

CERTAIN PHASES OF  
DOCTOR E. G. BLACKSTONE'S  
PHILOSOPHY OF SECONDARY COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

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Bachelor of Science

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Durant, Oklahoma

1937

Submitted to the Department of Business Education

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1941

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The invaluable assistance and helpful suggestions given by Doctor E. G. Blackstone, and the patient and inspiring directions of J. Andrew Holley made this study possible.

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## THE PROBLEM

### I. Introduction

Business education has been serving the public faithfully for many years. Its efforts have been sincere and earnest, and its results have been meritorious. But it may be well from time to time for it to examine its activities, to render account of its stewardship, and to make plans for the future for fear that tradition may have prevented its constant adjustment to changing needs.

Doctor E. G. Blackstone has been one of the foremost leaders in business education for a number of years. His point of view pertaining to this field has exerted far-reaching influence. Therefore it seems highly desirable that a study should be made of his writings, his lectures, and his theory of commercial education in order to determine his philosophy.

Professor Blackstone has been out on the educational frontier since the turn of the century and is one to whom credit and praise is due for most substantial and far-reaching contributions to the professional advancement of business education. The brief record of his professional life is chronicled in Who's Who in American Education,<sup>1</sup> but it does not reveal any of the drama in his rise in commercial education.

A man's professional philosophy is inextricably interwoven with his life experiences, and a review of the high points in Blackstone's activities as an educator is inserted here to furnish a background for a

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<sup>1</sup> Cook, Robert C., Editor, Who's Who in American Education, New York City, N. Y., The Robert C. Cook Co., 1931-32, III:396; and J. M. Cattell, Editor, Leaders in Education, A Biographical Directory, New York City, N. Y., The Science, 1932 (First Edition)

clearer understanding of his point of view regarding secondary commercial education. E. G. Blackstone was born July 9, 1892, in Ackley, Iowa, where he attended school until 1910. He then moved to Iowa Falls, Iowa, and was graduated from that high school in 1911. In 1911 he enrolled in Ellsworth College, Iowa Falls, Iowa, and was graduated in 1914 with a major in Business. He entered the University of Iowa in 1914 and received his A. B. degree in the summer of 1916. He received an M. A. degree from the same institution in 1922 and the Ph. D. degree in 1927.

Blackstone's early teaching career included experience in both public schools and colleges. In 1912 he was appointed typewriting teacher in Ellsworth College, Iowa Falls, Iowa, which position he held until 1916. He then went to Dubuque, Iowa, where he was employed as head of the commercial department during 1919. From 1919 to 1922 he taught in high school at Detroit, Michigan. He was one of the first city directors of commercial education in the public schools in the state of Michigan, serving in that capacity until 1923, when he was appointed assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and instructor in Detroit Teachers College. He held this position until 1924. In 1924 he became head of commercial teacher training and secretarial science in the University of Iowa, and remained there until 1938. During this time he was visiting instructor at Colorado Teachers College, Ohio State University, and Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. From 1938 until the present time he has been Associate Professor in Charge of Commercial Teacher Training and Secretarial Administration at the University of Southern California.

Some of the offices he has occupied and professional organizations of which he is a member are:

Director, National Commercial Teachers Federation; vice-president, Department of Business Education of NEA; founder, National Association of Commercial Teacher Training Institutions; president, Iowa State Commercial Teachers Association; president, National Council of Business Education; grand secretary of Pi Omega Pi; sponsor of University of Southern California chapter of Gamma Rho Tau; charter member of Phi Delta Kappa; Chairman, National Commercial Teachers Federation.

## 2. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the philosophy of commercial education of E. G. Blackstone in order to determine what his concepts of commercial education are with reference to (1) vocational and non-vocational training, (2) curriculum construction, (3) preparation of teachers, and (4) the relationships between business and business education.

The rapid growth of the secondary school has produced a heterogeneous high school population. This has caused the abandonment of the college preparatory objective as the principal aim of high school instruction.

With these difficult conditions confronting teachers, there is an urgent need for the formulation of a guiding philosophy of commercial education. There is need for an adaptation of the knowledge of our commercial leaders into a definite clear-cut philosophy which will serve as a pattern for teachers to use more effectively in evolving a program of commercial education.

