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FOLLOW-UP OF NON-PERSISTING
CLERICAL STUDENTS AT
METROPOLITAN TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Secondary/Post-Secondary Education
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Lutisha F. Neely Clark

July 1980

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Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College,
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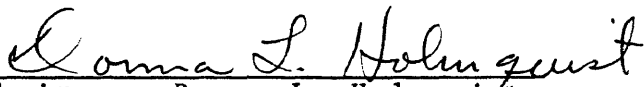
Thesis Committee



Edward J. Sadler, Department of Secondary/Post-Secondary
Education



B. Gale Oleson, Department of Counseling and Guidance



Chairman, Donna L. Holmquist,
Department of Secondary/
Post-Secondary Education

7-10-80

Date

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF CHARTS	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
THE PURPOSE OF STUDY	3
Statement of the Problem and Sub-Problem	3
Sub-Problem 1	4
Sub-Problem 2	4
Sub-Problem 3	4
Significance of the Problem	5
BACKGROUND AND SETTING FOR THE STUDY	5
DESIGN OF THE STUDY	8
ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS	9
DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS	10
ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT	11
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	12
ORIGIN OF THE TERMINOLOGY	12
HISTORICAL EXAMPLES	13
EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM	14
INVESTIGATION OF REASONS	17
TEN POINT PROGRAM	24

	Page
3. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	27
REASONS FOR DISCONTINUING CLERICAL TRAINING	29
RECORD OF FAILURE	31
BASIC CLASSROOM PROBLEM	34
INCENTIVES FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL	37
DROPOUT PROBLEM FROM PERPECTIVE OF ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS	40
4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	44
RESTATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	44
DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES USED	45
PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	47
RECOMMENDATION OF FUTURE RESEARCH	49
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	51
APPENDICES	57
A. QUESTIONNAIRE	58
B. COVER LETER	62
C. SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE FROM DISADVANTAGED STUDENT	64
D. SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE FROM STUDENT OF AVERAGE PERFORMANCE LEVEL	69

LIST OF CHARTS

Table	Page
I. Reasons for Discontinuing Clerical Training . . .	30
II. Past Record of Failure	32
III. Basic Classroom Problem	35
IV. Incentives for Returning to School	37

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Of all the rights granted to citizens of this country, there is probably none more important nor more personally gratifying than the right to a public education. Without education, the capacity to exercise other rights would be severely limited. During the latter half of this century, there has been a greater effort on the part of the public to make college education a reality for everyone as exemplified in the tremendous growth of community and technical colleges. Colleges are now available and easily accessible to aspiring students regardless of sex or age, and there is even financial assistance for those who need it. Students are entering colleges in vast numbers, motivated by the desire to become better qualified to earn for the good life. Unfortunately, many persons become discouraged before completing their planned program and drop out. Reasons for dropping out often relate back to prior school rejection and to an all too common disillusionment with the education received. In the light of the dropout rate, increasingly, the goal of education for every citizen to be developed to his/her fullest potential is not being realized.

In education, as in business and industry, when after time, money, and materials have been expended there

is minimum return on the investment, grave losses often occur. When the product deals with humanistic matters rather than an inanimate object, losses involve not only money but human values, such as feelings of failure, decrease of self-respect, inability to achieve independence, and lack of opportunity for self-actualization. When students have already invested time and money in a course of study which they do not complete, the actual loss is incalculable. Therefore, those who discontinue a projected course of study before completion have been a subject of considerable concern to educators.

Naturally, a prime consideration of the faculty of Metropolitan Technical Community College is to retain students and to allow them to achieve to their fullest potential. To ensure that every factor which might contribute to the number of dropouts has been identified so that changes can be integrated which tend to retain students, on-going studies have been conducted. This study is a continuation of the effort to provide a secretarial science program which will satisfy both the student and the ultimate consumer, local business and industry.

Therefore, it seems to be in the best interest of Metropolitan Technical Community College to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the present secretarial science program, and to bring about those changes which will make

it more effective and accountable and provide stimulating educational experiences to the students who enroll.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study attempted to determine why a substantial number of dropouts occur in the secretarial science program at Metropolitan Technical Community College. Was it because students felt ill-equipped academically to continue until graduation and recognized insurmountable difficulties in maintaining necessary grade levels? Did students attribute their dropout behavior to other reasons because they were ashamed to admit the real problem? As a result of conclusions reached through this study, perhaps Metropolitan Technical Community College will offer an instructional delivery system based on objective data gathered from the student himself rather than subjective analysis of the faculty who then may proceed according to unsubstantiated assumptions.

Not only were the reasons for dropouts objectively identified but recommendations for change and strengthening were made based on statistical data gathered and analyzed. It is hoped, this data will point the way to increased student success.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND SUB-PROBLEMS

Required college courses twenty-five years ago were not generally viewed as specifically applicable to the

vocational life or professional career of the student. In the accelerating community college movement, however, emphasis is now being placed more on educational experiences which are directly relevant to the student's choice in career development.

In spite of pre-enrollment testing, screening, and counseling as well as on-going evaluations after enrollment, many students who enter the Secretarial Science Program at the Metropolitan Technical Community College drop out prior to the completion of their stated educational goal. It is vital to the effective functioning of the Metropolitan Technical Community College Secretarial Science Program to pinpoint the reasons why students drop out prior to program completion.

Sub Problem 1. A review of the literature was conducted from the period beginning in 1907 to the present in order to identify national trends causing college drop outs. What are the values and attitudes which authorities have discovered to be applicable to college dropouts?

Sub-Problem 2. Is the lack of basic educational tools by American students increasing adversely people's entry-level employment or advanced academic pursuits?

Sub-Problem 3. Despite the often apparent failure of some experiential methods which are employed to improve academic competence, would a review of the literature reveal that

some instructional delivery systems in Secretarial Science Programs are more effective than the individualized instruction presently used at Metropolitan Technical Community College?

Significance of the Problem

The significance of the problem is that the results may guide people who are planning the Secretarial Science programs at Metropolitan Technical Community College so that they will determine the best methods and those that will be effective for the largest number of people in a realistic and efficient manner.

Conclusions drawn from the study will have application not only to students enrolled at the other two campuses of the college but also college students in Nebraska, especially those affiliated with secretarial science programs in technical colleges.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING FOR THE STUDY

The Metropolitan Technical Community College, chartered in 1974, is a multi-campus institution designed to serve the needs of the people in Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties of Nebraska. Presently consisting of three campuses within the Omaha Metropolitan area, the college began admitting its first students during the summer of 1974.

Metropolitan Technical Community College is committed to the philosophy that people should be given an opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge, as well as an awareness of their roles and responsibilities in society. The college is devoted to serving the educational needs of its community, and assumes responsibility to help meet the requirements for manpower in the Omaha area through cooperative efforts with local business, industry, professions, and governments.

Metropolitan Technical Community College, at the present time, is dedicated to an educational method referred to as "individualized instruction." The term defined at the college means to take a student from wherever he is and walk with him hand-in-hand to wherever he is going.

Metropolitan Technical Community College is ideally adapted to such a study since the college has three campuses presently located in the north, south, and southwest areas of the city. The campuses are located in extremely diverse neighborhoods, which attract distinctive student groups. This study will focus primarily on those influences which affect the successful retention of students in the Secretarial Science Program at the Fort Omaha Campus and Southwest Campus.

At the Metropolitan Technical Community College a student who successfully masters typing should be able to find a clerical position.

Students that are eventually employed in a clerical position may find that it is a substantially rewarding field. The demand for secretaries and typists appears to be unlimited.

Miriam Hecht and Lillian Traub stated:

"This eminently useful skill of typing can be acquired at low cost in a couple of months . . . and will pay off for years to come. The willingness to apply yourself for a few months, will provide a skill used for the rest of your life. The ability to type 35-45 words a minute smoothly and accurately, will get you a job almost anywhere. If you can type 50-60 words a minute your choice of jobs is even better. Bear in mind that virtually every word in every newspaper, magazine, and book must be typed (often more than once); that all business correspondence is typed; that every bit of information fed into a computer must be entered by way of a keyboard or key-punch (which has a lot in common with a typewriter.) Day after day millions of typewriters put forth billions of words - and every last one of them calls for a typist or secretary."¹

In the past, innovations in education methods often have promised to provide the panacea for former educational ills, only to prove disappointing after implementation in the classroom. Methodologies of the past, such as individualized

¹Alternative to College by Miriam Hecht, and Lillian Traub, MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1974, p. 129.

instruction, have within them the seeds of success, but none perhaps has within itself the ultimate answer. If education is to be "individualized," then its primary requisite may be that it should be eclectic since people do not learn alike.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

To assess how successful the college has been in meeting the needs of the students enrolled in the Secretarial Science Program at the Fort Omaha and Southwest Campuses, a questionnaire was used. Since July, 1974, when the College began operation, through the winter quarter of 1976, 1,581 students enrolled in the Metropolitan Technical Community College Secretarial Science courses and 395 of those students dropped before completing their stated objectives. A questionnaire was utilized to determine the problems they experienced both before and during the time they were enrolled, and to ascertain reasons for withdrawing. Data obtained through the questionnaire were then tabulated.

Causes of college withdrawals were compiled from the review of literature in order to provide a normative base upon which to compare the findings from the study at Metropolitan Technical Community College.

