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A STUDY OF CERTAIN HIRING PRACTICES OF

FIVE SELECTED AGENCIES IN DECATUR, ILLINOIS

(TITLE)

BY

Anne Bernice Reeds

PLAN B PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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AND PREPARED IN COURSE

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1966

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS
FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE DEGREE, M.S. IN ED.

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Mr. David Kirk, Administrative Assistant, City of Decatur, Illinois

Mr. Edward Lillpop, Office Employment Manager, Firestone Tire and
Rubber Company

Mr. Clyde Matthew, Personnel Director, Caterpillar

Mr. Dean Steinkoenig, Assistant Employment Supervisor, Staley's

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I. INTRODUCTION

Not too many years ago, a person could walk into a business looking for a job, and the personnel manager would talk to him for a few minutes and say either, "You are hired," or, "There is no position for which you are qualified." Today this same job applicant might have to undergo a series of tests, be checked by character references, pass a physical examination, and fill out a lengthy series of application blanks.

There are many reasons for this change in hiring procedures and for the greater emphasis given to employment tests. One important reason is the rapid growth of our cities. The personnel manager used to know personally all the people applying for a job. Today, he probably knows only a few, if any, of them. Another reason is the great mobility of our population. People used to spend their entire lives in one community, but they are now moving much more frequently from community to community. Another, and possibly the most important reason for this change, is the rising cost of training this applicant. An employer wants to be sure that his expenses in training workers will be profitable to him. He wants to be sure the applicant is interested in working for him and in doing his best for the company. He wants to be sure that the applicant is qualified for the job and is capable of doing a good job.

One of the major tools in hiring procedures used by businesses in the United States is the employment test. There are many different

kinds of employment tests given. There are battery tests, short intelligence tests, and performance tests. The battery tests consist of several different tests designed to measure scholastic achievement, aptitude, or intelligence, or a combination of these. The person giving the test has to decide how much he will weigh each part of the test and what parts of the test to give. Short intelligence tests yield a simple overall, or global, score. This score is called the intelligence quotient, although in many cases the test probably measures achievement more accurately than it does intelligence. The performance tests may involve typing a letter, taking a timed writing, putting something together, or doing something with one's hands. The employment test may include spelling and English tests, or it may involve skills and knowledges relative only to the job being filled.

Purpose of the Paper

It is the purpose of this paper to analyze some of the tests given by five major employers of stenographers in Decatur, Illinois, and to tell some of the job qualifications involved. The employers chosen for this study are Staley's, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, Caterpillar, Mueller's, and the City of Decatur. The information was obtained by interviews with the personnel managers of the agencies and by questionnaires completed by the personnel managers or by persons designated by them.

This analysis will be carried out by giving some information about the tests used by these firms, by reporting the results of the interviews and responses to the questionnaires, and by forming

conclusions relative to testing and other procedures in selection for employment.

II. DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME EMPLOYMENT TESTS

Tests serve two functions in the employment situation: selection and placement.¹ In the selection situation, the emphasis is on a job and finding someone to fill it. In the placement situation, the emphasis is on the person and finding a place for him. Most of the employment tests given are for the purpose of selection. The employer must choose the test which he feels can best determine the correct person to fill the job that he has available. To accomplish this goal, he must carefully analyze the tests available to him and determine the test that will best serve his purpose. If done correctly, this can be an enormous task.

There are many, many tests on the market today from which the employer may choose. The tests used by the Decatur, Illinois, employers include the Henmon-Nelson Test of Mental Ability, the SRA Typing Adaptability Test, the Psychological Corporation General Clerical Test, the Wonderlic Personnel Test, and company-devised tests. Before the results of the interviews and questionnaires with the employers in Decatur, Illinois, can be discussed, it is necessary to know something about these tests.

¹George J. Dudyca, Applied Psychology (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 172.

The Henmon-Nelson Tests of Mental Ability

The Henmon-Nelson Tests of Mental Ability belong to the class of group intelligence tests which yield a single global score, an overall estimate of general intelligence; having no part tests, they are not diagnostic and they provide no measure of specifics.²

There has been much discussion about this test. Many people feel that such a short test tends to be too verbal, that it measures scholastic aptitude rather than intelligence quotient. Others feel that it is a very fine test of its kind, that it is easy to administer, and that it is easy to score. The test uses the Clapp-Young self-marking device which requires no separate scoring key. This is one of the major advantages of the test. The responses are recorded on the reverse side of the test page by the action of a carbon backing. When the scorer removes the perforated edging and pulls the carbon backing away, the correct responses are clearly indicated.³

The Henmon-Nelson Tests have been revised, and according to many critics, the revised edition shows a distinct improvement over the first edition. The format is improved over the earlier edition, and the manual accompanying the test gives more detailed information on how to administer the test. The manual was one of the most controversial issues of the earlier test. It was believed that it was not detailed enough when speaking of norms and in giving directions on how to administer the test.

