

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE GRADUATES OF THE ADULT  
BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM AT TULSA COUNTY  
AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

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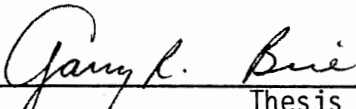
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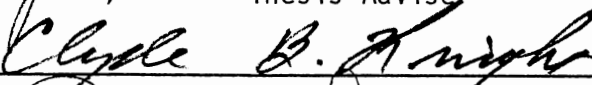
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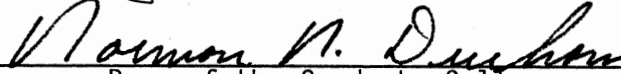
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The role of adult vocational-technical training is to prepare workers for productive employment. Changes in technology, the nature of work, and the workplace itself suggest the need to determine if programs are relevant or keeping up to date.

There was a lack of information regarding the employability of graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program at Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School (TCAVTS) insofar as skills training and academic education were concerned. Some graduates were hired while others were not; some continued formal education while others did not. It became increasingly apparent that feedback to the Adult Business and Office Program was vital in determining what areas to expand or modify within the curriculum and what revisions were needed.

According to Hodges (p. 3), quoting Venn (1967):

Guidance, placement, and follow-up must become a recognized responsibility of all schools and colleges if education is to achieve its purposes in a technological society. One of the major 'uses' of education is in the world of work. Education not put to use has no value.

With the advent of the "information age," the business office environment has shown a dramatic need for change in worker skills and technological training. Any worker entering the business office must possess not only the basic requisite skills of a clerical worker, but

must show adeptness in communication skills including the computer and other sophisticated "high-tech" electronic equipment.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem was that technology in the workplace and workplace conditions had been changing rapidly and there was no empirical data upon which to make curriculum changes for the Adult Business and Office Program.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine if the level of training and education was appropriate for those students completing the Adult Business and Office Program to secure entry-level positions within the field for which they were trained. This determination was made through a sampling of Adult Business and Office Program graduates from July 1, 1986, to October 1, 1989.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To determine whether graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program were able to secure employment within their field of training upon completion of the program within six months. If they did secure employment upon completion of the program, how long it took them to secure that employment.
2. To determine if further skills training and/or academic education were necessary for that graduate to secure initial employment.



3. To determine if the Adult Business and Office Program curriculum was adequate to meet the needs of the student trained.

#### Need for the Study

In order to stay abreast of the ever-changing face of business and office technology, continual evaluation of the training program must be done. Former students now employed or seeking employment have been one of the most reliable sources of information to verify the program's effectiveness in training students for employment in the business world.

Venn (1967) as quoted by Hodges (p. 5) addressed the need for continual evaluation of training programs:

A good vocational or technical education program will have as many (or more) students doing extension as are doing preparatory work. This goal has already been achieved in many of the existing programs. Those doing extension work are not necessarily day or degree-credit students, nor is their entry marked by prerequisites other than ability to profit from the instruction, nor is the course length necessarily divided into the traditional quarters or semesters--and this flexibility is an important element to their effectiveness. The needs in the semi-professional, technical, and highly skilled occupations are for 1) more people, 2) the right kind of people who are, 3) well trained and 4) well educated; only through education can these ends be accomplished.

#### Scope of Population

The population was restricted to the graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program at the TCAVTS from July 1986 to October 1989. The reasoning behind the decision to select a three-year follow-up survey rather than a five- or ten-year follow-up survey was as follows:

1. The IBM Personal Computer training was not available for the Adult Business and Office students until 1986; therefore, none of the graduates of the program prior to 1986 were trained on a

piece of equipment now considered to be an "essential." It is projected that many of the program graduates prior to 1986 would suggest the addition of personal computer training, a suggestion which has already been implemented.

2. Because of the close contact with business and industry through on-site visits and through Advisory Committees, the Business and Office Program course content and curriculum has been continually evaluated, updated, and upgraded, as budget allows. Three-year follow-up responders would be most likely to have had the benefit of the most recent changes in course content and curriculum, therefore supplying our program with the most timely suggestions and comments.
3. Because of the high mobility rate of the graduates, success in locating a significant number of graduates after a time period of more than three years was highly unlikely.

#### Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions and statements were included:

1. What were the basic demographics of the study?
2. How consistently was employment sought and what resources were utilized?
3. Did skills training and academic education levels match employer demands? If not, what additional skills training or academic education was required in order to secure initial employment?

4. Would the graduate return to the Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School if additional training s/he desired was offered? Would the graduate recommend training to others?

#### Definition of Terms .

To avoid misinterpretation, terms used in this study are defined:

For purposes of this study, an Adult Business and Office Program Completer is defined as a student completing all the requirements of his/her career option in the Adult Business and Office Program at a satisfactory level of performance at Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School.

For purposes of this study, Skills Training is defined as and includes typewriting speed and accuracy, filing, shorthand, bookkeeping, machine transcription, electronic calculator (by touch), word processing skills (IBM Personal Computer and Lanier dedicated word processor), and secretarial office procedures.

For purposes of this study, Academic Education is defined as English and business mathematics.

For purposes of this study, Communication Skills is defined as telephone usage, mock interviews, oral and written communications, spelling, and proofreading.

For purposes of this study, Personal Relationship and Job Seeking Skills is defined as professional development (including assertiveness training, effective listening, and the handling of irate customers) and job conditioning.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature in this study is subdivided into three sections as follows:

1. The Place of Vocational Education in the Community.
2. Need for Evaluation.
3. Follow-Up as a Method for Gathering Information for Evaluation of Curriculum.

#### The Place of Vocational Education in the Community

What is the definition of vocational education? What is the purpose of vocational education in society? What should vocational students be trained to do? Should vocational education be responsible for "making up" the academic areas of students who "fell through the cracks" in high school? The writer will address these questions and attempt to give insight into different experts' opinions in the following paragraphs.

#### What is the Definition of Vocational Education?

Vocational education traditionally has been associated with the "slow learner." The student who had no college aspirations nor had shown "promise" in the academic area had been labeled as a prospective student for a vocational technical program.

A more recent--and accurate--definition of vocational education was stated in the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act (1984):

The term "vocational education" means organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals in paid or unpaid employment in such fields as agriculture, business occupations, home economics, health occupations, marketing and distributive occupations, technical and emerging occupations, modern industrial and agriculture arts, and trades and industrial occupations, or for additional preparation for a career in such fields, and in other occupations, requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree (p. 55).

### What is the Purpose of Vocational Education in Society?

With the move toward a more "service-oriented" society, trained vocational workers can find their niche in an occupation that requires little or no college. To continue to concentrate funds, time, energy, and attention to the college-bound student does immeasurable injustice to the vocational worker.

According to Venn (1967) citing Chase:

Tragically, the nation's educational system is, when viewed as a whole, in what Edward Chase describes as a gross imbalance, its attention concentrated on the 20 percent of students who go through college. Thus, when Sputnik, one symbol of technological advance, flashed before the world's eyes, the U.S. response was predictable: the National Defense Education Act, designed primarily to bolster science, language, mathematics, and engineering opportunities for the academically talented, degree-seeking student.

But what about the other 80 percent who will not graduate from college? Unfortunately, the "pursuit of excellence" has left most of them behind . . . Despite propaganda about the importance of staying in school, they drift out of educational institutions in droves: the system loses 35 percent of its enrollees during high school, then 45 percent of its high school graduates, and finally 40 percent of its college entrants . . . "Lack of interest" is by far the most frequent reason they give for leaving, because they do not all fit into the present college-track plan of education. Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz more aptly calls them "pushouts" (p. 1).

What Should Vocational Students Be  
Trained To Do?

Many students, high school graduates as well as dropouts, have left school with no skill or occupational training. For those who did not attend college, their options were few; and what few there were, were not desirable or fulfilling.

Venn (1967) stated:

Fully a fifth of the out-of-school youth under twenty-one are unemployed, and the youth unemployment rate, already higher than it was during the depression, reaches higher levels month after month. Those who do find work end up in low-skill, low-pay jobs, jobs without security and without a future, jobs frustratingly below their occupational potential (p. 2).