Interviews with secretarial science instructors at Metropolitan Technical Community College as well as other post-secondary institutions in the Metropolitan area of Omaha were conducted in order to ascertain concerns and problems relating to students' progress.

A study was conducted using the withdrawal forms completed by students who had withdrawn from the Secretarial Science program at the college.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

It was a basic assumption of this study that a majority of the students who drop out of Metropolitan Technical Community College were motivated when they first enrolled for class, and that they can be remotivated if the proper conditions are met.

The intention of the person conducting this study was to determine, through the responses to questionnaires to students who have dropped out of Secretarial Science courses at Metropolitan Technical Community College, whether or not they might have been retained by other instructional delivery systems. It was hoped that the proportion of response helped to indicate whether the questionnaire was a valid means of obtaining such data.

Although this study tried to establish a measure of effectiveness of the system presently employed, no attempt has been offered to provide alternatives.

The study will be made available to the Secretarial Science programs particularly in technical colleges in the state of Nebraska and elsewhere as desired.

DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS

A number of terms used in this paper are used in particular ways as they apply to Metropolitan Technical Community College and the Secretarial Science Program.

These terms are defined as follows:

1. Individualized Instruction: Courses are programmed and designed for independent study in which students use programmed materials so that they can proceed in small steps, can respond to information, and can be informed immediately whether or not the response is correct.

2. Secretarial Science Program: The Secretarial Curriculum is primarily an occupational program with executive secretarial, medical secretarial, legal secretarial, and clerical secretarial options. The program takes the student from whatever level has been attained to achievement of the desired level of accomplishments. The program prepares the career-minded student in achieving his goals in the business world.

3. Study Skills: The ability to utilize reading in order to know how to proceed with instructors. This skill

requires the student to read well enough to derive pleasure from some kinds of readings.

4. Academic Deficiency: Absence of or insufficient breadth of academic skill to succeed in completing usual class projects.

5. Basic Education: Reading, spelling, arithmetic, and grammar.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The introduction, purpose of the study, the statement of the problem and sub-problems, the significance of the problem, the background and setting for the study, the procedures used, and definitions of important terms have been included in this chapter. A review of related literature and research is contained in Chapter 2. The procedures used to gather data and analysis of the data collected in the survey are described in Chapter 3. The fourth chapter contains the findings and conclusions, along with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature was undertaken in order to substantiate the need for serious attention by universities and colleges to the dropout problem. The literature reviewed supports the contention that the dropout problem is long standing, has had serious economic and cultural affects, and has enjoyed only sporadic and disorganized attempts to correct. Although present-day schools are experimenting with the diversity of educational approaches to alleviate the problem, no single method thus far has provided any substantial improvement.

Origin of the Terminology

According to the literature reviewed, the word dropout was not used until the late 1950's. Since then, many books and articles have been written on the problem of dropouts and methods that best accomplish the retention of students. Follow-ups on dropouts have always been of interest to educators.

By the late 1950's, dropouts were a major problem and had become the concern of all educators across the country. Educators are constantly working on this problem that dates back to before the depression, increased dramatically during the depression, and continues at the present time, when a

large percentage of students voluntarily discontinue prescribed courses, even though personal development is becoming a necessity of life.

The first major writings about the dropout problem dates back to 1907 (Thorndike, 1907) when they were termed "Elimination from School." That term was replaced by references to "holding power," then to "student withdrawal," and thereafter to the present term "dropout." The term dropout became popular during the later 1950's. All related literature points to an old problem that still exists and summarizes both valid and nonvalid reasons.

Historical Examples

Over 50 years ago, Brooks (1924) said these significant challenging words:

You college men have no right to continue this wholesale dropping of students. You accept them in September, fresh from the exhilaration of the high school graduation. They have left their commencement exercises with high aspirations to amount to something in the world; the most ambitious of them come to you. You mass them at registration, you teach them in crowded classes. After four months of this you send hundreds of them home - disgraced. You brand them as failures. You tell them they haven't made good. They have made good for a dozen years of schooling. That doesn't count; their failure to adjust themselves in four months in college outweighs all their previous successes. Many, rebuffed by your exclusion, but accepting your judgment as final, marked as failures, downheartedly seek some other occupation. At best it is their second choice of activity. What's

more, they begin their new work with a feeling of personal failure.²

Almost fifty years ago, J. Harry Schad (1932) felt that students were dropping out due to deficiency in studies. He wrote that many students vary in their aptitude for different subjects. To exclude a student from school for deficiencies in certain subject areas is to sacrifice the talents of a student in his deficiencies without gaining any advantage for his classmates, and contrary to the objectives of stated supported institutions--"education and improvement in learning."

Today it would be entirely possible to offer a more varied curriculum providing for individual differences, which would help in increasing retaining power at the community college level. What better place is there for a person to mature, to increase mental facilities, and to pursue further study than in the classroom? Nature has not endowed all alike (Schad, 1932).

Extent of the Problem

In a study made by McNeely (1937), it was found that out of every 1000 students who entered publicly controlled colleges, 513 graduated. This meant that 487 students, or

²"Who Can Succeed in College? W. S. Brooks, School and Society, Vol. 19, 1924, p. 424.

48.7 percent, withdrew from the institutions of higher education represented in the investigation prior to completing the requirements for graduation.

McNeely (1939) conducted an additional study for the Office of Education. One of the unexpected findings at that time was that a large number of students leave for unknown causes and that universities possessed no knowledge as to why they left the institutions. Another difficulty was that the student and personnel records of most of the 24 universities studied made no provisions for recording the causes of student withdrawal. His study concluded that the highest number of students who left school was due to failure in academic work. This would tend to indicate that the withdrawal of many of the students was compulsory rather than voluntary.

Hilson and Carpenter (1943) did a study of the dropouts from nine Missouri colleges. Out of 3,023 who enrolled, 40 percent either transferred to some other institution or dropped out of school. They felt that in order to prevent such large numbers of students from dropping out of college the first year, the college must either refuse to admit those students who cannot complete a prescribed curriculum or else offer at least a two-year curriculum in which a large number of students can hope to succeed. They said that the institutions should recognize that a large number of students now drop out before graduation and should attempt to provide

offerings and proper recognition--a degree or certificate--for completion of two years of college which should prepare students for some field. Colleges, they said, should also recognize that many students transfer to other colleges and universities, and they should attempt to give the necessary guidance and curricular offerings that will make possible satisfactory achievement in the school or college to which the student transfers.

Dillon (1949) felt that the situation concerning college dropouts is even more pressing when one is reminded that those who matriculate into institutions of higher learning have already survived a process during which many of our high school youth drop out at the secondary level for academic, social, economic and other sundry reasons.

Bryant (1950) did a study on Lincoln Junior College of Kansas City during the year 1949-1950 as to the reasons why students withdraw from school. Thirty-seven students out of a total enrollment of 149 withdrew from Lincoln Junior College, which was a loss of 24.8 percent or about one-fourth of the student body. His study indicated that half of those withdrawing (51.1 percent) were doing poor scholastic work. This withdrawal rate might indicate a failure to satisfy students' needs. Bryant wrote that the scores in entrance tests indicated that these students were hardly fitted for the type of work which they were trying to do.

Investigation of Reasons

Reynolds (1951) stated it is very difficult to discover a valid reason for loss of students during their first year of college. Some of the loss, no doubt, is caused by student transfer, or by removal of student's residence to some other city. However, Reynolds writes that some of the loss is caused by unsuitability of the educational programs of colleges. Concern for the welfare of the individual student justifies investigation of all cases of dropouts. Reynolds further stated the tracing of students who have dropped out of school is no easy task. Quite frequently, the student involved is not classified as a dropout until many weeks after he has ceased attending. This lapse of time contributes materially to the difficulty of the task. Once the student is located, it is often difficult to learn true reasons for withdrawal. He may not actually know why he withdrew other than a lack of interest (an explanation which may cover a multitude of reasons), or his reasons for withdrawing may be associated with personal matters which he does not care to discuss. A maximum of ingenuity may be needed to discover the real cause for the withdrawal.

Quarles (1954) felt that few questions can be more important to a college than the area of inquiry concerning

student separations. The student separating from college poses questions relating both to his own resulting reaction and to the effectiveness of the college program.

Bragg (1956) took the population of the freshman class that entered in the fall of 1952 of a midwestern city college. This class contained seven hundred and twenty-four students. Three hundred and five or 42.13 percent continued and four hundred and nineteen or 57.87 percent withdrew during the two-year period from September 1952 through May 1954. A random sample of 100 cases was taken. Bragg's findings were: 1) older students may need more individual attention than the younger students; 2) the need for more emphasis on remedial and developmental reading programs was indicated; 3) withdrawal due to lack of motivation as a result of poor grades--drawing heavily on the reading and verbal abilities was implied; 4) academic counseling should be provided those students whose high school performance falls much below average; and 5) more academic counseling should be provided in the selection of the curriculum based upon a matching of skills, abilities, interests, and aptitudes required by the particular curriculum.