²H. M. Fowler, "The Henmon-Nelson Tests of Mental Ability," Fourth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1953), p. 398.

³D. Welty Lefever, "The Henmon-Nelson Tests of Mental Ability, Revised Edition," The Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1959), p. 470.

A potential user of this test must answer several questions, one of the most important being "Will a relatively short test (90 items in 30 minutes), yielding a single score and carrying a heavy verbal emphasis, serve the purpose for which it is intended?" If this is true, the Henmon-Nelson is quite sufficient for the purpose. The test contains items including vocabulary, sentence completion, word classification, logical selection, disarranged sentences, interpretation of proverbs, verbal analogies, mixed spelling, series completion, design analogies, and arithmetic reasoning.⁴

Although the Henmon-Nelson Tests of Mental Ability have proved quite successful in schools for measuring academic achievement, they have not been as valuable in diagnosing special problems in learning, in vocational counseling, or in working with the mentally retarded.⁵ This leads to the problem that the tests may not be as good as anticipated for employment purposes. If the employer is looking for an intelligence test, it will be sufficient. Therefore, the test could be used to advantage in the selection situation; but if the employer is using the test in the placement situation, he may have some difficulty. It is suggested that the employer take a critical look at the test and see if it really measures what he wants before he uses it.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 472.

The SRA Typing Adaptability Test

The SRA Typing Adaptability Test is given by many employers seeking stenographers who are proficient in typing skills. There are two main criticisms of the test. They are (1) that the test lacks organization, and (2) that the test does not measure the typist's ability to do straight copy work. The instructions given are very clear and detailed, except they do not tell the typist that he is indirectly timed on the test. A record is made of the amount of time needed to complete the test, but the typist is not given a certain amount of time to do it. The amount of time required to do the test is added to the errors made to get the total score; therefore, the person with the lowest score has done the best job on the test.

Test 1 requires the reproduction of a rough draft into an acceptable manuscript. Test 2 requires the student to transfer tabular material to a form with lined columns. Test 3 requires the typist to rearrange five names and addresses and type them in alphabetical order. The examinee is told to erase all errors and advised that he will be penalized one point for each corrected error and 2 points for each uncorrected error.⁶

The test is presented in a 4-page folder of general instructions and a second 4-page folder is included for the actual typing of the test. Considerable manipulation of paper is required for the typist who is

⁶Gale W. Clark, "SRA Typing Adaptability Test," Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1959), p. 623.

taking the test. Also included is a 4-page manual for the examiner. It is quite detailed and very complete.

The test appears to be very useful as a short screening test which is easy to administer and can be scored by a careful clerk in about two minutes.⁷ It is a very useful aid in the employment of someone who has to do a large amount of typing.

Psychological Corporation General Clerical Test

Many employers want to be sure their stenographers are adept in clerical skills as well as in typing and shorthand skills. They test these clerical skills by means of a clerical test. One of the better known clerical tests is the Psychological Corporation General Clerical Test, or the GCT test.

The Psychological Corporation General Clerical Test consists of nine parts or subtests. These are arranged in three groups: Clerical (checking and alphabetizing), Numerical (arithmetic computation, error location, and arithmetic reasoning), and Verbal (spelling, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar).⁸ These three groups cover quite thoroughly the area of clerical work and have been shown to be valid for predicting success in this kind of work. The test takes only about an hour to complete in its entirety.

⁷Edward B. Greene, "SRA Typing Adaptability Test," Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1959), p. 624.

⁸Edward E. Cureton, "Psychological Corporation General Clerical Test," The Fourth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1953), p. 721.