An unskilled worker, given two or three years of occupationally oriented training, can qualify to fill meaningful jobs on the skilled, technical, and semiprofessional levels--jobs now experiencing an acute shortage of manpower.

Vocational education was designed to do just that. However, one of the most underrated aspects (underrated by the public, not by students served) of vocational training is the sense of pride, self-worth, and feeling of achievement individuals experience as a result of their ability to make important contributions to society.

According to Hodges (1973):

To be employed is necessary for economic well being, but more important it gives an individual a feeling of self worth. A man's feeling of competence and meaning for life are best expressed in work that he does well and that he feels has value. Education can do its part by giving people sufficient guidance and training to enable them to find their place in the work world. Vocational education is the right of every young person and adult; it must be available to all in all kinds of educational settings. Its programs must take into account the mobility of our population and the talents of our students (p. 11).

Should Vocational Education Be Responsible For "Making  
Up" the Academic Areas of Students Who "Fell  
Through the Cracks" in High School?

If there has been any single area of heated debate in education, it has been academic versus vocational education. Proponents of the "college-track" issue have argued in favor of academic education, while proponents of "hands-on" skills training argued in favor of vocational education. Students enrolled in vocational education have lost academic credits unless s/he has chosen to make them up by attending extra class hours each day. Students enrolled in academic education have graduated from high school with little or no occupational education that has allowed them to enter the job market to pursue full-time employment or help with college expenses. Although both professional and vocational education share many objectives and standards, the sad truth is one is accepted as education and one is not.

Venn (1967) stated:

Vocational education does have a dual purpose: to provide the people it serves with an education AND to train skilled workers for the labor force . . . Administrative regulations tie it to education's standards and practices, but practical considerations force it to look to industry for its curriculum and teachers. Achievement in vocational subjects may be dependent on achievement in academic subjects, but the two are usually taught without reference to each other (p. 30).

Additional support for the vocational-technical system is found in the following excerpt from Ruley (1970) as quoted by Hodges (1973):

Vocational Education has come to be accepted as that phase of education designed to improve the proficiency of an individual in a specific occupation. It is preparatory for specific employment or supplementary to the work of those already employed in

a specific occupation. It is not restricted to boys and girls in secondary schools, but is provided for any youth or adult who needs and can profit from vocational education (p. 11).

It is not only the youth who has benefitted from vocational education. According to Cavins, one growing segment of society in particular has required more and better education--displaced homemakers, presently numbering over 11 million in the United States, and almost 200,000 in Oklahoma. Cavins (1987) stated:

Reasons for unemployment among displaced homemakers include lack of job experiences, lack of job training, sex and age discrimination, and emotional stress from divorce, separation, or death or disablement of a spouse (p. 12).

Training or retraining of adults has rapidly become one of the major services of vocational technical schools. With the return of so many women to the workplace, vocational education will need to respond quickly and efficiently to the needs of this sizeable workforce.

Not only have women returned to the workplace, but jobs as we have known them have been in a process of change. In the near future, we can expect to see changes in the jobs of today as well as jobs in the past.

Monroe (1972) as quoted by Hodges (1973):

John Diebold, President of the Diebold Group, Inc., and coiner of the term automation, estimates that in the next thirty years, sixty million Americans in several hundred occupations will find their jobs changing radically. (McCalls, 1963, pp. 64-65). Old and new workers alike will need to seek occupational training (p. 12).

#### Need for Evaluation

Hodges (1973) stated, "It can be concluded that if programs are to be properly evaluated it becomes necessary to go beyond the students currently enrolled." Accordingly, program designs must meet the increasing



demand for adult vocational education. The Adult Business and Office Program at TCAVTS has attempted to do just that. As business and industry trends have moved quickly toward the "automated office," frequent and regular program evaluations are used to respond to industry demands.

According to Moore (1980), "An enabling objective of increasing the employability, the productivity, and the assumption of responsibility delineates the need for this (type of) study (p. 6)."

### Open-Entry, Open-Exit Training

A growing trend in adult vocational training has been open-entry, open-exit vocational education. This concept has allowed a student to enter the program when that student is available, start at his or her level of competency; then, following a prescribed curriculum, advance to the desired level of expertise in a non-threatening environment.

Advantages of this concept are too numerous to mention, but some are listed below from a personal interview with Thomas (1989), Assistant Director of Peoria Campus, who also coordinates Adult Education Programs:

1. The student is phased in when s/he is ready to attend classes rather than waiting to begin at a semester break. This has enhanced student motivation and performance as there is no significant time lag between desired entry and actual entry.
2. With individualized instruction, the student is allowed to work on each item at his/her own pace without pressure to perform at a certain speed or level. In case of absenteeism, the student does not "get behind" as in a traditional classroom. When the student resumes his/her schooling, s/he simply picks up where s/he had stopped and proceeds from there.
3. With "prescribed" curriculum, the student can concentrate in areas of least proficiency or special interest and spend less time in areas of greater proficiency or less interest.
4. The open-entry, open-exit concept has not generated the competition among students that the traditional classroom has. A

student is encouraged to compete only with him/herself, rather than to compete with classmates.

5. With the open-entry, open-exit concept, advanced students have refreshed their skills and memories by assisting newer students. This has given the advanced students an opportunity to use supervisory and management skills as well as inter-personal relationship skills.
6. The wide range of student backgrounds brought to the Adult Business and Office Program is less important than in a traditional classroom where each student is "assumed" to have the same or similar skills and education. Students build upon life experiences and areas of interest, giving each a stronger direction in career training.
7. With staggered graduation dates, the job market is not flooded in May or December; rather, as graduates have left at random intervals, jobs were easier to find and employers have contacted the school 12 months out of the year and usually have found a student job-ready on a temporary or permanent basis.

Upon completion, each student had been asked to evaluate the program, listing strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve instruction.

#### Advisory Committees

One indispensable source of input for evaluation and assessment has been the Adult Business and Office Advisory Committee. Comprised of members from business and industry, human resource departments, temporary employment agencies, former students now employed in professional or related capacities, and representatives from other TCAVTS campuses, the Committee has met semiannually to discuss current and future trends.

The subject areas addressed most frequently in the past three years has been the need for increased word processing skills, increased grammatical and proofreading skills, and telephone usage skills. Suggestions resulting from a mailout survey sent to Advisory Committee members in 1988 have been implemented regarding the above-mentioned skills.

The Advisory Committee members have been open and honest with the faculty and students in the Adult Business and Office Program, and in turn, suggestions presented as a result of their evaluation of the Program have been implemented as soon as it was economically and physically possible.

#### Follow-Up as a Method for Gathering Information for Evaluation of Curriculum

One of the most effective methods of evaluating a program after one year, two years, three years, or longer, has been the follow-up survey conducted among graduates of a particular program or school. Although studies of this type provide valuable feedback to the program or institution, it was difficult to measure in terms of success for the graduate (not knowing how persistent the student was in seeking employment or higher education).

Also, follow-up studies have not been without their own set of unique problems. According to Moore (1980), who discussed the success of follow-up studies of adult students in Adult Basic Education:

With the disadvantaged adult considered to more mobile than the middle class income family, and with the lack of classroom records or the employment continuity of ABE teachers beyond a three year time span, long range achievements and measurements have not been made or attempted. The majority of follow-up studies were conducted upon completion of a course or the GED and do not entail more than one year beyond the completion of course objectives (p. 6).

Hodges, (1973), however, experienced a high level of success in finding former students who had been enrolled from 1965-72 in a follow-up study of the Agricultural Mechanics Program at Modesto Junior College, located in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley of California (p. 73).

According to Hodges, a follow-up is not only desirable, but necessary if an institution is to meet the needs of its students:

To merely teach a program and say that a need is being satisfied is not sufficient. A follow-up of former students is necessary to determine their employability and to gather information with which vocational education can evaluate its program and better provide industry with those employees they need. At the same time, information may be gathered which would indicate need for curriculum change or at least indicate areas of retraining (p. 17).