Koelsche (1956) did an investigation of the student dropout problem at Indiana University. His study concerned the characteristics of those persons who enrolled as freshman students, but who withdrew prior to completion of graduation requirements. The data collected for 180 students of Indiana University were analyzed with respect to withdrawer's family

background, high school career, college career, and employment patterns since leaving the University in an attempt to determine the characteristics of the typical dropout. Withdrawal from Indiana University seems to have resulted from a combination of patterns which indicated that lack of funds, low scholarship, contemplated marriage, ill health, and loss of interest were major contributing factors. The knowledge of forthcoming military service created a feeling of restlessness. The data presented in this report gave factual information which would serve as the basis for additions, alterations, and deletions in the college curriculum. Such changes would facilitate the acquisition of satisfactory experiences, both intellectual and vocational, by most of the matriculants.

Yoshino's (1958) study indicated that the lack of academic preparation and poor study habits concern the students who continue in college as well as those who drop out. He said students expressed themselves thusly: "The jump from high school standards to college expectations is too great." "The high school could help by teaching courses designed more on the college level." "Why don't they stiffen up the requirements in high school?" "I found out that I really didn't know how to study, and it's rather hard learning how with so many other adjustments to make." Yoshino's findings were that freshmen are immature in a number of ways, and need guidance and support from their families, instructors, and upperclassmen. He found that most of the

entering students have high hopes and aspirations when they first arrive on campus. There is a definite need to emphasize the academic milieu of college life from the very beginning, and to place the social aspects in proper perspective. He felt many secondary schools had not sufficiently challenged some students and had not motivated them to prepare adequately for college studies. He also felt that, even though a number of students drop out of college at the end of the first year, they have derived some educational and social benefits from the experience and they will profit personally and become better citizens.

Angers (1961) felt the most outstanding reason which the student reports for his wanting to leave college is what can be termed vocational disorganization. He summarized vocational disorganization in three categories. The first category is the students who lack a vocational goal, which is a requirement for high achievers. Their rationalizing becomes clear from their excuse of someone else having chosen their training for them. The second category is reasons beyond one's control. These consist of such things as death in the family, illness, moving to another state, unexpected financial difficulties, or accepted at another school which was "my first choice," "have to work full-time which interferes with college work," or "the distance was too far to travel each day." The third category is discouragement.

Angers describes this student as being accustomed to receiving high grades in elementary and secondary school only to find the competition of college "so rough" that he would rather give up than keep trying. Some students in this group came from famous fathers, or wealthy fathers, or brilliant fathers. They felt inferior by unflattering comparison, and they were unwilling to accept the truth as this served their purpose to withdraw.

Brickman (1965) wrote that the problem of dropouts has not received sufficient attention in the midst of planning for buildings, facilities, staff, and programs. He stated that recent reports indicated dropout rates of 20-50 percent in classes at the large private and state universities. He said there can be little doubt that the administration of colleges and universities cannot be deemed a success under circumstances of large-scale dropouts. Surely, here is a serious waste of manpower, of faculty, and of young people. If those who enter cannot be expected reasonably to complete their studies, then the entire process of admission needs careful study and radical revisions. If the counseling process is at fault, then the psychologists, educators, counselors, and administrators should rethink their policies and procedures to achieve better results. If the instructors

are not sufficiently efficient or inspiring, it is up to the senior professors, the administrators, and scholarly and professional organizations to bring about an improvement in instruction. The probability is that there is a multiplicity of causes for prematurely leaving college and that concerted action can reduce the incidence of dropouts. What is needed is constant vigilance to note, at the earliest opportunity, those students whose difficulties might lead to an early departure from the college. Once the trouble has been identified and diagnosed, the resources of higher education must be brought to bear upon it. Under such circumstances, salvage is possible. Even if the advice to the college sounds trite, it is necessary to make the point that, beyond an unavoidable minimum, there is no necessity to tolerate the existence of situations which permit dropouts. It is an obligation of higher education to organize its house in such a way as to make each student want to succeed in his studies. It is more costly to have dropouts than to do something concrete to prevent them.

Why do college freshmen drop out? To answer this question, Clinton I. Chase (1967) of Indiana University undertook a study of first semester dropouts. Chase found that dropouts scored significantly lower on aptitude and achievement tests than their successful classmates. There was a fair amount of overlap between the two groups, however, suggesting that test scores were not the most important determinant. In their personal and academic history, freshmen

dropouts were significantly different from nondropouts in several respects: They were generally older (average age over 20). Their parents had less than 12 years of schooling. They often had no younger brothers and sisters. They were more often from the second or third quarters of their high school classes and less often from the top ten percent. They tended to avoid organizations, especially student government or academic clubs. They had poorer study habits. Responses to questionnaires sent to dropouts three years after they left college showed that most claimed adjustment problems as the reasons for dropping out. Lack of direct contacts with the college faculty and weak academic skills were at least partly to blame. In characterizing the dropout Chase says: "He was relatively weak in the achievement and aptitudes that would facilitate success in college, and he came from a background of minimum involvement in the academic affairs."

When DeVecchio (1972) compared returning students and freshmen who withdrew from the Lake Land Community College at Matton, Illinois, during the 1970-71 academic year, those who did not return had earned lower scores. Additionally, non-returning students attended small high schools (enrollment under 500), had lower high school grade point averages, and indicated a preference to complete fewer years of college than returning students.

Institutions are prone to consider a student a dropout who simply does not return to the institution; however, if

the student has already fulfilled his educational objectives, even though he has not obtained a degree, he may not consider himself a dropout. Questions the institutions may have to deal with are whether or not they are dealing adequately with students' financial problems, career problems, periods of indecision, and provision of academic alternatives geared to the skill level of the students (Maxwell, 1976). Maxwell's research specified that there was a significantly higher rate of dropouts of students from lower status families than high status families even when ability was held constant. His research showed that when the parents have high expectations for their children's education there is a positive influence on dropout rates. Students who had lower dropout rates received more parental advice, praise, and interest in their education.

Ten Point Program

Anderson (1976) wrote that a program for retention should be established among all colleges to include these ten major points:

1. Program goals must receive the endorsement and support of the institution's highest officials and programmatic activities must be consistent with the goals as endorsed.

2. Retention begins with an ethically conducted recruitment program and admission standards based upon research concerning the characteristics of persisters.

3. In order to improve the flow of non-traditional students into college, inter-institutional alliances should be formed with targeted, potential feeder high schools whereby there can be cooperative programs and professional exchange.

4. It is futile to attempt to orient students to institutional demands before they have had direct experience with the demands.

5. It is important for program participants to feel an identification with the program and yet not feel stigmatized by the program.

6. The best retention service directly addresses the areas of greatest student anxiety and frustration.

7. Retention programs take the initiative in promoting and providing services.

8. In order to insure program relevance, students should be treated as consumers.

9. In order to build campus support for an equal opportunity program, the program must not only accomplish its objectives; it must demonstrate its value to the institution.

10. The lifeblood of equal opportunity programs is a staff whose members have demonstrated that they can make a

difference in student performance and for whom the program is an extension of their own personal values and commitments.³

³Edward C. Anderson, "An Equal Opportunity Program Retention Design," College and University Journal, Vol. 51, 1976, pp. 696-699.

CHAPTER 3

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to learn something about the attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and concerns of the Metropolitan Technical Community College students, a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire consisted of four parts requiring subjective answers. (See Appendix A, page 60)

On August 26, 1977, three hundred and ninety-five questionnaires, cover letters explaining the purpose of the study, and self-addressed stamped envelopes were mailed to students who were classified as dropouts of the Metropolitan Technical Community College. By September 10, 1977, 75 questionnaires, or 18.9 percent, had been returned. On September 15, 1977, follow-up cards were sent to those students who had not responded. A cut-off date was set for September 30. By that time, an additional 26 questionnaires had been received, making a total return of 25.5 percent.

The questionnaire was in a format that is widely used by public pollsters and political analysts so it would seem that the population in general responds to such questionnaires according to instructions. This would appear to be a valid assumption if any of these kinds of surveys are to be regarded as having any validity. Perhaps it is because the

Metropolitan Technical Community College population consists primarily of economically depressed students and those who would not or could not attempt a Bachelor of Arts program that the instructions for ranking items were in large part not adhered to. Because sizeable numbers of respondents did not rank answers as requested, some desirable information could not be derived from the survey. However, other information was established.

It was decided to classify the information collected into two simple categories--positive and negative--for questions one, two, three and four. Positive responses are identified as those which place no blame on the school. Negative responses are those that, in some respect, blame the school or the system for the dropout behavior. In most instances, positive responses were checked much more often than negative responses. Generally, petty criticism, or shifting the responsibility to the school or the system, was not a major means of explaining failure.

Obviously, responses to other, the final category, could not be so classified since that constituted an open-ended question; therefore, the charts give equal weight to other for both positive and negative responses.