The Psychological Corporation General Clerical test allows the employer to use other intelligence tests and other skill tests if he so desires. The test is available in a single booklet or in two booklets. In the latter form, one booklet contains the clerical numerical tests, and another the verbal tests.⁹ The manual accompanying the tests is quite complete, more so than many of the manuals for similar tests. The only omission is that the manual fails to contain descriptions of the process by which they were selected for final inclusion.¹⁰

This test is quite complete and stands up well when compared to other clerical tests. It should be given worthy consideration by any employer of clerical personnel. The personnel manager should decide if it has any drawbacks, such as length or the separately timed tests, that may interfere with his beliefs as to testing. He should find this an excellent test of its kind and one that will prove to be acceptable by most companies desiring this kind of test.

Wonderlic Personnel Test

The Wonderlic Personnel Test is an intelligence test that is widely used by businessmen. It is highly probable that the test is too widely used to be valid. Almost anyone in search of a job is given this test at one firm or another. Five forms of the test are

⁹G. A. Satter, "Psychological Corporation General Clerical Test," The Fourth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey, 1953), p. 722.

¹⁰Ibid.

available, and it is recommended that employers give two of the tests. Test items are arranged in order from very easy to very difficult. The test is easy to give, takes only a short time, and is easy to score. These are the reasons many employers prefer this test over similar intelligence tests.

The manual accompanying the Wonderlic Personnel Test has caused much discussion. The manual fails to give adequate information about validity of the test and reliability of the test. The references that the manual gives are old, the most recent being 1958, even though the manual itself is dated 1961. Many of these references are from trade journals, and it is somewhat hard for an employer to get a trade journal if he is not in that specific field. Therefore, information about the test is relatively scarce.

Scoring of the Wonderlic Personnel Test is done with strip keys and is easy and simple; the score is the number right.¹¹ Wonderlic recommends the use of raw scores rather than IQ's for use with adults.

One definite fault of the test is its easy acquisition. The test is advertised very frequently in trade magazines and a copy is given upon request to any personnel manager asking for one. Separate forms of the test are provided for employment agencies, but many employers also give this form of the test because of its ready availability.

¹¹N. M. Downie, "Wonderlic Personnel Test," Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1965), p. 793.

The test is believed to be a good measure of intelligence for any employer desiring this kind of information. It is quite likely that the tests are adequately reliable and that they are also valid for a variety of jobs and for a variety of situations.¹² However, no definite proof can be made of this fact. Therefore, the employer should experiment with the test and find out if it really fills his purpose in testing applicants before he definitely decides to use it as an employment tool.

Company-Devised Tests

Many companies have their own tests. Most of these companies are quite proud of this fact and are very hesitant to give any information about what is contained on these tests. They can be performance tests, testing typing and shorthand skill; they can be intelligence tests, in which case even though they are "company" tests, they have probably been borrowed from other sources; or they can be clerical tests, testing clerical aptitudes and abilities. The company tests can also be a combination of these factors. A company test has certain advantages. In many instances it is given by all branches of this company throughout the entire United States. If this is the case, it probably has been proved to be valid and reliable. In any case, the employer knows what he wants to prove by his test, and he can tell if the applicant has the qualities for which he is searching. Company tests used by smaller

¹²Marvin D. Dunnette, "Wonderlic Personnel Test," Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook, ed. Oscar Krisen Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1965), p. 795.

companies may not be as valid as other tests could be; but the employer still knows what he wants, and if the test serves his purpose, it is valid for that company.

III. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH AND
QUESTIONNAIRES FILLED OUT BY
FIVE PERSONNEL MANAGERS IN DECATUR, ILLINOIS

Five personnel managers in Decatur, Illinois, employing a great number of stenographers in the city, were contacted and asked about their employment tests, what the duties of their stenographers consisted of, and how the schools could better train stenographic help. This was done by personal interview and by questionnaires filled out by these men. A copy of the questionnaire that was given to these men is shown in the appendix of the paper. The men contacted were: Mr. Ed Lillpop of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company; Mr. C. E. Coffin of Mueller's; Mr. Dean Steinkoenig of Staley's; Mr. Dave Kirk of the City of Decatur; and Mr. Clyde Matthew of Caterpillar. This chapter discusses the results of the research.

Firestone Tire and Rubber Company¹³

Firestone Tire and Rubber Company requires a typing and a shorthand test before they will employ a stenographer. This is a company test consisting of three company-devised letters. The applicant is given one letter as practice material. He can practice as long as he likes. He is then given a test on one of the other letters. The applicant is scored on the total time required to type a mailable letter

¹³Interview with Ed Lillpop, Office Employment Manager, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, May 20, 1966.

from this copy. The company allows a maximum of ten minutes on the letter. Mr. Lillpop feels that a good typist will put out the letter in three to five minutes.