Hodges (1973) stated that it is generally accepted that attitudes can be measured. He quoted Good as to the two most commonly used methods of securing data concerning attitudes, the interview and the questionnaire:

The questionnaire has been used increasingly, however, to inquire into the opinion and the attitudes of a group. The questionnaire is especially useful in descriptive survey instruments in securing information from widely scattered sources and when it is not practical or possible to see the respondents personally (p. 17)!

#### Summary

In order for a vocational school or system to provide its community with viable programs for learning new skills or updating existing skills, data must be gathered from a variety of sources, the former student or graduate being one of the most valid sources of information. It is for this reason that the writer chose to use the follow-up survey as the instrument to measure the degree of success of employment for graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this survey was to compile and analyze data from graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program regarding the adequacy of the training they received at the Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School (TCAVTS). To achieve this purpose, the following terms and methodology were employed:

Population - The population for this study was comprised of all Adult Business and Office Program graduates from July 1986 to October 1989 (176 students).

Scope of Geographical Area- There are four TCAVTS campuses in Tulsa, Oklahoma: Lemley Campus (formerly Memorial Campus); Peoria Campus; Southeast Campus; and Airpark Campus. The study was limited to the graduates of one campus--Peoria--as this was the only campus which offered the Adult Business and Office Program.

Sample - For the purpose of this study, the sample was the population (176 students) with 89 respondents (51%).

Methodology - Because of the high mobility rate of the program graduates and the distance between the writer and these graduates, a mailed questionnaire was used to collect the data.

Instrumentation - A questionnaire was designed by the researcher using methods learned in the class, "Designing Questionnaires" taught by

Drs. Perry and Campbell at Oklahoma State University, Fall, 1988. The questions were designed to identify the types of career opportunities and job-related skills which resulted from their completion of the Adult Business and Office Program. The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions plus a comment section after appropriate questions and a general comment section at the end of the questionnaire. Selected comments are listed at the end of this report.

The questionnaire was reviewed by four faculty members of Oklahoma State University and four faculty members of Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School, Peoria Campus. Suggestions from those faculty members were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was not field tested among the Adult Business and Office students to avoid contamination of the sample.

Cover Letters/Follow-Up Letter - The cover letters and the follow-up letter closely follow the format chosen by Hodges. The researcher felt that respondents would be receptive to cover letters and a questionnaire mailed to them from administration and a former instructor. Past experience has shown that Adult Business and Office Program graduates have been eager and willing to assist in the evaluation and revision of curriculum and course content.

Donald (1960) as quoted by Hodges (1973):

Analysis of response according to the number of stimuli required to induce return of the questionnaire indicates a significant relationship between response elicitation and member involvement. The higher the involvement in terms of active participation, knowledge and understanding of the organization, and loyalty to it, the fewer the stimuli required to induce a response (p. 12).

Analysis of Data - Because of the nature of the interview data, quantitative analysis was done. The results of the analysis is shown in tables in Chapter 4. Data were analyzed in terms of numbers and percents.

Time Schedule - The questionnaires were mailed in September, 1989, with the non-responders receiving a follow-up letter two weeks after the initial mailing with another copy of the questionnaire. When possible, a telephone call preceded the follow-up letter to ensure respondent had indeed received the initial letter and the questionnaire. September graduates were asked to complete the survey upon their completion of training, and the results of their responses were incorporated into this study. It was felt their responses were especially valuable as they had experienced the most recent changes in the curriculum and could provide timely feedback.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The problem for the study was that technology in the workplace and workplace conditions had been changing rapidly and there was no empirical data upon which to make curriculum changes for the Adult Business and Office Program. The objectives were to evaluate the perceptions of former students who had completed the program between July 1, 1986, and October 1, 1989, to determine: (1) their ability to secure employment within their field of training in a reasonable length of time (six months) and how long it took them to secure that employment; (2) if further skills training and/or academic education were necessary for that graduate to secure initial employment; and, (3) if the Adult Business and Office Program curriculum was adequate to meet the needs of the student trained.

Population and sample size was 176 former students, with 89 students responding (51%). Mailed questionnaires were utilized as the data collecting instrument along with letters of instruction. The closing date for gathering of information was October 20, 1989.

#### Analysis by Question on the Instrument

An analysis of the returns indicated the following:

QUESTIONS #1 AND #2: WHAT WAS YOUR AGE AT THE COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM AND YOUR SEX?



Of the 89 former students who responded, 6% were male and 94% were female. The highest percent of completors (32%) was in the 26 to 35 age range. Two areas tied for lowest percent of completors (2%). Those were the 56 to 65 year-old age range and the 66 or older age range. Three of the five males in the sample were age 25 or less, and the other two males were in the 36 to 45 year-old age range. Number of students and percentages regarding age distribution and sex are shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND RETURNS

Age in Years at Completion of the Program	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	N	%	N	%
66 or older			2	2%
56 - 65			2	2%
46 - 55			15	17%
36 - 45	2	2%	17	19%
26 - 35			28	32%
18 - 25	3	4%	20	22%
Total	5	6%	84	94%

N=89

QUESTION #3: WHAT WAS THE CAREER OPTION FOR WHICH YOU RECEIVED TRAINING?

All full-time students entering the Adult Business and Office Program were required to take the "core curriculum," which consisted of typewriting, electronic calculator by touch, business/machine math, business English, filing, professional development, job conditioning, introduction to computers, communications, and receptionist training.

Several options available to the students who completed their core classes were additional word processing, and machine transcription. More recently offered was introduction to bookkeeping for students who had not selected the Bookkeeper option.

With computerized offices that have stressed "high-tech" computerized equipment and computer entry, many students felt their time was best spent training on the array of electronic equipment in order to be more employable. This could explain the popularity of Clerk-Typist/General Office Clerk option (49%), as shown in Table III, which emphasized word processing and computer entry training from the date of entry.

The Bookkeeper option, which emphasized principles of accounting from the date of entry, showed greater enrollment (28%) than the Secretary option (18%) which emphasized shorthand. One explanation might have been the "exclusive" enrollment of the males; another reason might have been the result of classified advertisements where accounting or bookkeeping skill was frequently cited while shorthand was seldom mentioned.

Advisory Committee members explained that employers desire clerical employees with shorthand--however, employers feel shorthand is a skill seldom taught or available. Enrolling students were faced with the

"shorthand dilemma." Did shorthand carry the same prestige it once did or was it a "dying art"?

On the day of enrollment, students were oriented to the department, and all career options were explained to them in detail. As all three career options involved the same number of classroom hours (1,050), length of training in selecting an option was not a factor.

Consideration was given to the student who originally chose a career option and decided after a short time that s/he preferred a different option. The student was counseled by both "drop" and "add" instructors and was allowed to select a different option from the one originally chosen. In Table II, career options indicated by the former student are the career options ultimately chosen. ("Other" was indicated by respondents as receptionist and medical secretary.)

TABLE II  
CAREER OPTION FOR WHICH STUDENT RECEIVED TRAINING

Career Option	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	N	%	N	%
Secretary (Includes Shorthand)			16	18%
Bookkeeper	5	6%	20	22%
Clerk-Typist/General Office Clerk			44	49%
Other (Please Indicate)			4	5%
Total	5	6%	84	94%

N=89

QUESTION #4: DID YOU SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN THE FIELD FOR WHICH YOU WERE TRAINED UPON COMPLETION OF YOUR TRAINING? IF NO, PLEASE MARK ALL RESPONSES THAT APPLY:

Question 4 was to determine the number of graduates who, upon completion of the program, chose whether or not to seek employment in their field of training. The respondents indicated that 83% of the females and 60% of the male completors chose to seek employment in their field of training. Remaining numbers and percentages are given in Table III.

TABLE III  
RESPONDENTS WHO DID AND DID NOT SEEK EMPLOYMENT

Respondents by Sex	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	70	83%	14	17%	84	100%
Male	3	60%	2	40%	5	100%

The second part of Question #4 asked that all respondents who chose NOT to seek employment in their field of training upon completion of the program to mark the reasons why they chose not to obtain employment in the field for which they had prepared. The reason given most often was higher

education desired or required (36%). The only reason not used at all was "Husband/Wife Did Not Want Me to Work (0%)."

