the simpler types of letters (orders, inquiries, acknowledgments, announcements, etc.)

d. Familiarity with the more complex letters (sales, credit, collection, adjustment, etc.)

e. Familiarity with application letters

12. Would you recommend that a student be of senior standing before being allowed to enroll for the course? Yes  No

Why?

13. Would you recommend that the Business Writing course continue to be a required course for business majors? Yes  No

14. Would you recommend that the course be extended to a required two-semester course? Yes  No

Why?
15. In your employment have you made direct use of the knowledge gained from the Business Writing course? Yes__ No__

16. Do you feel that business writing ability is helpful in gaining promotions with the firm you represent? Yes__ No__

17. Please rate the practical value of the course by checking one of the following:
   a. One of the most valuable courses taken in college.
   b. Somewhat above average value.
   c. Average value.
   d. Somewhat below average value.
   e. Of very little value.

Your Signature

Date

If you wish to make additional comments concerning the questionnaire or the Business Writing course, please use the back of this page.
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