Business men are not wholly satisfied with the product of commercial departments of the high schools, as the following statement indicates:



The use of the commercial department as a dumping ground has reaped its just reward in indignation and criticism on the part of the citizens who were forced to employ the unsatisfactory product resulting from this practice.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the need of a philosophy it is the purpose of this study to set forth the viewpoints and philosophy of E. G. Blackstone with regard to secondary commercial education, for,

In the educational administration it is seemingly very important to know the number and nature of academic appendages which weigh down a man's name, but it is still more important to know an educator's philosophy of life and of education.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Method and Materials

The library method has been used in this study. Contributions were found in the form of printed addresses, reports of research investigation, articles contributed to educational magazines, textbooks for high school pupils, and books designed for teachers of commercial subjects. Lecture notes taken during the summer session of 1938 at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College were also used.

Because Doctor Blackstone is a versatile and prolific writer, this study cannot encompass the breadth and depth of his writings. However, the writer has attempted to portray a portion of it in the succeeding chapters.

### 4. Definitions

Philosophy. In ordinary usage the word "philosophy" has several concepts, and each writer is free to make his own definition. The first use of the word, attributed to Plato, set the precedent for its loose

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2 Haynes, Benjamin, Problems of Teaching Elementary Business Training, New York, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1929, p. 27.

3 Waitt, Russell, "Plea for Cooperation Between Scientists and Philosophers," Education, XLIX:517, May, 1929.

usage, as the literal meaning, "love of wisdom", implies. "To be a philosopher" says Thoreau, "is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but to love wisdom as to live, according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust."<sup>4</sup>

Dewey calls philosophy the generalized theory of education. He says:

Philosophy was stated to be a form of thinking, which, like all thinking, finds its origin in what is uncertain in the subject matter of experience, which aims to locate the nature of the perplexity and to clear it up so it can be tested in action.<sup>5</sup>

Commercial Education. This term covers that part of business education, appropriate for students, which has as its purpose the preparation of these students for socially useful and personally satisfactory living. A responsibility of particular concern, in this preparation, is making possible the entrance of students into commercial employment, with reasonable prospects of succeeding because they possess occupational skills, right attitude, and occupational intelligence.<sup>6</sup>

Curriculum. This is really the entire program of the school at work. It is everything that the students and teachers do.<sup>7</sup>

It may be well to note that no distinction is made between the terms "business" and "commercial" when referring to education.

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4 Durant, William, Introduction to The Story of Philosophy, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1926, p. 3.

5 Dewey, John, Democracy and Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1920, p. 378.

6 "Summary of Commercial Education," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1932, p. 67.

7 "Remodeling the Commerce Department," School Review, Vol. 4, No. 47, March 1939, p. 38.

The terms "high school" and "secondary school" are used interchangeably. Only the public day school is studied. Doctor Blackstone refers to junior high school as the eighth grade.

## CHAPTER II

## OBJECTIVES

## 1. Need for Meaningful Objectives

That the secondary school is changing and will continue to change is obvious. The modifications are in large part the result of an effort by school people to adapt an institution to the needs of a school population drawn from those in which the secondary school had its beginning and early growth. One of the significant changes within the secondary school is the conscious effort to recognize the individual differences of all pupils and to adapt educational purposes and procedures to fit their individual needs.<sup>1</sup>

Ruby V. Perry says:

Americans do not know what they want their secondary schools to do. In contrast to the systems in foreign countries, there is no underlying philosophy, no American culture to be sustained and transmitted. If secondary education is going to have any vitality it cannot be allowed to drift. Since wandering aimlessly among the dying embers of ancient cultures has proven ineffective, provision must be made whereby there will be allowed in the state supported schools, discussion of the vital issues of contemporary life.<sup>2</sup>

Blackstone in his writings has stated that business education is so complex and elaborate, involving such an enormous number of different items of information and skill, and so many attitudes and powers, that teachers tend to become lost in the maze of detail and to forget fundamental objectives. "There are so many objectives to be achieved--hundreds and hundreds of them, general objectives and specific objectives--that

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1 Hanrin and Erickson, Guidance in the Secondary School, Appleton-Century, New York, 1939, p. 2.