It was noted that the two males who indicated in Table III that they chose NOT to seek employment in their field of training were quite different. One male indicated that he planned to attend college in the winter semester to promote into the general offices of the fast-food restaurant for which he was employed part-time; the other male indicated that he was self-employed. The remainder of responses to the second part of Question 4 are given in Table IV.

TABLE IV  
REASONS FOR NOT SEEKING EMPLOYMENT IN FIELD OF TRAINING

Reason Given by Graduate	Number*	Percent
Illness/Pregnancy/Personal Medical Condition	4	18%
More Education Desired/Required	8	36%
Did Not Want Employment in This Field	2	9%
Incarcerated	0	0%
Not Enough Self-Confidence to Try	2	9%
Sought Employment in a Different Field	1	5%
Husband/Wife Did Not Want Me to Work	0	0%
Joined Armed Forces	1	5%
Other	4	18%
Total	22	100%

\*Total does not equal 16 because respondents had multiple answers.

QUESTION #5: IF YOU DID SEEK EMPLOYMENT (REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU WERE EMPLOYED OR NOT), PLEASE INDICATE ALL SOURCES YOU USED TO FIND EMPLOYMENT:

One of the most frequently asked questions by employers and employees alike was what method the job seeker used to find employment. Of the 89 respondents, 81 indicated that they sought employment, either in their field of training or in another field. Of the difference sources available, the graduates most frequent source during a job search was friends and acquaintances (86%). Classified advertisements in the newspaper was the second most frequent source of employment (78%), and referrals from Tulsa Vo-Tech Instructors or Personnel (such as counselors) was a close third (75%).

Another observation was the total number of respondents who chose the no-fee private employment agencies (63%) over the Oklahoma State Employment Services or sponsoring agencies (36%) as illustrated in Table V. The least selected option of locating employment was the employment agency where a fee was charged to the applicant (2%).

One respondent who marked "Other" indicated in the comment section that she was in her doctor's office waiting for her appointment when the receptionist told her of a job opening in the medical department. The student applied and was hired. "Other" responses included employment waiting for the student upon his/her completion (negating a job search).

Some respondents volunteered through which source they obtained their initial employment; however, since information regarding which source actually resulted in subsequent employment had not been specifically requested, it could not be reported.

TABLE V  
SOURCES USED TO FIND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Source	Number	Percent*
Classified Advertisements in Newspaper	63	78%
Friends/Acquaintances	70	86%
Temporary/Permanent Agencies (No Fee)	51	63%
Temporary/Permanent Agencies (Fee)	2	2%
Tulsa Vo-Tech Instructors/Personnel Referrals	61	75%
Cover Letters/Mailouts	37	46%
Unsolicited Applications (Large companies such as American Airlines, Memorex-Telex, etc.)	44	54%
Former Employer (Better Position)	8	10%
Oklahoma State Employment or Sponsoring Agency	29	36%
Other	3	4%

N=81

\*Total does not equal 100% because respondents had multiple answers.

QUESTION #6: IF YOU DID OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT AT SOME POINT AFTER COMPLETING THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM, PLEASE STATE THE APPROXIMATE TIME LAPSE BETWEEN YOUR COMPLETION DATE AND OBTAINING YOUR JOB (NOT NECESSARILY THE FIRST DAY ON THE JOB, BUT THE DAY HIRED):

As displayed in Table VI, of the 81 respondents, 30 students (37%) obtained employment upon completion of the program. Of those 51 students not employed upon completion, however, 47% took over eight weeks to find employment.

TABLE VI  
TIME LAPSE BETWEEN COMPLETING AND OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT

Length of Time	<u>None</u>		<u>Some</u>	
	N	%	N	%
None--Employed by Completion of Program	30	(37%)		
1 - 2 Weeks			11	21%
3 - 4 Weeks			10	20%
5 - 6 Weeks			4	8%
7 - 8 Weeks			2	4%
Over 8 Weeks			24	47%
Total	30	(37%)	51	100%

N=81

QUESTION #7: DURING THE TIME YOU LEFT SCHOOL AND THE TIME YOU WERE HIRED ON YOUR FIRST JOB, DID YOU ACTIVELY SEEK EMPLOYMENT CONSISTENTLY?



In Question 7, respondents indicated the consistency with which they sought employment, and 66% indicated that they were consistent in their job search. Only 1% indicated that s/he does not remember if his/her job search was consistent. Eleven percent indicated that their job search was not consistent. Table VII indicates remaining numbers and percentages of those seeking employment.

TABLE VII  
CONSISTENCY OF SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

Consistent	Number	Percent
Yes	52	66%
No	9	11%
Don't Remember	1	1%
Sought Employment, Not Consistently	17	22%
Total	79	100%

N=79

QUESTION #8: IF YOU WERE NOT HIRED WHILE ACTIVELY SEEKING EMPLOYMENT, PLEASE MARK ALL REASONS EMPLOYERS GAVE FOR NOT HIRING YOU:

When an applicant was not hired by an employer, feedback was sometimes given to that applicant as to why s/he was not chosen. Graduates indicated the reason most often given to them for not being selected for the job was

lack of specific work experience (42%). Lack of openings in the desired area was second with 29%, and the least often given reason to the student by the employer was lack of formal academic education (3%). A total of 18% did not get a job because of inadequate skills.

Table VIII indicates reasons employers were willing to state to the graduates for not hiring that graduate.

TABLE VIII  
REASONS GIVEN BY EMPLOYERS TO GRADUATE FOR NOT HIRING THAT GRADUATE

Reason	Number	Percent*
Lack of General Work Experience	21	27%
Lack of Specific Work Experience (i.e., Office or Clerical)	33	42%
Lack of Openings in Desired Area	23	29%
Lack of Adequate Skills Training	6	8%
Lack of Formal Academic Education (i.e., No College)	2	3%
Overqualified for Position	6	8%
Underqualified for Position	8	10%
Salary Range/Benefit Package Graduate Desired Not Acceptable with Employer	4	5%
Other	7	9%

N=79

\*Total does not equal 100% because respondents had multiple answers.

QUESTION #9: TO WHAT EXTENT WAS ADDITIONAL SKILLS TRAINING REQUIRED FOR YOU TO SECURE INITIAL EMPLOYMENT AFTER COMPLETING THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM?

Seventy-three percent of the former students indicated that no additional skills training was needed to secure initial employment. A small percentage (5%) indicated that extensive skills training was needed to secure initial employment.

QUESTION #10: TO WHAT EXTENT WAS ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC EDUCATION REQUIRED FOR YOU TO SECURE INITIAL EMPLOYMENT AFTER COMPLETING THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM?

Seventy-five of the graduates indicated no additional academic education was required for them to secure initial employment. However, 3% indicated they needed extensive academic education to be employed.

Table IX combines Questions 9 and 10 from the survey to indicate how prepared the Adult Business and Office Program graduates were to secure initial employment immediately upon completion.

TABLE IX  
ADDITIONAL SKILLS TRAINING OR ACADEMIC EDUCATION REQUIRED  
TO SECURE INITIAL EMPLOYMENT

Skills or Academic Education	<u>None</u>		<u>Minimal</u>		<u>Moderate</u>		<u>Extensive</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Skills Training	57	73%	9	11%	9	11%	4	5%	79	100%
Academic Education	58	75%	11	14%	6	8%	2	3%	77	100%

QUESTION #11: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE SKILLS TRAINING YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE TO PREPARE YOU FOR EMPLOYMENT?

Seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated that the skills training they received was adequate to prepare them for employment, 3% felt that their skills training was not adequate, 21% indicated they were uncertain, and 1% indicated "not applicable."

QUESTION #12: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE ACADEMIC EDUCATION YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE TO PREPARE YOU FOR EMPLOYMENT?

Eighty-one percent of the former students stated "yes" to the adequacy of academic education received in the Adult Business and Office Program, 4% stated "no," 14% stated "uncertain," and 1% stated "not applicable."