Another suggestion which emerges from the responses is that the function and the purpose of schooling and education are changing. Many of the students seem

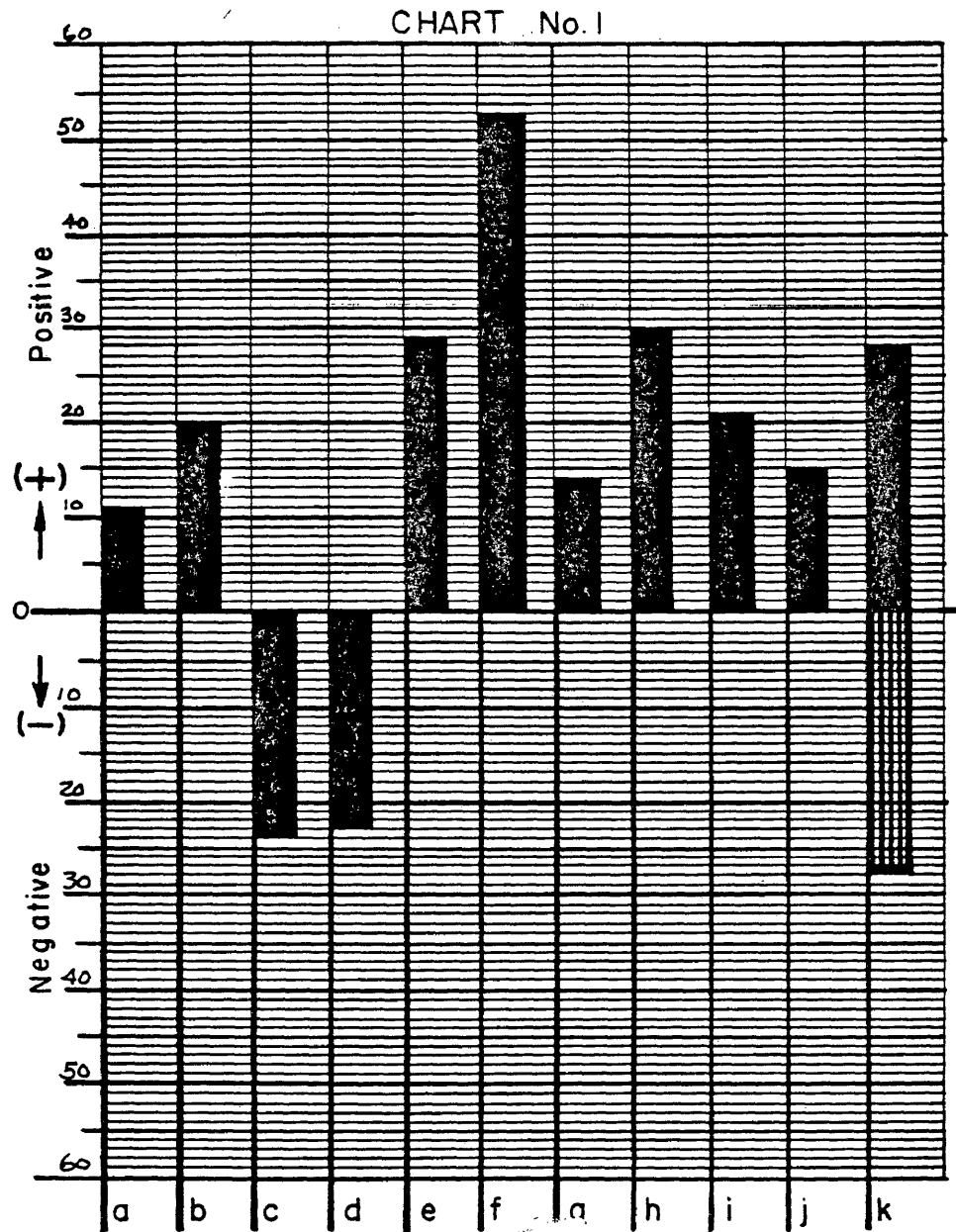
to have gone to school as a stop-gap activity between other urgent needs.

The items for question one were selected during a casual visit among three long-time classroom teachers citing the reasons they have most heard expressed by students for dropping out of school.

Reasons for Discontinuing Clerical Training (Question 1, Chart No. 1, Page 30)

In question 1, I discontinued my clerical training because: the item most frequently checked by all respondents was--"I really liked the school and would have liked to continue." This most favorable response was rather surprising, particularly since it emanates from a dropout population.

The second most checked answer of the questionnaire related to financial problems. Metropolitan Technical Community College participates in BEOG (Basic Education Opportunity Grants) programs and other monetary support scholarships, so it would seem that knowledge of the procedures necessary to utilize such monies should be more widely disseminated. However, in the light of inflation and rising tuition, perhaps scholarships and grant programs should be periodically reviewed to stay abreast of a rapidly changing economic picture. The lack of emphasis on negative reasons



1. I discontinued my clerical training because:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) I realized I didn't have adequate basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) to succeed. | (g) I had transportation problems I couldn't resolve and was late or missed too many classes. |
| (b) I wanted to avoid having a failure on my record. | (h) I had financial problems and had to quit to be able to take a job. |
| (c) Some of the teachers had attitudes that made me feel unwanted, unhappy, angry, or humiliated. | (i) I had really wanted to take another course other than clerical, but I didn't have the time or money for it. |
| (d) Too much of the course material I had to study seemed irrelevant to what I want to do. | (j) I was going to compromise by taking a clerical course but found out I didn't like it. |
| (e) I had personal problems. | (k) Other (be specific) |
| (f) I really liked the school and would have liked to continue. | |

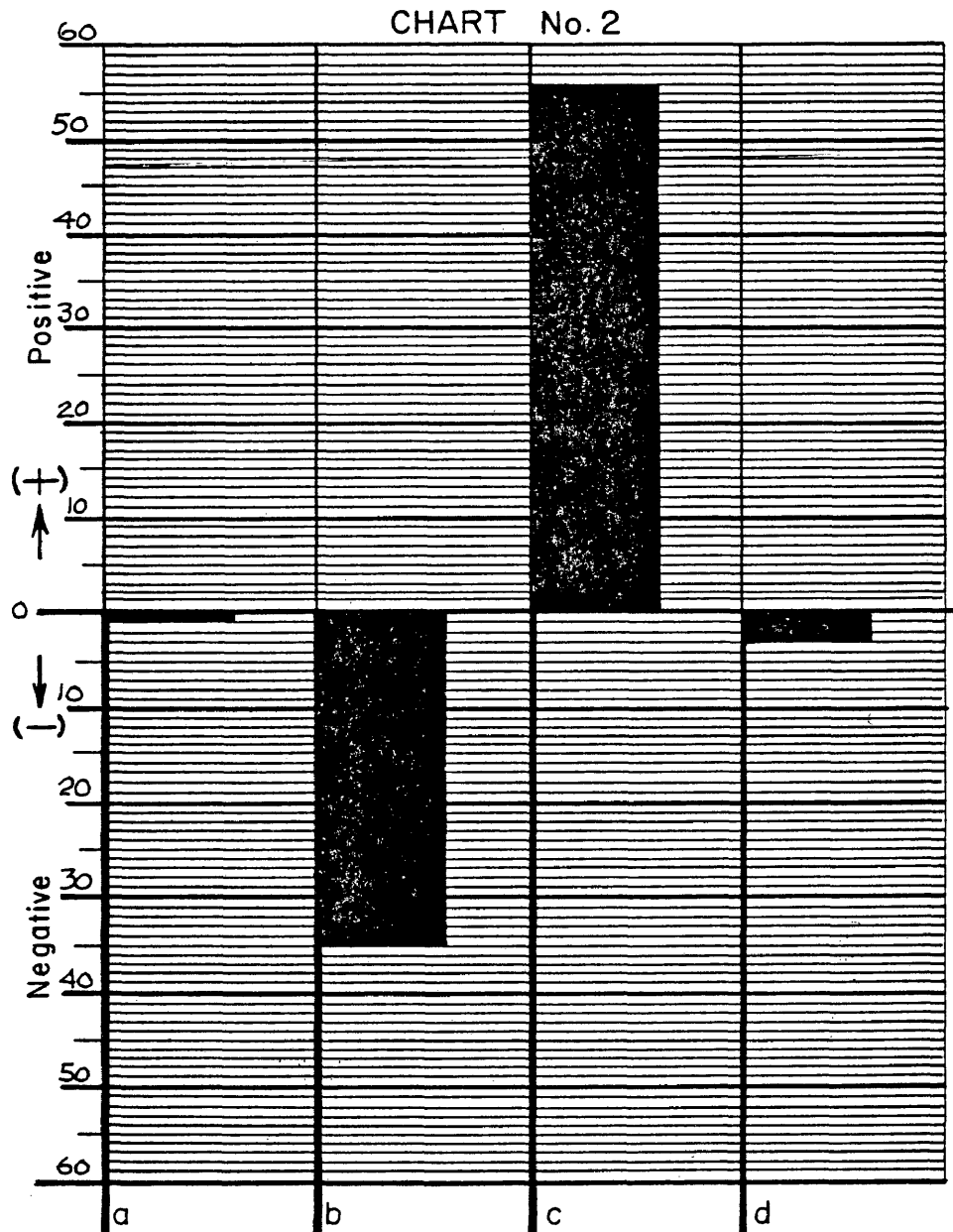
for discontinuing education by responding students would seem to favor retention of many students if mundane problems such as finances, transportation, more versatile scheduling, and easily assessable remedial programs could be made available.

Also, most educational support programs provide money for tuition only, or tuition and books, with little or nothing provided for survival money. Such a limitation, especially for economically disadvantaged students, often prohibits their attempting advanced education or forces their discontinuance.

