

AN EVENT OF IMPACT ON BUSINESS EDUCATION

BY

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The office has undergone a transformation in the past decade. Systems changed, procedures changed, attitudes changed. Because we are living in the age of automation, we have to accept that word processing has had an impact on areas of office productivity and on the content of what business educators teach.

Word processing increases production, but as Ruth Anderson states, "It is important to remember that the quality of the copy can be no better than the quality of the word processing secretary".¹ Secretarial typing ability is more than speed with accuracy. It is pride in what you do; it is economy in the use of time and supplies; it is organization; search for ways to increase output and efficiency, and ability to guide those whom you supervise in their typing assignments.² Machines do not replace people; they improve their ability to do a better job. If people are properly chosen and properly trained, the system works.

Although word processing is not a new term for business educators, it is confusing for students. They must understand that word processing is not only an office machine with a screen that produces written communications at a faster speed than the electric typewriters. They must understand that word processing prepares them for the automated office. To cope with this technological advancement, the student should not resist change and get to know about the new equipment and procedures that are not only changing the way office work is done but are restructuring the organization of the office.

The automated office requires skilled personnel. As educators, we have a significant part in preparing students and reeducating professionals for their role in and outside of the office environment.

Only recently have colleges started offering word processing courses. Secondary schools have not yet made provisions to incorporate them to the curricula.

Although not all offices will adopt word processing nor every graduate work with such a system, students should be made aware that it is there.

In order to properly prepare students for the business world, the basic techniques for word processing must be taught. No drastic changes should be made, but changes on the emphasis of the present curricula are definitely necessary. The changes may be incorporated in current courses such as typing, dictation, secretarial procedures, and business English. Students must be

oriented since the environment in the word processing system is completely different from that of the traditional office. If they are oriented to this new situation, the student may develop favorable attitudes.

In the typewriting class, emphasis should be given to procedures such as formatting, proofreading, editing, rough drafts, and statistical data. If an automatic typewriter is available, basic techniques such as changing margins, tabs, indenting, centering, underscoring, and backspacing should be taught. The IBM85 and the ET121 are automatic typewriters that may be used for this purpose. Once the student has the basic skills, it should only take a few days on the job to get acquainted with the operations of the specific machine. Backspacing is important because this is the method used in in correcting with the automatic typewriter.

Dictation in the transcription class should also be emphasized. The ability of word processors to understand every word dictated plays an important role in production. Skills in machine transcription should also be developed.

In the secretarial procedures class, word processing terminology and concepts must be added to the course content. Field trips, guest speakers, demonstrations from manufacturers, and films showing the center in operation are recommended.

In the business English class, editing skills should be developed. Students must learn to add or delete parts of letters and reports. The students should learn to concentrate, enhance their vocabulary, strengthen their grammar, and sentence structure.

The human factor becomes more important as changes in systems and equipment affect attitudes and emotions.

The opportunities for business educators to serve are unparalleled. New tools are available to help teachers and administrators to be more efficient, effective, and creative than ever before. Business education is providing the leadership.

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