QUESTION #13: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE?

If the Adult Business and Adult Program was lacking in any area of training, it appeared to be in the area of communication skills training, according to the results of this survey. Although the majority indicated "yes" (60%) the communication skills training they received was adequate, it was by a much smaller percentage than either the skills training or the academic education areas. A sizable percentage indicated "uncertain" (25%) and 12% stated "no." The other 3% indicated "not applicable."

Comments were directed specifically to the need for more telephone training. Written comments stated employers expected more flexibility in clerical employees including switchboard duties. Many graduates felt unprepared to assume these responsibilities without additional training.

QUESTION #14: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE WORK ATTITUDES OR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS TRAINING YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE?

According to former student responses, this was one of the strongest areas of training in the Adult Business and Office Program. "Yes" was indicated by 87% of the respondents, while 3% stated "no," and 10% stated "uncertain."

QUESTION #15: DO YOU FEEL THAT THE OVERALL TRAINING YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE FOR INITIAL EMPLOYMENT?

Overall, former students felt that the quality of their overall training at the Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School was adequate for initial employment (88%). "Uncertain" and "no" each accounted for 6% of the replies.

Table X combines all the responses indicated in Questions 11 through 15 from the graduate survey.

QUESTION #16: HAVE YOU RECOMMENDED (OR WOULD YOU RECOMMEND) TULSA COUNTY AREA VO-TECH ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM TO AN INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION?

Ninety-four percent of the former students indicated they would recommend the Program, 2% of the students indicated "no," and 4% indicated "uncertain."

QUESTION #17: IF ADDITIONAL TRAINING IS REQUIRED TO ADVANCE ON YOUR PRESENT JOB, SECURE A BETTER JOB, OR UPGRADE YOUR SKILLS, WOULD YOU RETURN TO THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE DEPARTMENT IF A COURSE WAS OFFERED THAT MET YOUR NEEDS?

Again, former students indicated that, as a result of the experience they had in the Adult Business and Office Program, 94% of them would

TABLE X

## DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES REGARDING THE ADEQUACY OF SKILL/SUBJECT TRAINING TO PREPARE THEM FOR EMPLOYMENT

Subject or Skill	Was The Skill Training You Received in The Following Areas Adequate?									
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Uncertain</u>		<u>Not Applicable</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Skills Training (Typewriting, Filing, Shorthand, Bookkeeping, Word Processing, and Transcription)	66	75%	3	3%	18	21%	1	1%	88	100%
Academic Education (English and Business Mathematics)	72	81%	4	4%	12	14%	1	1%	89	100%
Communications Skills Training (Telephone Usage, Mock Interview, Oral and Written Communications, Spelling, and Proofreading)	53	60%	11	12%	22	25%	3	3%	89	100%
Work Attitudes/Personal Relationships (Professional Development or Human Relations and Job Conditioning)	77	87%	3	3%	9	10%	0	0%	89	100%
Overall Training	79	88%	5	6%	5	6%			89	100%

TABLE XI

GRADUATES' FEELINGS ON REFERRING OTHERS TO THE ADULT BUSINESS  
AND OFFICE PROGRAM AT TULSA COUNTY AREA VO-TECH SCHOOL  
AND FOR GRADUATE TO RETURN FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Question Asked	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Uncertain</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Has Graduate Recommended (or Would Graduate Recommend) Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School to an Individual or an Organization?	83	94%	2	2%	4	4%	89	100%
Would Graduate Return to Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School to Upgrade Skills or Learn New Skills if a Course Was Offered That Met His/Her Needs?	83	94%	4	4%	2	2%	89	100%

for additional training if a course was offered that met their needs. A small percentage indicated "no" (4%) or "uncertain" (2%), but they gave no explanation regarding their lack of confidence in the Adult Business and Office Program.

Table XI is a consensus of the respondents' answers on Questions 16 and 17.

QUESTION #18: ON THE WHOLE, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR TRAINING IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM AT TULSA COUNTY AREA VO-TECH SCHOOL?

Indicated in Table XII is the consensus of Question 18, the final question on the survey. The overall satisfaction rating given by graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program was superior (36%), above average (44%), and average (20%). None responded with below average or inferior (0%).

TABLE XII  
OVERALL RATING OF TRAINING RECEIVED AT TULSA COUNTY  
AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL ADULT  
BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM

Rating	Number	Percent
Superior--Surpassed Expectations	32	36%
Above Average	39	44%
Average	18	20%
Below Average	0	0%
Inferior--Did Not Meet Expectations	0	0%
Total	89	100%



Information was compiled from the last section of the instrument and is presented below in Table XIII, indicating current status of the respondents. The majority was working in training related jobs, either full-time (70%) or part-time (9%). The only category showing no response was Military Service. The lowest percentage given (other than Military Service) was Employed Part-Time (Non-Training Related) at 1%, and that respondent indicated full-time student status.

TABLE XIII  
CURRENT STATUS OF GRADUATES

Status	Number*	Percent
Employed Full-Time (Training Related)	63	70%
Employed Full-Time (Non-Training Related)	3	3%
Employed Part-Time (Training Related)	8	9%
Employed Part-Time (Non-Training Related)	1	1%
Continuing Education Full-Time	4	4%
Continuing Education Part-Time	4	4%
Military Service	0	0%
Unemployed--Not Seeking Employment	4	4%
Unemployed--Seeking Employment	5	5%

\*Total does not equal 89 because respondents had multiple answers.

Additional open-ended items included on the instrument allowed the respondent to expand on the nature of his/her employment and previous jobs or schooling from completion of the Adult Business and Office Program until the time of this survey. General comments, when appropriate, are included in Appendix C of this report.

### Summary of Results by Research Question

#### Research Question 1

What were the basic demographics of the study?

Findings: The majority of former students were female (94%), between the ages of 26 and 35 years of age (32%), and indicated a career option of Clerk Typist/General Office Clerk (49%).

#### Research Question 2

How consistently was employment sought and what resources were used?

Findings: Results of the survey indicated that 73% of the respondents did seek employment, employment was sought consistently (66%), and the three most utilized resources were friends and acquaintances (86%), classified advertisements (78%), and Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech instructors and personnel (75%).

#### Research Question 3

Did skills training and academic education levels match employer demands? If not, what additional skills training or academic education was required in order to secure initial employment?

Findings: Graduates indicated that skills training was adequate (73%) and academic education was adequate (75%) to meet employer demands for initial employment. Comments regarding the need for higher typewriting speeds, more computer training, and more telephone skills training were most commonly indicated, either in the section regarding that area or in the general response area at the end of the survey.

#### Research Question 4

Would the graduate return to the Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School if additional training s/he desired was offered? Would the graduate recommend training to others?

Findings: The overwhelming positive response was 94% for each of these questions. Comments found in these areas were among the most complimentary to the program, the instructors, and Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School in general.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem for this study was to identify those key factors that were most important in assisting Adult Business and Office Program completors to obtain employment within six months of program completion.

The objectives were to determine (1) whether graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program were able to secure employment within their field of training upon completion of the program within a reasonable length of time (six months), (2) if further skills training and/or academic education were necessary for that graduate to secure initial employment, and (3) if the Adult Business and Office Program curriculum was adequate to meet the needs of the student trained.

Mailed questionnaires were utilized as the data collecting instrument. A questionnaire was mailed to each student who had completed the Adult Business and Office Program at Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School between July 1, 1986, and October 1, 1989. Questions in the questionnaire included some demographics, but most were directed to the skills training and academic education received by the student and the student's perception of how adequate that training had been in helping him/her to secure that initial job in a field related to his/her training. A comment section was provided at the end of each question.

General questions were given at the end of the questionnaire asking for an overall rating of the program as well as general comments.

## Conclusions

Generalizations for this study are limited to respondents and the Adult Business and Office Program at Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School. Generalizability is so restricted because of the limited scope of the geographic area and because of the specialized program that was involved in this study.