The necessity for survival support to relieve the disadvantaged student from holding a full-time job is especially desirable because he is a student most likely to lack some of the basic educational skills. If he is not able to devote adequate time to study and lesson preparation, he will be highly unlikely to succeed. Such students who often have a history of failure are easily discouraged when too many problems (lack of money, too many hours of work, unprepared lessons) crowd in on them.

Record of Failure (Question 2, Chart No. 2, p. 32)

The most frequently checked item under question two--I have never had a failing grade--might seem to contradict the statement that the disadvantaged and the dropout population have had a high history of failure. But it is only necessary to emphasize that these responses came



2. My past record of failure has been:

- (a) Extensive. It seems like I fail at everyting I try.
- (b) Moderate. I have failed some courses but they have usually been those I didn't enjoy and didn't really need.
- (c) Non-existent. I have never had a failing grade.
- (d) So discouraging that I really don't want to face the prospect of failing one more time.

from those who, indeed, did drop out. The strong emphasis and insistence on never failing could very well have been an issue when the student dropped out. If a student drops a course, he can't fail it. He has avoided the problem. His dropping out has become a rationalization for potential failure.

In order to more readily grasp the extremes of the academic preparation and ability exhibited by Metro students, it might be well to provide the reader with samples. (See Appendix C, p. 66)

Many questionnaire responses were very difficult to read as you can observe. It is obvious that a student at this level would have had an extremely difficult time in pursuing any skill training. Such a pursuit would undoubtedly have necessitated many hours of remedial education, which is more likely to discourage the student than the skill training itself. This student, too, said she had never failed. Students of limited formal education are allowed to pursue learning programs as fundamental needs are dealt with in a realistic way. However, there are students at Metropolitan Technical Community College, who, when placed in developmental classes, feel that their learning ability for college courses and successful completion of a certificate or degree is nil.

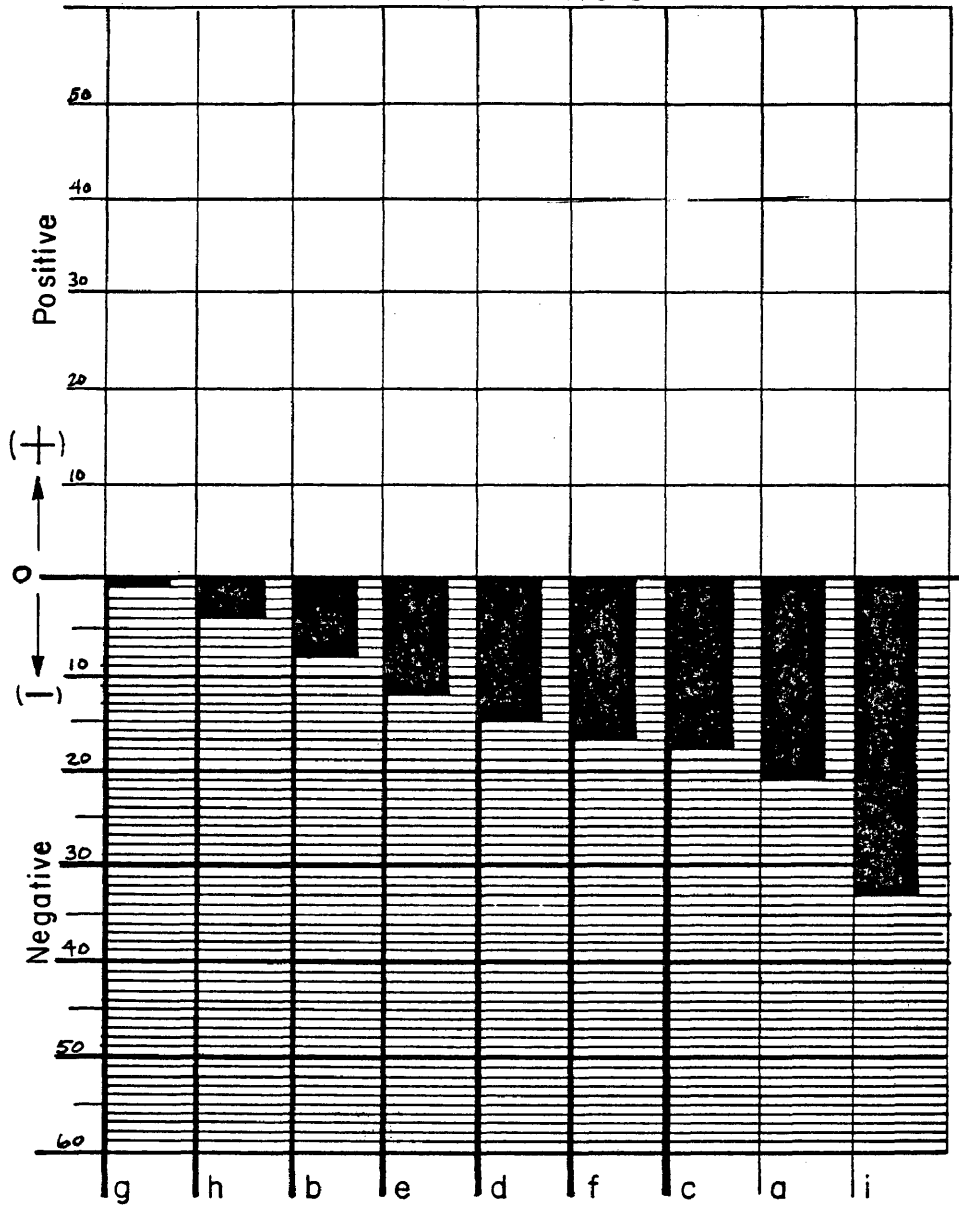
In order to illustrate the wide difference between the upper and lower performance levels of students, the following filled-in questionnaire is included. (See Appendix D, p. 71) As you can see, this one demonstrates proficiency in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. There were a number of students at both extremes and many in between. However, it would appear reasonable to assume that the average academic performance levels at a technical college would tend to be inferior to those at a university. It is also worth noting that a student demonstrating the academic deficits exhibited by the first example would likely not have been admitted to a university. Numerous educational problems are suggested by these examples but those problems are not within the scope of this paper. It would appear to be enough to say that severe academic handicaps would cause a student to consider dropping out of school.

Basic Classroom Problem (Question 3, Chart No. 3, Page 35)

Most teachers express dismay that so many students come to them unprepared and that student preparation level is declining, so question three attempts to determine whether students feel a lack of the basics is a significant problem.

Judging from the response to question three, basics of spelling, English, and study management are all crucial to students' success. Some of the specific responses indicated

CHART No. 3



3. The basic problem I have that cause me trouble in the classes I take are:

- (a) Spelling
- (b) Math
- (c) English
- (d) Remembering what I study
- (e) Knowing what to study
- (f) Planning my time so I can be prepared for class
- (g) Getting along with classmates
- (h) Getting along with teachers
- (i) Other (be specific)

under other are worthy of mentioning. "In my shorthand class, no problem whatsoever. Since that time I've been employed at Metro and the free classes I take are not interesting or informative and a waste of time. Instructors are not able to 'deliver' also most instructors seem so distant - I don't think they're use to minorities." Several responses like this one seemed to imply that many instructors could benefit from some form of sensivity training or conditioning to better understand minority students.

Repeatedly, students mentioned that they found it difficult to get extra help from teachers whose office hours seemed to be inappropriately timed in such a way as to make them unavailable. These responses perhaps suggest students might benefit from either support tutorial programs or para-professionals who could spread the qualified teachers' time over a wider group.

Only one respondent mentioned that he preferred a live teacher to tape recordings or other mechanical learning media. Probably good tape recordings do serve a useful purpose and supplement the teacher's efforts.

Some students were critical of individualized learning which is certainly understandable for those with lower academic achievement. The student from Appendix C, who had never had a failure, certainly demonstrated that it is unlikely her reading would be adequate for pursuing programmed