The shorthand test given by Firestone is taken from the same letters used for the typing test. A minimum of 80 words per minute is required for employability. Comptometer operators, key punch operators, and voucher typists are the only personnel not required to know shorthand. The employees of the company do not use their shorthand in the actual performance of their jobs; however, they need to know shorthand to be eligible for promotion.

Occasionally a Wonderlic test will be given to an applicant. This is if the girl will work a great deal with figures. It is given particularly to the girls who will work in the Methods Department. When this test is given, the company uses the national averages to a certain degree; however, they do not depend entirely on them. They are used as a minor tool. The company gives no grammar, math, or spelling tests at the present time, but they are thinking of devising them.

The company in Decatur uses the services of the Illinois State Employment Service in many instances. Therefore, the applicants have already passed a shorthand, typing, math, and general clerical test before they are interviewed. When this is true, Firestone does not give its own test to the applicant.

Firestone hires a person for a specific vacancy, not to advance within the company. However, some transfers do take place as a result of promotions. Usually those just out of high school will be hired as clerk typists, which implies that they do not have a great deal of

experience. Firestone has three classifications for stenographic help. They are as follows: clerk typist; secretary clerk, which used to be called stenographer; and secretary.

In the questionnaire filled out by Mr. Lillpop, he stated that even though they require the stenographers to know shorthand, after they are hired the amount of use of shorthand varies from ten letters per week to about two hours per day. This also varies with the department. Some departments do not require the stenographers to use their shorthand at all. They do not require the stenographers to know bookkeeping. At the present time they have no male stenographers, although they would hire one if he applied.

It is assumed that when filling out the section about the amount of use of machines that Mr. Lillpop grouped all stenographers together. Anyway, the total number of hours is very high if only one stenographer is being considered. The stenographer uses the Xerox machine about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours per week. Electric typewriters are used about 25 hours per week, although the company has only five electrics. Manual typewriters are used 20 hours per week; calculators two hours per week; the spirit duplicator one hour per week; the Thermofax one hour per week; the laminating machine one hour per week. Dictaphones, mimeographs, and stenograph machines are not used by Firestone's secretaries. He further comments that about fifty per cent of the stenographer's time is spent in typing.

Mr. Lillpop feels that Macon and Decatur schools do quite well in training girls. However, he feels that some of the other smaller

schools in the area do not do such a good job. He has had some very good stenographic help from the office occupations girls. Office occupations is a program where students go to school half a day and work in an office half a day. The students are paid for the work they do in the office. It is sponsored cooperatively by schools and by businesses in the city. The purpose of the program is to train high school students to be better office employees. Mr. Lillpop feels that this is a good blend between work and school. He thinks the basic skills of high school graduates are quite good, but that attitude toward work needs to be stressed more. He states that girls need to realize the importance of a full day's work for a full day's pay. He also says they should know that it does not hurt to ask questions; that problems arise when they do not ask questions. He thinks motivation could be stressed more in school. His final comment was that he thinks teachers should find out more about what industry really expects from stenographic help.

Mueller's¹⁴

Mueller's uses a short set of employment tests--the Wonderlic test, verbal word meaning test, numerical test, clerical test which combines names and figures, the SRA typing test for speed and accuracy, and a shorthand test which consists of five letters at five different speeds--60, 75, 90, 105, and 120 words per minute. They try to make

¹⁴Interview with C. E. Coffin, Personnel Manager, Mueller's, May 31, 1966.

sure that conditions are the same and that the tests are all given the same as far as length and speed are concerned. They feel the tests only give an indication of the potential to do a job, but that they do not tell whether the employee will work or not. They feel that a good experience background is much more important than the tests.

The problem that faces Mr. Coffin is what to do with the results of the test. He did an experiment on this by having 110 people in the plant take tests. As he scored them, he determined a basis to set up a range for each particular job. Some of the employees had worked for the company two weeks and others for as long as 35 years. This experiment was done about five years ago. The experiment gave a good indication of what the employees were capable of doing, but some of the employees were not willing to work up to this capacity. One girl scored very low in word meaning, but she was a very good employee. When questioned about this, she said that she had to rely on her dictionary for a great deal of help. He also feels that the tests do not tell whether or not the employee will get along well with other people. The fact that some people get excited when taking a test was also verified by the experiment.