The following conclusions were reached after thorough analysis of the data presented in Chapter IV:

1. It can be concluded that graduates of the Adult Business and Office Program considered skills training and academic education to be adequate to obtain initial employment.
2. It can be concluded that the communications skills training area needs additional emphasis in the curriculum.
3. It can be concluded that overall training is adequate for initial job entry but there is a perceived need for additional skills training and, to a lesser degree, academic education.
4. It can be concluded that the curriculum should include more emphasis on learning and refining computer skills with a greater number of software packages taught in the program.
5. Based upon information provided by respondents, it can be concluded that there is a need for a placement representative to assist students in finding employment. (See Student Comments.)
6. It can be concluded that on-the-job training should be a vital component of the curriculum to assist students build work resumes.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on data obtained during this study, comments made by former students, and the conclusions drawn from analysis of the data presented in Chapter IV.

1. Consideration should be given to revising current curricula to place greater emphasis on communication skills, especially those skills involving telephone communications.

2. The on-the-job component of the program should be continued and expanded to give students hands-on experience in addition to the skills training and academic education they receive.

3. Consideration should be given to increasing the course offerings in the evening program to include courses which would allow former students to gain further training in personal computers, word processing, verbal and telephone communication skills.

4. Based upon the student comment section, steps should be taken to employ a full-time job placement counselor who could devote time to assisting students with finding full-time employment in their field of training.

5. Consideration should be given to placing more emphasis on receptionist and specialized areas of training such as legal, medical, insurance, and financial.

6. Steps should be taken to insure the establishment of an effective, continuing follow-up program with results used for specific program improvement.

### Recommendations for Further Study

To insure the continuance of an effective follow-up program for vocational completors of the Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School Business and Office Program, the establishment of an effective, ongoing follow-up program should be implemented as soon as possible. Students were most helpful and responsive in giving honest feedback and important suggestions for improvement. A continuing study of program completors is also essential if educational programs are to be effectively developed in the direction that changing technology demands.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS OF TRANSMITTAL AND INSTRUCTION

September 1, 1989

Dear Graduate:

Mrs. Peggy Blunt of the Adult Business and Office Department is gathering information about job entry preparation from former students of the Adult Business and Office Program at Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School as part of her Master's Degree program at Oklahoma State University. It is hoped that this information can be used in giving direction to curriculum development and revision for future Adult Business and Office Program students.

The intent of this study is not only to make a contribution to the Adult Business and Office Program in general but particularly to the extent that it enhances the effectiveness of Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School in its service to the community.

Since we expect this study to be of major importance in helping establish any changes of direction in our Adult Business and Office Program, it is my hope that you will participate in this study by completing the enclosed questionnaire. Your judgment and recommendations will be of significant help to our vocational-technical school.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Sharon Schaub, Director

Mrs. Maxine Thomas, Assistant Director

Enclosures

September 1, 1989

Dear Graduate:

As you have probably heard, I am attending Oklahoma State University, working on my Master's Degree in Occupational and Adult Education. In the course of my study, I am attempting to do as much for the Tulsa Vo-Tech Adult Business and Office Program as I can. It is for this reason that I am conducting this survey.

I hope to receive enough information from you and other former Adult Business and Office Program graduates to give us some guidelines with which to evaluate courses of study in our Program and, hopefully, implement necessary changes.

Your cooperation in answering the questionnaire and returning it to me promptly will be greatly appreciated. To be of value to us, it is imperative that we hear from all our students who completed the program from July 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989.

I have designed the questionnaire to take as little time as possible, so please, sit down RIGHT NOW, fill out the questionnaire, then return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible.

I do hope this is not too much of an inconvenience for you; but at the same time, I hope you realize the importance of it to me and to the Program. I appreciate your time and cooperation very much and hope I can return the favor in the very near future.

Sincerely,

Peggy Blunt, Instructor

Enclosures

P.S. Remember--I'm counting on you to get this information to me as soon as possible!

September 15, 1989

Dear Graduate:

I thought I would try once more to convince you of the importance of your contribution to my study. It is the feeling of the Adult Business and Office Program that unless we receive a comment from each of our graduates selected to participate in the study, we have not adequately evaluated the program. It is important to me, because the validity of my study is dependent upon a high percentage of returns.

Just in case you have misplaced the questionnaire I sent to you a few weeks ago, I am enclosing another copy. I would appreciate your immediate cooperation in this matter as the time allowed for returns is drawing near the end. I am counting on you to complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. Please feel free to call me at (918) 428-2261 x272 if I can help to clarify any of the questions for you. Your opinions and comments are still very valuable to my research.

Please take just a moment right now to complete the questionnaire and return it to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. I appreciate your time and effort in helping me with this project that stands to benefit our school and our Adult Business and Office Program.

Sincerely,

Peggy Blunt, Instructor

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

## FORMER STUDENT SURVEY

Below are questions relating to the difficulty or success of securing employment upon completion of the Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical Business and Office Program. Please answer ALL questions that apply to your situation. A comment section is provided for your comments within the survey and general responses may be recorded at the end of the survey.

Your complete honesty regarding the quality of your training is essential to the value of this survey. All responses will be kept in strictest confidence and will be compiled into a single report with none of the individual respondents named.

Please return this survey in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible. If you have questions, please call or write to me at the telephone number or address listed below:

Peggy Blunt, Instructor  
Tulsa County Area Vo-Tech School  
3802 North Peoria  
Tulsa, OK 74106  
(918) 428-2261 x272 or (918) 371-4074 (Home)

PLEASE MARK AN X NEXT TO THE CATEGORY WHICH DESCRIBES YOU:

1. SEX \_\_\_\_\_ (A) FEMALE

\_\_\_\_\_ (B) MALE

2. AGE WHEN YOU COMPLETED THE PROGRAM:

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) 66 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER

\_\_\_\_\_ (B) 56 - 65

\_\_\_\_\_ (C) 46 - 55

\_\_\_\_\_ (D) 36 - 45

\_\_\_\_\_ (E) 26 - 35

\_\_\_\_\_ (F) 18 - 25

3. CAREER OPTION FOR WHICH YOU RECEIVED TRAINING:

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) SECRETARY (INCLUDES SHORTHAND)

\_\_\_\_\_ (B) BOOKKEEPER

\_\_\_\_\_ (C) CLERK-TYPIST/GENERAL OFFICE CLERK

\_\_\_\_\_ (D) OTHER (PLEASE INDICATE) \_\_\_\_\_



4. DID YOU SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN THE FIELD FOR WHICH YOU WERE TRAINED UPON COMPLETION OF YOUR TRAINING?

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES

\_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO

IF YES, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION #5 AT THIS POINT.

IF NO, PLEASE MARK **ALL** REASONS THAT APPLY:

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) ILLNESS/PREGNANCY/PERSONAL MEDICAL CONDITION

\_\_\_\_\_ (B) MORE EDUCATION DESIRED/REQUIRED

\_\_\_\_\_ (C) DID NOT WANT EMPLOYMENT IN THIS FIELD

\_\_\_\_\_ (D) INCARCERATED

\_\_\_\_\_ (E) NOT ENOUGH SELF-CONFIDENCE TO TRY

\_\_\_\_\_ (F) SOUGHT EMPLOYMENT IN A DIFFERENT FIELD

\_\_\_\_\_ (G) HUSBAND/WIFE DID NOT WANT ME TO WORK

\_\_\_\_\_ (H) JOINED ARMED FORCES

\_\_\_\_\_ (I) OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN) \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CONTINUE WITH QUESTION #6 AT THIS POINT**

5. IF YOU DID SEEK EMPLOYMENT (REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU WERE EMPLOYED OR NOT), PLEASE INDICATE **ALL** SOURCES YOU USED TO FIND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS IN NEWSPAPERS

\_\_\_\_\_ (B) FRIENDS/ACQUAINTANCES

\_\_\_\_\_ (C) TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT AGENCIES (NO FEE)

\_\_\_\_\_ (D) TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT AGENCIES (FEE INVOLVED)

\_\_\_\_\_ (E) TULSA VO-TECH INSTRUCTOR/PERSONNEL REFERRALS

\_\_\_\_\_ (F) COVER LETTERS/MAILOUTS

\_\_\_\_\_ (G) FILLED OUT APPLICATION FORMS AT LARGE COMPANIES SUCH AS AMERICAN AIRLINES, TELEX, ETC.