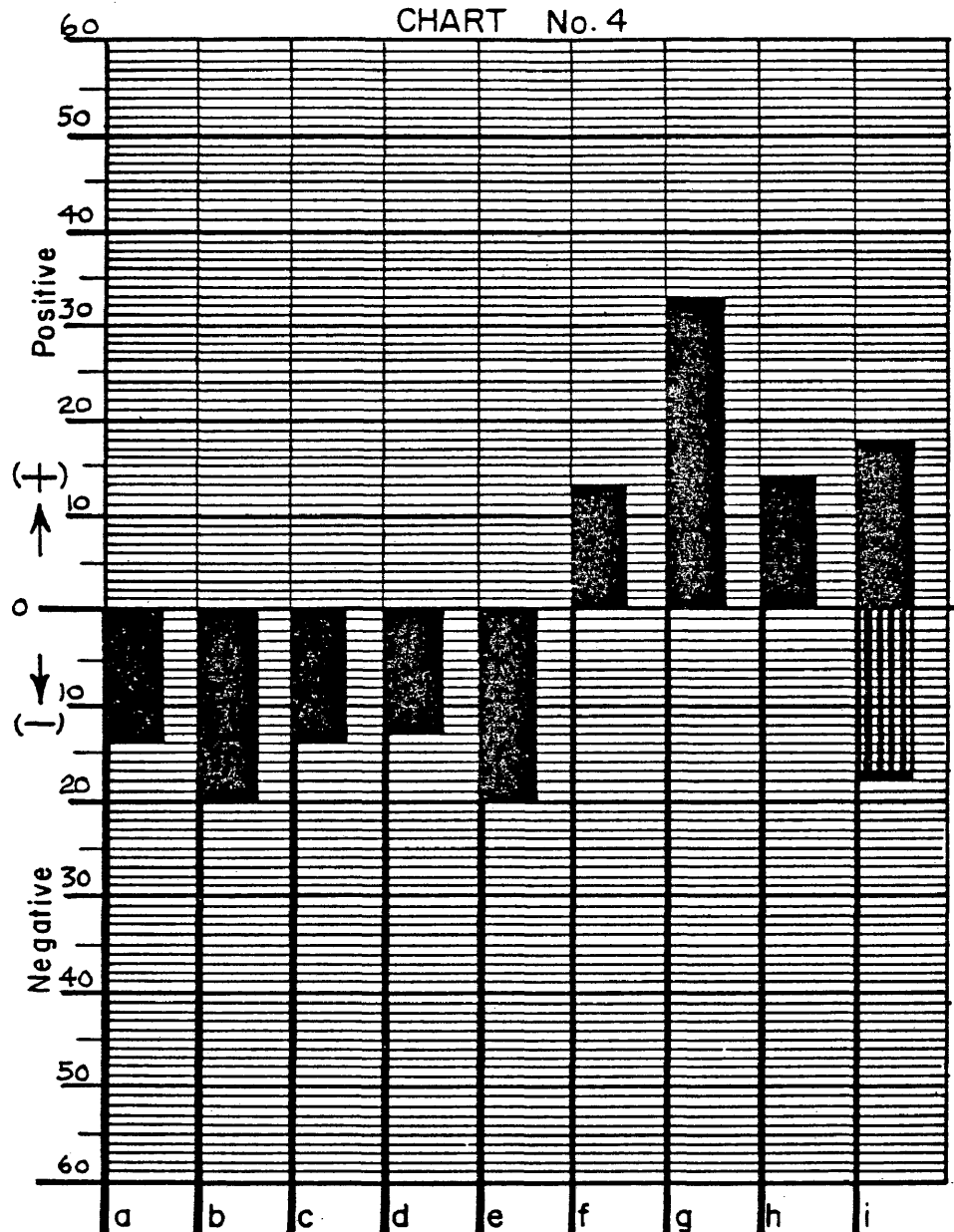
studies. Students who complain about the unavailability of teachers and about teachers who sit all the time without doing anything are probably also saying that they are not able to handle programmed studies without more face-to-face help.

Incentives for Returning to School (Question 4, Chart No. 4, Page 38)

In question 4--I would return to school if--many of these students indicated that some problems had arisen which prompted their return to school. It can be safely assumed that whenever a stipend is attached to educational activities, people will often choose to return to an educational setting during idle periods rather than seek employment compensation which takes care of survival but offers no improvement in options for the future.

A list of some of the commentaries taken directly from the questionnaire is quite revealing in this respect.

1. Might return to get upgraded and I can get my tuition paid.
2. Need a change of shift on job.
3. I would return if given a chance.
4. If personal life would allow.
5. I will be able to return to school when I get rid of this miserable job.
6. One of these days.



4. I would return to school if:

- | | |
|--|--|
| (a) They'd hire some new teachers who relate to people like me. | (e) They'd get rid of the required insignificant courses and let people take just what they really need. |
| (b) I could have some tutoring or special help to bring my basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) up to standards. | (f) I could arrange dependable transportation. |
| (c) I thought I would be graded fairly and judged on my performance instead of personal qualities. | (g) I could have some (or better) financial assistance to help me while I'm in school. |
| (d) They didn't have grades but just let people learn at their rate and completed them when they could do the work. | (h) I had dependable baby-sitting arrangements. |
| | (i) Other (be specific) |

7. Right now there is no way.
8. I have to work.
9. Plan to return and take bookkeeping.
10. When I get well I hope.
11. I don't make enough to live but I make too much to get a grant now - so I have been told.
12. Don't think I will return. I got a good job.
13. Whenever I can afford a car.
14. Wish they would offer classes at noon downtown like business communication or business math.
15. I need more help financially than any school could give.
16. Working on a good job.
17. There is no answer to my problem in the immediate future.
18. None of the above apply to me. I have decided to return to school. I enjoyed it very much.
19. Too late to return now.
20. As soon as I get another car I will be back.
21. I will return to MTCC when I get a job (I was in the CETA program during my 9 months of school) in order to pay my tuition and pay for my books.
22. If you would get rid of the individualized system.
23. Working a split shift prohibits me from returning.
24. I will be back next spring.

25. If I could get some bills paid off.
26. You could get more help from the teachers--they just sit.

Dropout Problem From Perspective of Administrators and Teachers

It seems appropriate to examine the dropout problem from the perspective of the administrators and teachers in order to determine the feelings and attitudes of professionals regarding their dropouts. So far we have been considering the problem from the point of view of the students themselves. Personal interviews were conducted with the secretarial science teachers at two Metropolitan Technical Community College campuses, the Director of Admissions of the College of Saint Mary, the Director of Education and the Registrar of the Nebraska College of Business, and the senior business education instructor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The questions asked were three:

1. What do you think is the biggest cause of students quitting?
2. Do you think that money enters into students leaving before graduation?
3. Do you feel that students entering secretarial courses have the necessary skills?

Only one teacher who is stationed at the Fort Omaha Campus cited unreadiness as a major factor in the dropout

rate. All Metropolitan Technical Community College teachers said they felt the need for or the acquisition of a job as most important. They also indicated that monetary factors were important.

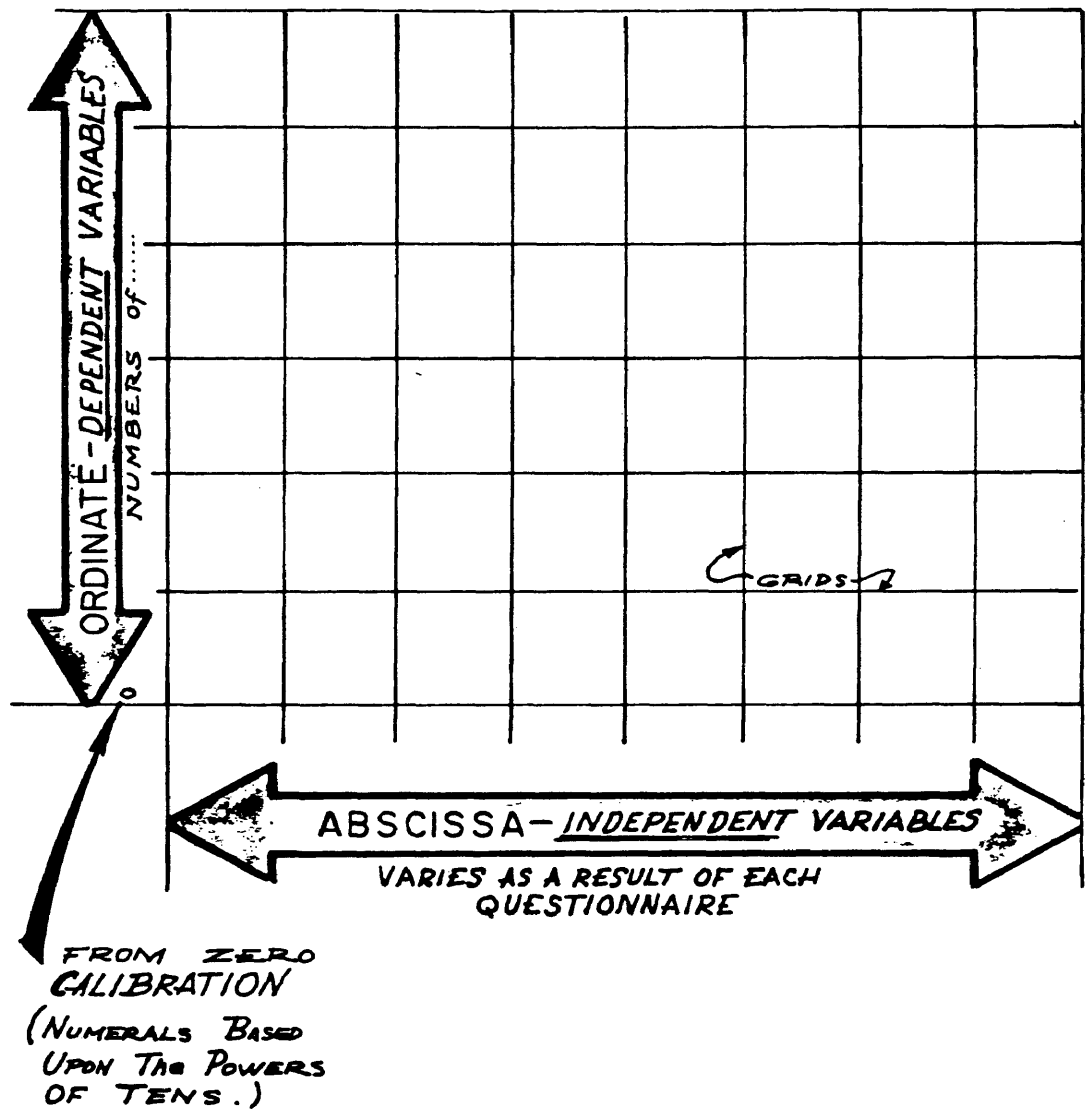
Mr. Gary Johnson, Director of Admissions from the College of Saint Mary, said that only in the last few years has there been a noticeable decline in the readiness of entering students. He said a few years ago high schools demanded four years of English, four years of mathematics, and other heavy academic requirements. The delay in a private school, such as the College of Saint Mary, in observing the decline in academic skills can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that potential dropouts had already been weeded out at the high school level because of time and heavy requirements. He said that currently their school is recruiting from the older market and that, oddly, the older women tend to drop out at a faster rate than recent high school graduates. Reasons given for their failure to continue were usually related to family problems, changing family conditions, or divorce.