Mueller's require the stenographers to know shorthand. The minimum they require is 75 words per minute. After they are hired, the girls use their shorthand from one hour to three hours daily. The applicants are not required to know bookkeeping. Although they presently have no male stenographers, they would hire one if he applied.

Mr. Coffin says that they place their inexperienced girls on training jobs to learn more about the company and the work. They move

from one department to another for the first few weeks of their employment. However, the experienced girls are placed in more challenging positions.

The machines used by the stenographers and the time per week spent on them is as follows: Xerox machine, one to two hours; electric and manual typewriters, 50 per cent of the time; calculators, which include the Marchant and Monroe, ten per cent of the time; the dictaphone, 75 percent of the time; the mimeograph, ten per cent of the time; the spirit duplicator, ten per cent of the time; the Thermofax, ten per cent of the time. It must be realized that these percentages total more than 100% and that some of them are rather high. For example, most firms would not use the Thermofax four hours a week. The laminating is all done in one department and the stenograph machine is not used. The stenographers spend about three hours daily typing. Other work consists of typing dictation, transcribing, filing, and answering telephones.

Mr. Coffin feels that the Decatur Schools are adequately preparing graduates for stenographic work, but he feels attitudes, appearance, maturity, courtesy, accepting responsibility, use of good English, and the ability to realize the importance of a job well done should be stressed more. It needs to be stressed that a work break is more important than a coffee break. He realizes that this is hard to teach in the classroom and that it is something the girls should learn at home.

Staley's¹⁵

Mr. Dean Steinkoenig, the personnel manager at Staley's, says they give the General Clerical Test to every clerical applicant, regardless of whether this applicant is a man or a woman. He also says that they give a ten-minute typing test. The applicant must type 45 words per minute with ten errors or less on the typing test. However, if the applicant has a college degree, he is not given a test.

Staley's is now in the midst of revising their testing. They want to get a test that will take less time to give and that will give the same results. They feel that the GCT test they presently give is valid in most cases. They give no grammar test, but check the grammar in the interview and in the application. They rely mainly on the interviewer's judgment when hiring a girl.

Testing conditions are much better here than they used to be. Tests used to be given out in the open. They have a company psychologist who comes to Decatur from Chicago two days a month to work with the professional people. They feel this has increased the employer-employee relationships in the company.

They do not require shorthand, but they feel it is best if the girl has it. They try to see that the girls do know it, since it is required by most of the executives. The only people who use dictaphones are the ones who do not have secretaries.

¹⁵Personal interview with Dean Steinkoenig, Assistant Employment Supervisor, Staley's, May 31, 1966.

All girls hired at Staley's begin as messenger girls. This is a Job Class 1. Next is the file clerk which is a Job Class 3. Job Class 5 is a clerk typist. From this the girls go into the steno pool. This is with a junior or senior transcription operator. After this they are promoted to a department secretary, then to a division secretary, and finally to an executive secretary. It is a policy of the company to promote from within. It is also a company policy to always have eight messenger girls. These girls average between 18 and 25 years of age. The secretaries usually average about 26 years of age.

Mr. Steinkoenig feels that typing skills of the applicants are weaker than the shorthand skills. He feels that the best source of girls from the Decatur Schools is St. Teresa. He thinks that they have more social graces and better stenographic skills. He accredits this to the fact that college preparation courses are not pushed as much at St. Teresa as in the public schools. The office occupation girls have worked out quite well at Staley's. Mr. Steinkoenig's main complaint is that the girls are pretty independent and this is reflected in their attitude toward work. The girls from the farming communities around do not have this attitude. This is accredited to the fact that they have had to work harder for what they have acquired.

City of Decatur¹⁶

The city of Decatur does much of its testing through the Illinois Employment Service. This way the applicants have already had a typing test, a shorthand test, a spelling test, and a clerical aptitude test. Before Mr. Kirk will interview the girls, they must have passed the typing test with at least 45 words a minute with five errors or less and passed the shorthand test with a minimum of 80 words per minute and a maximum of ten errors. The clerk aptitude test must be medium and the spelling grade must be at least a C. Mr. Kirk then gives the Henmon-Nelson intelligence test to the applicants. This test has been used for four to five years now. He takes the grade from the intelligence test and converts it to a percentage. There is a possible grade of 90 on the test. He averages this percentage with the percentage from the oral interview. There is a possible score of 35 on an oral interview with each commissioner. Since three commissioners interview the applicants, there would be a possible score of 105. An eligibility register is then compiled from the averages of the percentages.