\_\_\_\_\_ (H) RETURNED TO FORMER EMPLOYER (BETTER POSITION)

\_\_\_\_\_ (I) OKLAHOMA STATE EMPLOYMENT OR SPONSORING AGENCY

\_\_\_\_\_ (J) OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_

6. IF YOU DID OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT AT SOME POINT AFTER COMPLETING THE BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM, PLEASE STATE THE APPROXIMATE TIME LAPSE BETWEEN YOUR COMPLETION DATE AND OBTAINING YOUR JOB (NOT NECESSARILY THE FIRST DAY ON THE JOB, BUT THE DAY HIRED):
- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) NONE--EMPLOYED BY COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM
- \_\_\_\_\_ (B) 1 - 2 WEEKS
- \_\_\_\_\_ (C) 3 - 4 WEEKS
- \_\_\_\_\_ (D) 5 - 6 WEEKS
- \_\_\_\_\_ (E) 7 - 8 WEEKS
- \_\_\_\_\_ (F) OVER 8 WEEKS
- \_\_\_\_\_ (G) DON'T REMEMBER
7. DURING THE TIME YOU LEFT SCHOOL AND THE TIME YOU WERE HIRED ON YOUR FIRST JOB, DID YOU ACTIVELY SEEK EMPLOYMENT CONSISTENTLY?
- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES
- \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO
- \_\_\_\_\_ (C) DON'T REMEMBER
- \_\_\_\_\_ (D) SOUGHT EMPLOYMENT, BUT NOT CONSISTENTLY
8. IF YOU WERE NOT HIRED WHILE ACTIVELY SEEKING EMPLOYMENT, PLEASE MARK ALL REASONS EMPLOYERS GAVE FOR NOT HIRING YOU:
- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) LACK OF GENERAL WORK EXPERIENCE
- \_\_\_\_\_ (B) LACK OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN SPECIFIC AREA (SUCH AS OFFICE OR CLERICAL)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (C) LACK OF OPENINGS IN YOUR AREA OF TRAINING
- \_\_\_\_\_ (D) LACK OF ADEQUATE SKILLS TRAINING
- \_\_\_\_\_ (E) LACK OF FORMAL ACADEMIC TRAINING (I.E., NO COLLEGE)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (F) OVERQUALIFIED FOR POSITION
- \_\_\_\_\_ (G) UNDERQUALIFIED FOR POSITION
- \_\_\_\_\_ (H) SALARY RANGE/BENEFIT PACKAGE YOU DESIRED WAS NOT SATISFACTORY WITH EMPLOYER
- \_\_\_\_\_ (I) OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_

9. TO WHAT EXTENT WAS ADDITIONAL SKILLS TRAINING REQUIRED FOR YOU TO SECURE INITIAL EMPLOYMENT AFTER COMPLETING THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM? (TYPEWRITING, FILING, SHORTHAND, BOOKKEEPING, WORD PROCESSING, TRANSCRIPTION)

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) NONE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) MINIMAL  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) MODERATE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) EXTENSIVE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

10. TO WHAT EXTENT WAS ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC EDUCATION REQUIRED FOR YOU TO SECURE INITIAL EMPLOYMENT AFTER COMPLETING THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM? (ENGLISH AND BUSINESS MATHEMATICS)

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) NONE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) MINIMAL  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) MODERATE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) EXTENSIVE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

11. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE SKILLS TRAINING YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE TO PREPARE YOU FOR EMPLOYMENT?

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) UNCERTAIN  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) NOT APPLICABLE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

12. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE ACADEMIC EDUCATION YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE TO PREPARE YOU FOR EMPLOYMENT?

\_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) UNCERTAIN  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) NOT APPLICABLE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

13. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE DEPARTMENT WAS ADEQUATE? (TELEPHONE USAGE, MOCK INTERVIEW, ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS, SPELLING AND PROOFREADING)

- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) UNCERTAIN  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) NOT APPLICABLE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

14. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE WORK ATTITUDES OR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS TRAINING YOU RECEIVED WAS ADEQUATE? (PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR HUMAN RELATIONS AND JOB CONDITIONING)

- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) UNCERTAIN  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) NOT APPLICABLE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

15. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE OVERALL TRAINING YOU RECEIVED IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM WAS ADEQUATE FOR INITIAL EMPLOYMENT?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) UNCERTAIN  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) NOT APPLICABLE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

16. HAVE YOU RECOMMENDED (OR WOULD YOU RECOMMEND) TULSA COUNTY AREA VO-TECH ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM TO AN INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) UNCERTAIN  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) NOT APPLICABLE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

17. IF ADDITIONAL TRAINING IS REQUIRED TO ADVANCE ON YOUR PRESENT JOB, SECURE A BETTER JOB, OR UPGRADE YOUR SKILLS, WOULD YOU RETURN TO THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE DEPARTMENT IF A COURSE WAS OFFERED THAT MET YOUR NEEDS?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) YES  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) NO  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) UNCERTAIN  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) NOT APPLICABLE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

18. ON THE WHOLE, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR TRAINING IN THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM AT TULSA COUNTY AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (A) SUPERIOR--SURPASSED MY EXPECTATIONS  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (B) ABOVE AVERAGE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (C) AVERAGE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (D) BELOW AVERAGE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (E) INFERIOR--DID NOT MEET MY EXPECTATIONS

PLEASE GIVE YOUR COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM:

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

(To ensure confidentiality, I will detach this portion from the survey)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYER \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMPLOYER'S ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ (HOME) \_\_\_\_\_ (WORK)

POSITION/DUTIES: \_\_\_\_\_ SALARY \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE LIST ALL EMPLOYERS, POSITIONS (OR DUTIES), APPROXIMATE DATES EMPLOYED, AND/OR SCHOOLS ATTENDED SINCE COMPLETING THE ADULT BUSINESS AND OFFICE PROGRAM (USE ADDITIONAL SHEET IF NECESSARY):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C  
SELECTED STUDENT COMMENTS

More practice interviews would be helpful. Communication skills are some of the more important of the skills needed. The instructors served as excellent role models (Professional Development class). Have recommended Vo-Tech many times. (Graduate working full-time for Northeastern State University/UCT as Secretary to the Dean.)

I love my job. Just this week my boss was promoted to Director of Operations from Director of Support Services. The responsibilities of his new position are absolutely awesome, and of course this means mine are, too! He tells everyone that I run things, he only works for me (ha! ha!) I have one girl who is my assistant and hope to hire another before long. Mary Bailey, Dislocated Worker Counselor at Vo-Tech, sent me to Nordam to apply--is how I got the job. I have been here almost two years now. (Graduate working at LORI, a division of Nordam).

Just a short letter to thank you for all your encouragement while I was attending Vo-Tech. The call in your office from Norrell Temporary Service has made a great change in my life, all positive. I am now the assistant to five salesmen in the Southwestern Bell Telecom office. Thank goodness we got through DisplayWrite 3 because I use the DW4 version in our office. (Graduate who won the PBL State Contest in Administrative Assistant and went on to represent Oklahoma at Nationals in Orlando, Florida, July 1989.)

With each of these jobs, I have gained in experience in data entry, word processing, Lotus 1-2-3 and secretarial duties. I know that I am capable to do (sic) any job set before me.

I lost my job because some of the agents were not happy with me as a receptionist. They said my voice was too soft and I did not come across as a salesperson. My employer was very happy with my secretarial and word processing skills. She will give me an excellent recommendation. She wishes that she could keep me but cannot afford to pay two people-- one as a secretary and one as a receptionist. Besides, Jane feels that the receptionist job is a dead-end position, and I should find a job where I can better utilize my skills and talents and have a chance at promotion and raises. (Graduate working for a realty company).

Mrs. Blunt, I can only stress the importance of taking all the software programs and basic computers anyone can possibly learn. It (the personal computer) is the most popular! (Graduate working for American Airlines as a provisional employee).