2 Perry, Ruby V., "What is the Youth Problem?" Abstract of Report by American Youth Committee, Journal of Business Education, 12:15, October 1926.

one loses perspective."<sup>3</sup>

His concepts of secondary school objectives run through many of his writings. A quotation at this point will serve to illustrate.

If we could agree upon criteria and objectives, it would be possible to stress these fundamental criteria in the colleges where young people are being trained for teaching; it would be possible for supervisors to use a common measuring stick to evaluate the work of their teachers and to stress vital rather than trivial items; and it would be possible for teachers to check up frequently on the objectives of their work so as avoid stress on unessentials."<sup>4</sup>

Due to the changing school, Blackstone believes we should not lose sight of individual differences. He points out that we should set up objectives that may be reached by all students regardless of their economic and social status.

The writer failed to find statements in Blackstone's writings which express clearly how these objectives should be determined.

## 2. Cardinal Objectives of Secondary Education

In his writings Blackstone has said very little about the seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education.<sup>5</sup> Through correspondence with Doctor Blackstone during the period of this research and from his lectures, the writer finds that he believes these objectives have greatly influenced the secondary education program.

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<sup>3</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Criteria for Evaluating Teaching," Third-Yearbook, National Commercial Teachers Federation, 1937, p.47.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Education, Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, Bulletin No. 33, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1918. "This commission...regards the following as the main objectives of education: Health, Command of fundamental processes, Worthy home membership, Vocation, Citizenship, Worthy use of leisure time, Ethical character."

Blackstone expresses his point of view as to their effect on high school instruction in these words:

The so-called seven cardinal principles of education doubtless have been over-emphasized in recent education literature, but though somewhat indefinite and unsatisfactory they serve to indicate the extent to which the objectives of high school education have undergone modification in recent years.<sup>6</sup>

He also states:

Every teacher should have in mind the health of her pupils. No teacher can escape responsibility for developing her students to be worthy of home membership or creating right attitude toward civic responsibilities. Business teachers should do all in their power to develop ethical character and insure best possible use of leisure time. However, all of these are common aims of secondary education and not of the commercial teacher.<sup>7</sup>

He again said:

Let us not as teachers forget fundamental objectives in our desire to teach a thousand and one direct details and skills.<sup>8</sup>

Blackstone has pointed out that the Cardinal Principles of Education are the objectives of all education, and should not be left to the commercial teacher alone for their achievement.

He points out that we have a tendency to over-teach these objectives and to over-look details and skills which are equally important, and that the commercial teacher must consider that his work has a vital part in their achievement.

### 3. Vocational Objectives of Secondary Education

As has already been stated, the curriculum since 1900 has greatly expanded and changed. New purposes in education are being recognized

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<sup>6</sup> Blackstone, E. G., Commercial Education in Junior and Senior High School, Racine, Wisconsin, 1926, Chapter on Commercial Edu.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Criteria for Evaluating Teaching," Third-Yearbook, National Commercial Teachers Federation, 1937, p. 47.

with increasing rapidity. Blackstone has pointed out in his writings, the idea that commercial education in the past was primarily for training in the techniques of office occupations, but it has given way to a broader point of view. He has pointed out that regardless of the nature of the business vocation for which training is given, there should be provided the necessary techniques of the occupation, necessary promotional background through business law, economics, geography, and other courses for occupational intelligence. These should include, as a minimum, some effective skill in arithmetic, English, spelling, and penmanship, and they should provide for adequate trait development.<sup>9</sup>

In Blackstone's research work he has found that some attempts have been made to move vocational training out of high school and into the field of post graduate and junior college study.

But he has said:

Moving of vocational training out of high school into junior colleges, has been accelerated by the employment situation. It is only a progression of movements which have been in action since colonial times. Business education was originally provided by private business colleges to students of the upper elementary-school age and to the high school freshmen and sophomores.<sup>10</sup>

Blackstone again points out that today business education is universally taught in the last two years of the secondary school and says:

A hundred years from now there may be no need for vocational education in the high school, but today hundreds of thousands of high school students are securing business positions on the basis of vocational education supplied in the secondary school. Administrators should beware of eliminating vocational business education from high school until post graduate work at public expense is much more widely available than it is today.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Commercial Education," Encyclopedia of Education, edited by Monroe, Walter, The Macmillan Co., N. Y., p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

Blackstone is aware that vocational education is moving in with tremendous force, but that to accomplish vocational objectives in the business world of today, it must emphasize machine instruction, and he wonders if the public school budget can provide for purchasing of office appliances and equipment long past due.