If an applicant fails any part of the performance test, he is automatically disqualified. Every applicant who has passed the performance test has to be tested further by the city. They must advertise fifteen days in advance of an examination. This advertisement appears

¹⁶Interview with David Kirk, Administrative Assistant, City of Decatur, June 2, 1966.

in the paper as a legal notice. The person at the top of the eligibility list automatically gets the job. A police record check and a credit check are also made before a person is hired. The basis for promotion within the departments is that the top three qualified are considered.

The City of Decatur has their Clerk Stenographers classified as Clerk Steno I or Clerk Steno II's. The positions are now filled with Clerk Steno II's. These are City Civil Service, but this is in no way associated with State or Federal Civil Service.

Mr. Kirk indicated that the majority of the stenographers they employ use their shorthand less than one hour weekly after they are hired. Although they do not have any male stenographers at the present time, they would consider one for a position if he applied. They do not require their applicants to have a knowledge of bookkeeping. The major work of the stenographers consists of typing written correspondence, reports, public relations, and filing. He states that the stenographers spend more than three hours per day typing.

The machines used by the stenographers include the Xerox machine, electric and manual typewriters, calculators, dictaphone, mimeograph, and the spirit duplicator. They do not use the Thermofax, the laminating machine, or the stenograph machine. Mr. Kirk did not indicate time spent on these machines.

Mr. Kirk feels that the Decatur schools are adequately preparing students in the knowledge of various business machines, but he feels there is a great failing in spelling and accuracy. Overall, he feels

the schools are not adequately preparing the students for worth-while employment.

Caterpillar¹⁷

Caterpillar gives all applicants a mental alertness test, a general clerical test, an emotional stability test, and typing and shorthand tests. These are all company devised tests. The tests are used as a hiring tool, but the application blank and the interview are relied on to a greater degree than the tests. The company wants the applicants to have shorthand speeds of 100-120 words per minute and typing speeds of 50-65 words per minute. However, they sometimes have to lower these standards to be able to hire someone.

Mr. Matthew feels that attitude is probably the most important thing to consider when hiring employees. He wants to get people who will work well with others and who will be able to get along with the group. He wants people who are reliable, who are on time for work, who are healthy enough not to be absent from work very much--and he gets this information from other places of employment where the person has worked, or from school records. The only reason he will turn a person down on the basis of test scores is when the person fails the typing or shorthand tests. The company relies mainly on the judgment of the person doing the interviewing. The tests are only a crutch to lean on; however, they usually substantiate what the interviewer finds. The interview picks up the loose ends and finds out if there was a reason for low scores on the tests.

¹⁷Interview with Clyde Matthew, Personnel Director, Caterpillar, June 3, 1966.

Mr. Matthew feels that the girls will gain in shorthand and typing speed after they start working. He thinks the general clerical test he gives is quite good.

Mr. Matthew has grouped dictators into three groups--those who will dictate perfect letters, who will tell paragraphing, punctuation, and everything they want in the letter; those who do not want to fool with punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, or correct English and will leave them up to the secretary; and those who could not do the punctuation, the paragraphing, or English even if they tried. He thinks this fact should be stressed more in school to give the girls some motivation to learn how to do these things.

Caterpillar hires girls for Class 2. They promote from within the plant if it is at all possible. All classes require shorthand except file clerks, and they are required to know shorthand if they want to be promoted to a better job. However, the use of the shorthand varies with the job and with the supervisor. One department head very seldom gives dictation; others may give it two or three hours per day.

Most of the typewriters used by the company are electric. The girls also use the calculators and the Thermofax. The duplicating is done by people in another section. The time the girls spend in typing varies tremendously with the job. The stenographers also make a lot of telephone calls, do posting, filing, and other common secretarial duties. Therefore, Mr. Matthew has no idea of what constitutes the major part of the stenographers' day. Caterpillar has no male stenographers, although they would be considered if they would apply. The applicants are not required to know bookkeeping.

Mr. Matthew feels most girls right out of school are doing a fine job. He does not think the poorest ones are a result of the school. The teachers should tell the girls to really "hit" the shorthand and typing because they will have a better opportunity for getting a job and of advancing in the job. They might also stress the importance of good punctuation, spelling, and form letters. The major weakness of the schools, according to Mr. Matthew, is that they are not turning out enough girls for secretarial work. It is getting to a point where almost anybody who can take dictation can get a job without any trouble. He would like to be more selective in hiring, but with the number of applicants so few, he cannot be this selective.