Vo-Tech was very good for upgrading and refreshing my skills, and it is a very good place to work. I am well-pleased. (Graduate hired full-time as secretary/receptionist and switchboard operator at Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School, Lemley Campus.)



I am mainly working weekends so would be available for full or part-time work through the week. Tulsa Vo-Tech was very helpful to me.

I feel another form of word processing should have replaced the Lanier (word processor).

Needed actual telephone business usage.

School isn't enough. They want experience on the job. They (Vo-Tech) need to have people train on the job in addition to school classes. Also, someone (needs) to work at finding jobs for students seriously. I tried very hard to get a job after completion of Vo-Tech. Oklahoma Employment had discontinued assisting with employment at that time. At first, I tried for jobs closer to my school training. In time, I lost confidence in my abilities. I got so worried about finding a job I felt that I almost had a nervous breakdown. I've given up on a good job and have settled permanently with what I have. (Cashier and School Crossing Guard)

I feel I need more training . . . word processing, transcription, shorthand. (Overall evaluation): You did fine. I just need more schooling. (Male student--owner/manager of painting/contracting business)

I took an entry-level job because I had no office experience, and I could advance within this company. (On training): I need to take classes to keep up my skills (Customer service representative--beginning salary \$7 per hour)

One office told me I need more hands-on experience specifically in the office environment on my word processing (WordStar) even though my training was sufficient. (Secretary/receptionist)

Very good training, especially for someone with little or no previous experience. This duplicated and reinforced a great deal of my previous knowledge. (Former student working in premium audit department of large insurance company)

(Would recommend TCAVTS Adult Business and Office Program) Because of hands-on training. (Proofing clerk)

I am very impressed with my training at Vo-Tech. The salesmen I work for are amazed that I have never worked in an office before. It says a lot for Vo-Tech and its instructors, to turn out students ready and eager to start their careers.

We had a textbook that was outdated (human relations class).

(Comment regarding communications skills training): This was one of the more important of the skills needed.

Needed to have had Lotus and/or Data Base.

More computer knowledge.

I'm extremely overqualified. (Student hired at large insurance firm)

Just need experience for skills learned.

In typing.

However, I did need to go to Tulsa Junior College to get more detailed accounting.

Would have liked a little more training in understanding computers.

I didn't feel I learned enough to be a bookkeeper.

I took a course in PC WordStar at the beginning of the year and forgot it by the end of the year.

The only way I could suggest improving my studies at Vo-Tech would be to include extra work in English.

I feel that someone like me without previous office-related work experience did not get enough training. This program was not sufficient. It was only good for people that need upgrading (in) their skills.

I attended College of the Americas after I completed Vo-Tech to upgrade my skills. I took it more seriously but the programs were very similar. I am seeking a job with higher pay. I would appreciate your assistance. (Switchboard operator)

I would have liked to operate a switchboard. I learned more within the 6 - 9 month period than I ever expected. The instructors are very encouraging. Mrs. Blunt, thanks for the job placement. My supervisor is wonderful! (Word processing secretary)

Excellent instructors. Very satisfied.

Very pleased with the program. Many of the clients that come to my department received my recommendation to go to the Adult Business and Office Department. Vo-Tech was very pleased with my skills and qualifications. (Student who completed the Business and Office Program, then was hired by Tulsa Vo-Tech as a secretary in their business offices)

I feel that during the last month of your training, students should be placed on jobs part-time. This way they will still be graded on their skills they learned and will also have a better knowledge of what the work world is really like. During the time I was at Vo-Tech, I heard many complaints about no OJT, so I feel that some type of job placement is needed.

I liked the program the way it is. (Reservation sales agent - Avis)

I really need more work on written communications. I have always had a lot of trouble with spelling, so I feel I could have used more one-on-one help. For the time the teachers are given to teach the course, I think they do very well. (Reservations sales agent - Avis)

I studied many hours and asked questions, therefore I learned a lot. I don't know how one could cause another to have the incentive or ambition to study and learn. (Staff assistant--American Airlines)

More on phone answering, etc., needs to be taught. (Secretary and bookkeeper--manual and computer)

I had the basics--each position required its own training of duties of the course. The positive attitudes and encouragement from the instructors and staff played a great role in preparing me for the outside world. Mrs. Butler's instruction in telephone usage, interviews, and communications training was very helpful.

Women who have not worked for years, as myself, need all the encouragement and support they can get because there are many sharp, young women we have to compete with. There are many things in the business world that we as housewives had never really had to deal with. I was emotionally stressed when I entered the program. Thanks to the instructors' patience and guidance, I was fortunate enough to become employed immediately. Vo-Tech gave me a well-rounded background which enabled me to secure the position of business office float (initially) which also gave me very good experience in the business world. (1986 graduate--promoted from office float to claims examiner)

I know I didn't stay in long enough. What I did receive was very helpful. Let students come part-time to match their individual time needs and have that self-improvement day once a week--that was great! Currently attending Tulsa Junior College. (R.N. who was making a career change)

I feel I would have done better if the program were structured more.

I feel we should have more hands-on computers. Mrs. Butler's Professional Development class was a big help. I enjoyed this class. (Communications skills training) very helpful and informative. (Recommend Vo-Tech) to everyone. From my own experience seeking employment, I wish I had CRT training, data entry training, and more time on word processing packages. Other than this, Vo-Tech is great! #1 to me. (Temporary assignments including word processor, data entry, typist, receptionist)

I didn't have any complaints. I really learned alot from the course. I would take it again if I could. The instructors are very helpful. (Payroll/insurance/personnel administrator)

More computers and less shorthand would have served me better. I have not used shorthand.

I feel for my age and the time I was out of (high) school, it was overwhelming to me. I really don't know how you could work around that.

The only reason I wouldn't return is that I am seeking degreed education.

Jeanne Aguilar helped me find my job. I will be going on to Tulsa Junior College to get an associate's degree. I learned how to hide (sic) my bad attitude, in exchange for a good one. I really don't have any ideas to improve or better the Business and Office Program, but I can say I enjoyed all of my classes. (Bookkeeper/receptionist)

Treat adults as adults, discuss new guidelines, do long-range planning. Continue to improve. Show no favoritism (sic), because other students watch the example you are setting. Continue to stress the best in all. Be fair in all decisions.

Would like to see more basic computer sciences taught. Need more instructors like Mrs. Spybuck and Mrs. Blunt that really care. Worked through Key Temporary and was hired on in the same position. Worked six months as temp and then went full-time employee. (Electronic mech inspector)



Needed more training and practice in telephone usage.

I feel the human relations part of the program is one of the most important parts. If a person is convinced they can get a job, that is half the battle. (Assistant purchasing agent)

More understanding of computers. Also, understanding of attitudes of people you work with. (Data entry clerk)

The genuine concern and help received at Tulsa Vo-Tech is what makes Tulsa Vo-Tech different from other forms of education. Teachers really care and want you to succeed. (Assistant accounts payable supervisor in pipeline company)

I took the course and went a year without employment. I feel I wasted my time--not enough experience, not enough years in school, such as a college degree (sic).

Try to help students in their weakest point or subject. Because of one weak point, it makes (sic) the difference between getting a job or not.

VITA

Peggy G. Blunt

Candidate for the Degree of  
Master of Science

Thesis: A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE GRADUATES OF THE ADULT BUSINESS AND  
OFFICE PROGRAM AT TULSA COUNTY AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 27, 1950, the daughter  
of farm and cattle owners, George and Betty Garrett. One older  
sister, Pamela; one younger brother, Dale.

Education: Graduated from Owasso High School, Owasso, Oklahoma, in  
May, 1968; received Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Edu-  
cation from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma,  
in May, 1972; completed requirements for the Master of Science  
Degree at Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma, and Okla-  
homa State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in December, 1989.

Professional Experience: Adult Business and Office Instructor, Tulsa  
Skills Center (now closed) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, from October,  
1973, to June, 1977. Adult Business and Office Instructor,  
Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School, Peoria Campus,  
Tulsa, Oklahoma, June, 1977, to present.