Dr. Terry Murphy, Director of Education, and Ms. Myra Feekins, Registrar of the Nebraska College of Business, represented the only strictly commercial school contacted. They said that most of their students had attended to monetary needs prior to enrollment in their school. The usual reason

usual reason students drop out from such a school is, not because they have elected to quit, but because they have achieved the goals that they had intended in the first place. Graduation was not one of their goals; usually they become employed. One interesting commentary Dr. Murphy made was that, insofar as readiness is concerned, he has observed that students from outstate Nebraska are deficient in math and metropolitan Omaha area students tend to be deficient in language skills.

Verda Rauch, Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, said that their school tends to get the elite for selection from those area students who might consider the secretarial sciences. Most entering students already have the background of some kind of clerical skill such as shorthand, several semesters of high school typing, often actual clerical working experience. Such students are less likely to become disillusioned since they already have a familiarity with the required courses and get no surprises. She also felt that many students have personal goals which they complete and which do not necessarily correspond to the school's prescribed course of study.

Many of these students at all campuses are likely to attend school for a period, drop out for a period, and return to school for additional training between jobs or when jobs are scarce because of economic slowdowns.



CHARTS NOMENCLATURE

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Restatement of the Problem

Because of enormous changes that have taken place in our increasingly technological society, educational institutions are being faced with a constant need to update, revise, and increase the practicality of programs on a continuing basis if they are to satisfy the needs of today's students. The character of students attending advanced educational institutions is changing. They are going to be older than they used to be. Many of them will have completed other career preparations and earlier career goals prior to their current enrollment. These students will tend to have much more pronounced ideas concerning what they are coming to school for and what they intend to get from it. Technical community colleges are going to need to remember that they are distinct from and serve a separate function from the already long-established university system. Being a newer concept, the community colleges have the opportunity for a fresh, unique approach.

This study initially proposed to identify reasons for the extent of the dropout problem and to suggest means of improving retention. Now it is suggested that the concept of "dropout" be redefined so that only those who have legitimately chosen to quit school because it has not met their

need and who do not plan to return can be identified. There may be greater numbers of students who plan to get specific training in a series of reentries and additional attendance patterns. In the light of this study it would seem to be necessary to reevaluate the purpose of a technical community college and allow the program to be adapted to the changing students' needs.

Description of Procedures Used

The original student enrollment in the Secretarial Science programs at the Fort Omaha and Southwest Campuses from fall 1974 to fall 1976 was 1,581, and attempts were made to contact 395 students who had dropped from the program.

Questionnaires were mailed in the fall of 1977 to each student's home address as provided by the Admission Office. First-class postage was used so mail would be forwarded to students who had moved. A postcard was sent to each student as a reminder approximately two weeks after the initial questionnaire was mailed. Of the questionnaires mailed, 101 were returned and used in this study.

Because many students failed to rank answers, responses were identified as negative and positive--positive being those answers which indicated approval of the program that students had entered into and negative being identified as instances when students felt the failure of the school to satisfy their needs was responsible. Charts of students'

responses provide a graphic indication of the relative relationship of the students' responses. Examples of student responses have been included to dramatize problems deriving from the wide range of student readiness.

The number of returns was disappointing. However, the results were based on the assumption that those that returned questionnaires were representative of the total population surveyed. The results were based on the information received from those questionnaires that were returned.

Principle Findings and Conclusions

The principal findings have been that students do not necessarily consider themselves to be dropouts simply because they have ceased going to school for the time being. The educational and the employment factors markedly influence the student's behavior. The student who elects to go to a technical community college comes for a much more highly specific training than does the traditional university student. Although Metropolitan Technical Community College has provided a somewhat flexible entrance system through the quarterly system, there are probably many courses which could be provided on an open-entry/open-exit basis. Many courses need to be provided that can be taken by themselves or within a cluster of related skill areas.

Probably some system of certification for various skill acquisitions should be established which are separate

from the nine-month certificate, one-year certificate, or the two-year associate degree. Developmental courses, though important to the student and vital to his progress, offer no academic credit for time, money, and effort expended. Because the need for these studies at the community college level must have evolved from some breakdown in the public education provided beforehand, it seems the system should acknowledge in some formal way when a student has persisted independently to achieve the necessary competencies.

Responses to the questionnaire indicated that most students apparently find it preferable to seek off-campus part-time employment rather than to seek a loan. Students realize that most grants and loans have strings attached and most of them lose the right to monies or pay back at higher rates when they are not able to complete a program within the specified time frame. The positive impact of a student being able to work as he continues his studies appears to be substantially high.

It is also evident that instructors generally do not have training as counselors, as group process leaders, or are they able to do assessment of individual differences. Therefore, counselors should be attached to courses to be readily available consultants to teachers to help them clarify student's goals and to provide feedback on those methods of achieving instructional goals that appear to be most effective. Tutors who are assigned to face-to-face instruction for students who have special needs should also

be trained in techniques which help the student to develop positive self concepts.

Recommendation for Future Research

When this study was begun, intentions were to identify the problems causing a significant dropout rate at Metropolitan Technical Community College. It was also felt that, if such problems could be identified, probably similar circumstances existed on other campuses nationwide and others might benefit by revising and updating programs to eliminate problem areas. If the students indicate anything specific concerning curriculum planning, it is the need for diversified education.

There is nothing new in the idea of diversity of educational approaches, but the limit of such diversity has not been met and probably will not be in the foreseeable future. Means of learning through reading, listening, hands on, visualizing, role playing, and many other options must be provided to all students. Consider the wide range of readiness, basic skill, and personal adaptability in educational situations of the kinds of students who are presently seeking to expand knowledge in academic areas. It is almost redundant to say that any one method or any limited group of methods will not serve the needs of enough students. It is also self-evident that the student's need for a different kind of educational institution is rapidly becoming a foremost consideration. Many, if not most students, attend

an institution of higher learning which leads to better jobs, promotions, and increased income. The associate degree was a step in the right direction but it is not enough. If a clerical employee goes to school to add shorthand to her skills, she needs a paper to certify specifically what she can do and what it is worth. Some students, such as a lady who had experienced no failures, could come to Metropolitan Technical Community College and spend a year, even two years, and walk away without any certified qualifications. Colleges are probably not going to do much to decrease the dropout rate, but rather they are going to have to draw distinctions between the goals that have been set. Colleges are going to have to offer a wider range of goals to satisfy today's students who are goal oriented and who have a variety of both short-range and long-range plans.

Many of the subjective answers to questions on the questionnaire mentioned that students have a great deal of difficulty in getting back into the habit of studying and, in fact, many said they had never had and did not know how to develop good study habits. Perhaps it would be profitable to conduct a study researching the failure of certain study habits to produce the desired knowledge foundation and to research also the study habits of students who gain outstanding success.

It might also be worthwhile to research methods of creating a greater involvement of students in school and in

school affairs, since students who are highly involved in school activities seem to do better. Because of the changing patterns of the student population, a new kind of involvement needs to be considered. The present students will not be those that necessarily have free evenings or weekends. A pattern of involvement needs to be provided.

Combinations of financial aid and work opportunities need to be researched and developed. Many communities have already erased many of the boundaries between work and education so that the work place becomes an extended classroom. These kinds of innovative situations need to be studied so they will provide the best possible learning climate and environment for students.

Research is needed on the transfer of credits from the community college and the eligibility for entering a university. Because of the new student pattern of attending, dropping out, and returning, many students will apparently want education beyond the community college level. The educational system should be prepared for this possibility and should be providing bridges to allow transfers from community colleges to universities as students desire to continue.

Difficulties encountered at the beginning of this study indicate that a far better system for collecting and making available follow-up data on each student is vital. Research could be done on the kinds of information that will be needed and on a variety of means of obtaining and retaining it.

It appears to be evident from the literature that the dropout problem is one of long standing and of serious economic and social consequence. Current newspaper articles indicate a great deal of concern by both educators and lay people about the number of students who either fail to become educated within the system or who quit struggling against a system that somehow defeats them. Metropolitan Technical Community College administrators and curriculum advisors need to continue to work toward improving all areas where problems are identified and also to increase diligence in researching additional successful teaching approaches. Almost everything seems to validate that using a variety of teaching methods is the most successful way of reaching the most students' levels, in satisfying the most students' needs, and in retaining all those who express an earnest desire to achieve an educational goal.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire Sent to 395 Students
Who Dropped From the Secretarial Science
Program From Fall 1974 to Fall 1976

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

For the following sentences, rank each completing statement by numbers with the most important, from your point of view, being No. 1, next most important No. 2, and so on. If any of them do not apply to you at all, leave those blank.