The interviews with the various employers were very beneficial. Most of them were quite willing to give information and wanted to work to bind closer ties between business and the schools. The interviews were also helpful in that they provided a tool that business teachers can use to better train stenographic workers. It is suggested that more teachers try working closer with businessmen and then incorporate some of the information into their business classes.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Of the five businessmen contacted in Decatur all required their stenographic employees to have a knowledge of shorthand. However, after the girls were hired, they did not use their shorthand as much as they could have. If the employer is going to put this much emphasis on shorthand, he should require the girls to use it more. This would be motivation for the girls to do better in school.

All of the agencies required an employment test before they would hire an applicant, although several of them paid little attention to the actual results of the test. Many of them also said that they did not think the schools were doing as good a job as possible in preparing stenographic help. It might be that this could be determined before the girls were hired if the employers had paid more attention to the employment test.

Most of the agencies are looking for a short employment test. This is fine if the employer knows what he is doing, but he might be able to screen the applicants better if he gave a more thorough test. One firm only gives a Wonderlic test to the girls who will do a lot of work with numbers. It seems that if they are going to give this test to these girls, it should be given to all girls, since the test is an intelligence test.

Some of the employers indicated that the schools were not training enough good clerical help. It is suggested that they bring this to

the attention of the public. Perhaps if this were done, the public would see the need for good stenographic help and would be more willing to let their sons and daughters enter this field.

It is felt that most of the personnel managers are doing an adequate job of hiring stenographic help. They are interested in what they are doing and they are trying to do a good job. They should work closer with the schools so that the teachers know what the employers want and can better train those who desire this kind of work. After finding the results of these interviews, it is evident that attitudes toward work must be stressed more in the schools. Granted, this is hard to do, but each teacher should do his best to instill this in the students.

The only way that teachers can train the kind of personnel that employers want is for the two to work hand in hand. Business teachers, as well as guidance counselors, should become aware of this fact. Businesses are looking for the best the schools have to offer, but how good is this best? A teacher must always work to his fullest capacity to try to fill these needs. Then, and only then, can he feel that he has accomplished his task of preparing these students for employability.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Does your business use a specific employment test when hiring stenographers? YES NO
 - a. If yes, what test(s) do you use? _____
 - b. If not, do you require any kind of a test? YES NO
 - c. What kind of test? _____
 - d. If not, what basis do you use for employment purposes?

2. Do you require your stenographers to know shorthand? YES NO
 - a. If so, what speed do you require? _____
 - b. How often do the stenographers use shorthand after they are hired?
 - (1) 1 hour daily
 - (2) 3 hours daily
 - (3) 1 hour weekly
 - (4) 3 hours weekly
 - (5) less frequently
 - (6) more frequently

3. Do you require your stenographers to have a knowledge of book-keeping? YES NO
 - a. How do you ascertain whether or not they possess a knowledge of bookkeeping?
 - (1) Completion of a bookkeeping course? YES NO
 - (2) Test? YES NO
 - (3) If by a test, what kind of test do you require? _____

4. Do you have any male stenographers? YES NO
 - a. If any men would apply for a stenographic job, would you consider them for the position? YES NO

QUESTIONNAIRE (Page 2)

5. What kinds of machines do your stenographers use?
(Please indicate approximately how many hours they use the machines each week.)
- (a) Xerox machine _____
 - (b) Electric typewriter _____
 - (c) Manual typewriter _____
 - (d) Calculators _____
 - (e) Dictaphone _____
 - (f) Mimeograph _____
 - (g) Spirit duplicator _____
 - (h) Thermofax _____
 - (i) Laminating machine _____
 - (j) Stenograph machine _____
6. About what per cent of the time do your stenographers spend in typing?
- a. 1 hour daily
 - b. 3 hours daily
 - c. 1 hour weekly
 - d. 3 hours weekly
 - e. less frequently
 - f. more frequently
7. What kind of work constitutes the biggest part of the day for your stenographers? _____
8. Do you find that the Decatur Schools are adequately preparing graduates for stenographic work? YES NO
9. In what area are the schools doing the best work in preparing graduates for stenographic work? _____
10. In what area are the schools doing the poorest job in preparing graduates for stenographic work? _____
11. What suggestions do you have in regard to the work the schools are doing?

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