He says:

Business education is in its infancy; our job is far from being finished. It is disappointing to read inventories of office appliances now in use in many of the larger high schools. Much of the equipment is obsolete.<sup>12</sup>

Blackstone has pointed out that no one can find a better entrance into the business world than through a knowledge of business education.<sup>13</sup> He says that the first question asked of an applicant by a business man when he applies for a position is, "What can you do?" When the applicant replies, "I can keep your books or perform any clerical work which relates to business education," he has given a definite answer to this important question.

The answer suggested has a meaning to the owner of a business. It is necessary that he maintain a record of the transactions completed in the operation of his business, if he is to have available the information he needs regarding the affairs of the business. The business man is not the only one interested in this information, but others are interested in it. When he wishes to borrow money from banks or to purchase merchandise on credit he will have to furnish information regarding his business.

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<sup>12</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Collective Thinking," National Business Education Quarterly, Vol. 7, No. 2, December 1936, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Blackstone, E. G., Twentieth Century Bookkeeping, Southwestern Publishing Company, Cincinnati, 1928, p. 1.



Blackstone points out that upon entering business as a bookkeeper, assistant bookkeeper, stenographer, or filing employee, one will find that he has many opportunities for promotion, and that he may advance in any of these. This, of course, is based on the assumption that the secondary school has the responsibility for the vocational preparation of its students. Commercial education experience will also give training which will aid in preparing for a profession.

Blackstone states:

Even if you never go into private business, a knowledge of business education will be of real value to you. The study of it will give you an intelligent and sympathetic view of the duties of men in business and of procedure in buying and selling goods. If you are employed in the selling, advertising, buying, delivery, or any other department, you will understand the effect of the work of one department on the other.<sup>14</sup>

He has pointed out that one will find business education a series of interesting subjects if he keeps in mind the various ways in which they may be used. They are briefly summarized as follows:

1. Business education may be used by one in making transactions for a business so as to provide the information needed by the owner.
2. If one at any time owned or managed a business he could use his knowledge of business education.
3. Business education gives a person an understanding of business, and helps to interpret the information reported to him by the different departments of a business.
4. Business education leads to an understanding of business values that will aid one in making investments.
5. Business education lays an excellent foundation for work in college and for securing a well-rounded education.<sup>15</sup>

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14 Ibid., p. 2.

15 Ibid., p. 3.

He adds to this that should a person continue his program of education through college, a knowledge of bookkeeping and typewriting will be invaluable. It develops habits of regularity, promptness, accuracy, neatness, and many other elements essential to a complete well-rounded education. If his business education is sufficient to permit it, he will have available a means of earning an income while in college.

Blackstone has long been aware of the changing commercial education objectives, and he attributes their lack of constancy to progressive education. He believes that the vocational emphasis of commercial education will never be taken out of the secondary school and that the vocational aim should endeavor to achieve occupational and economic understanding. The vocational emphasis should be delayed until the later high school years.

#### 4. Personal Use Objectives

In this modern world, mechanization is steadily replacing hand work. The linotype, typewriter, and bookkeeping machines have almost driven longhand writing from business offices. Portable typewriters by hundreds of thousands are invading the homes, and the day of ornate penmanship seems to have passed. Typewritten letters tend to create a better impression upon the reader, and will more often gain prompt consideration than those written in longhand.

In Blackstone's research he points out that in some communities the demand for instruction in typewriting has become so great that it is difficult to supply it; he says:

It will never be necessary to make typewriting compulsory...the pupils will elect the subject voluntarily.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Blackstone, E. G., Personal Typewriting, Gregg Pub. Co., 1939, p. 2.