1. I discontinued my clerical training because:

- () I realized I didn't have adequate basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) to succeed.
 - () I wanted to avoid having a failure on my record.
 - () Some of the teachers had attitudes that made me feel unwanted, unhappy, angry, or humiliated.
 - () Too much of the course material I had to study seemed irrelevant to what I want to do.
 - () I had personal problems.
 - () I really liked the school and would have liked to continue.
 - () I had transportation problems I couldn't resolve and was late or missed too many classes.
 - () I had financial problems and had to quit to be able to take a job.
 - () I had really wanted to take another course but I didn't have the time or money for it.
 - () I was going to compromise by taking a clerical course but found out I didn't like it.
 - () Other (be specific)
-
-

Page 2

Put X in the appropriate box or boxes

2. My past record of failure has been:

- () Extensive. It seems like I fail at everything I try.
- () Moderate. I have failed some courses but they have usually been those I didn't enjoy and didn't really need.
- () Nonexistent. I have never had a failing grade.
- () So discouraging that I really don't want to face the prospect of failing one more time.

3. The basic problems I have that cause me trouble in the classes I take are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| () Spelling | () Knowing what to study |
| () Math | () Planning my time so I can be prepared for class |
| () English | () Getting along with classmates |
| () Remembering what I study | () Getting along with teachers |
| () Other (be specific) | |

For the following sentences, rank each completing statement by numbers with the most important, from your point of view, being No. 1, next most important No. 2, and so on. If any of them do not apply to you at all, leave those blank.

4. I would return to school if:

- () They'd hire some new teachers who relate to people like me.
- () I could have some tutoring or special help to bring my basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) up to standards.
- () I thought I would be graded fairly and judged on my performance instead of personal qualities.
- () They didn't have grades but just let people learn at their rate and completed them when they could do the work.
- () They'd get rid of the required insignificant courses and let people take just what they really need.
- () I could arrange dependable transportation.
- () I could have some (or better) financial assistance to help me while I'm in school.
- () Other (be specific)

5. What I liked best about Metro was: _____

6. What I disliked most about Metro was: _____

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter Which Accompanied
the Questionnaire

APPENDIX B

August 26, 1977

Dear Former Clerical Student:

In the interest of research and of providing information to Metropolitan Technical Community College so that they may better plan programs suitable to satisfy the aspiration of students, a study is being conducted to better understand the limitations and inadequacy of the programs now being offered.

You will do yourself a favor and you will provide pertinent information of benefit for future students if you will take the time to respond to the attached questionnaire. The only stipulation of your answers is that you will be honest and complete as possible.

Please use the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope to return the questionnaire by September 15, 1977.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lutisha F. Clark
Graduate Student
The University of Nebraska
at Omaha

lfc

APPENDIX C

Sample of Filled-Out Questionnaire
From Disadvantaged Student

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

For the following sentences, rank each completing statement by numbers with the most important, from your point of view, being No. 1, next most important No. 2, and so on. If any of them do not apply to you at all, leave those blank.

1. I discontinued my clerical training because:

- () I realized I didn't have adequate basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) to succeed.
- () I wanted to avoid having a failure on my record.
- () Some of the teachers had attitudes that made me feel unwanted, unhappy, angry, or humiliated.
- () Too much of the course material I had to study seemed irrelevant to what I want to do.
- (/) I had personal problems.
- (/) I really liked the school and would have liked to continue.
- () I had transportation problems I couldn't resolve and was late or missed too many classes.
- () I had financial problems and had to quit to be able to take a job.
- () I had really wanted to take another course other than clerical, but I didn't have the time or money for it.
- () I was going to compromise by taking a clerical course but found out I didn't like it.
- (/) Other (be specific)

** Problems affecting physical were not resolved. But since then I lost 67 lbs. got strengthened. Thinking about taking courses later, CETA & State Rehab are helping in good form.*

*Translation - Problems affecting physical were not resolved. But since then I lost 67 lbs. got strengthened. Thinking about taking courses later. CETA and State Rehab are helping in good form.

-2-

Put X in the appropriate box or boxes

2. My past record of failure has been:

- () Extensive. It seems like I fail at everything I try.
- () Moderate. I have failed some courses but they have usually been those I didn't enjoy and didn't really need.
- (X) Non-existent. I have never had a failing grade.
- () So discouraging that I really don't want to face the prospect of failing one more time.

3. The basic problem I have that cause me trouble in the classes I take are:

- () Spelling
- () Math
- () English
- () Remembering what I study
- () Knowing what to study
- () Planning my time so I can be prepared for class
- () Getting along with classmates
- () Getting along with teachers
- (X) Other (be specific)

* *The only trouble was minimal Physical dexterity to operate calculating machines was hard. I bit off too much - I probably needed a fore-map of what I was really getting into. Refresher course was needed.*

*Translation - The only trouble was minimal Physical dexterity to operate calculating machines was hard. I bit off too much - I probably needed a fore-map of what I was really getting into. Refresher courses was needed.

-3-

For the following sentences, rank each completing statement by numbers with the most important, from your point of view, being No. 1, next most important No. 2, and so on. If any of them do not apply to you at all, leave those blank.

4. I would return to school if:

- () They'd hire some new teachers who relate to people like me.
- () I could have some tutoring or special help to bring my basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) up to standards.
- () I thought I would be graded fairly and judged on my performance instead of personal qualities.
- () They didn't have grades but just let people learn at their rate and completed them when they could do the work.
- () They'd get rid of the required insignificant courses and let people take just what they really need.
- (/) I could arrange dependable transportation.
- () I could have some (or better) financial assistance to help me while I'm in school.
- () I had dependable baby-sitting arrangements.
- (/) Other (be specific)

** If I was helped more extensively I probably would still make it. State Rehab had me enroll on the last day of registration.*

And one small incident - I waited for 3/4 of an hour for a pen (or) pencil. And 132nd campus has better atmosphere than Fort Omaha.

*Translation - If I was helped more extensively probably would still make it. State Rehab had me enroll on the last day of registration. And one small incident - I waited for 3/4 of an hour for a pen (or) pencil. And 132nd campus has better atmosphere than Fort Omaha.

-4-

5. What I liked best about Metro was:

* Didn't really get started.

6. What I disliked most about Metro was:

** Parking and atmosphere at the Fort Omaha Campus were discouraging.

*Translation - Didn't really get started.

**Translation - Parking and atmosphere at the Fort Omaha
Campus was discouraging.

APPENDIX D

Sample of Filled-Out Questionnaire
From Student of Average Performance Level

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE

For the following sentences, rank each completing statement by numbers with the most important, from your point of view, being No. 1, next most important No. 2, and so on. If any of them do not apply to you at all, leave those blank.

1. I discontinued my clerical training because:

- () I realized I didn't have adequate basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) to succeed.
- () I wanted to avoid having a failure on my record.
- () Some of the teachers had attitudes that made me feel unwanted, unhappy, angry, or humiliated.
- () Too much of the course material I had to study seemed irrelevant to what I want to do.
- () I had personal problems.
- () I really liked the school and would have liked to continue.
- () I had transportation problems I couldn't resolve and was late or missed too many classes.
- () I had financial problems and had to quit to be able to take a job.
- () I had really wanted to take another course other than clerical, but I didn't have the time or money for it.
- () I was going to compromise by taking a clerical course but found out I didn't like it.
- (X) Other (be specific)

*I completed my courses in
 typing, shorthand, filing and clerical
 procedures. I have found a
 good job, but might return
 later for word processing*

-2-

Put X in the appropriate box or boxes

2. My past record of failure has been:

- Extensive. It seems like I fail at everything I try.
- Moderate. I have failed some courses but they have usually been those I didn't enjoy and didn't really need.
- Non-existent. I have never had a failing grade.
- So discouraging that I really don't want to face the prospect of failing one more time.

3. The basic problem I have that cause me trouble in the classes I take are:

- Spelling
- Math
- English
- Remembering what I study
- Knowing what to study
- Planning my time so I can be prepared for class
- Getting along with classmates
- Getting along with teachers
- Other (be specific)

I studied real hard and really had no problems.

-3-

For the following sentences, rank each completing statement by numbers with the most important, from your point of view, being No. 1, next most important No. 2, and so on. If any of them do not apply to you at all, leave those blank.

4. I would return to school if:

- () They'd hire some new teachers who relate to people like me.
- () I could have some tutoring or special help to bring my basic education (reading, writing, and arithmetic) up to standards.
- () I thought I would be graded fairly and judged on my performance instead of personal qualities.
- () They didn't have grades but just let people learn at their rate and completed them when they could do the work.
- () They'd get rid of the required insignificant courses and let people take just what they really need.
- () I could arrange dependable transportation.
- () I could have some (or better) financial assistance to help me while I'm in school.
- () I had dependable baby-sitting arrangements.
- (X) Other (be specific)

I presently work a rotating shift at a local hospital. When my hours at work become more stable, (8 to 5) I plan to return for more clerical courses.

-4-

5. What I liked best about Metro was:

*I liked Metro because they offer
courses on the quarter semester.*

6. What I disliked most about Metro was:

*I really didn't dislike anything
about the school.*