The traditional typewriting course was organized to train operators for office positions, and is full of exercises and business forms for office procedure.<sup>17</sup> Blackstone speaks of this "as being as it should," but if the schools fail to make provisions for students who wish to be able to typewrite themes or keep books for personal use only, it works a hardship on those students. He states further that in many schools, such students are put into vocational classes and are expected to work their way through a variety of drills and exercises, whereas they want theme-writing and simple record-keeping.

Blackstone also points out that the usual length of vocational classes (four semesters) is frequently too long. Many students cannot spend this much time and therefore fewer people take training in these courses than would with a shorter period.<sup>18</sup>

He also points out that there need be no fear that students will find it difficult to transfer from personal to vocational typewriting, because they use the same typewriters and keyboards. However, these are the only ways in which they are alike; they require different measurements and standards.

A quotation from Doctor Blackstone will clear up the matter:

Business training, particularly typewriting, is often taken by students for personal use rather than vocational use. They are not alike...bookkeeping for personal use and for social organizations is receiving greater emphasis, and there is need for personal shorthand if a system can be found which can develop adequate speed without the expenditure of too much school time.<sup>19</sup>

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17 Ibid., p. 3.

18 Blackstone, E. G., "Commercial Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 236.

19 Ibid., p. 236.

Blackstone expresses himself on personal use shorthand:

A speed of 80 to 100 words a minute seems to be a minimum for personal use, and such speeds have not yet been developed in secondary schools with the average pupil and teacher in less than three or four semesters of instruction. This is a heavy expenditure of time, and personal shorthand has not been too successful. Its accomplishment seems to be awaiting the development of an adequate system of shorthand which can be learned within a brief period.<sup>20</sup>

It is within the last few years that the personal use aim has been emphasized to any extent as a specific objective of commercial education. However, Blackstone's writings show that he has some very definite beliefs concerning this personal-use objective in secondary commercial education. He believes "personal use" refers to objectives which are designed to add to the usefulness and general well-being of the student's personal relationships, rather than those which are set up to emphasize occupational training.

He has pointed out that we actually waste school time by not separating vocational and personal-use classes.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

## CHAPTER III

## THE CURRICULUM OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

## 1. Definition

As has been pointed out in previous chapters, the economic and social conditions are changing; to keep pace with these, the curriculum must also change.

H. I. Good says:

The curriculum is the medium through which educational objectives are achieved. These objectives change with changing social and economic conditions, therefore curriculum building is a continuous process.<sup>1</sup>

Webster says:

Curriculum is the prescribed course of study of an educational institution, or of a department thereof.<sup>2</sup>

Rugg's version of the word "curriculum" and the breadth of its meaning in everyday usage is:

The word curriculum is an ugly awkward word, but fastened upon us by technical custom...It is really the entire program of the school at work. It is everything that the students and their teachers do. Thus it is two-fold in nature, being made up of activities, the things done, and of the materials with which they are done.<sup>3</sup>

Blackstone believes that in determining the curriculum a survey should be made of the surrounding community to determine the type of jobs available and to arrange the curriculum on the basis of the findings. This should be done through a follow-up of graduates. He has

1 Good, H. I., "Editorial," Balance Sheet, Vol. 15, No. 3, December 1935, p. 147.

2 Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, Mass., 1936, p. 249.

3 Rugg, Harold, The Two-Fold Nature of the Curriculum, Ginn & Company, Boston, Mass., 1936, Pp. 18-19.

pointed out that a large percentage of graduates leave their immediate community, so they must be prepared to meet business problems elsewhere.

A quotation will bear this out:

The curriculum should be constructed to fit the people for whom it is made, to fulfill the particular occupational demands which are required, to provide for the placement of those who complete the prescribed courses, and to recognize the importance of a follow-up.<sup>4</sup>

He states also that:

One of the questions which arose was, to what extent do students change schools? If the percentage was high then the curriculum of each school must be similar...eighty-five per cent remain in one school...thirteen per cent attend two schools...Bookkeeping should be taught in all communities, even in the smaller ones, because seventy-five per cent of students leave and only eight per cent return.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Scope

The effect of the depression has been to increase our already widely expanded commercial enrollment. Some say this is a justification of business education in the schools, but others view it with alarm.

Blackstone says:

Even before the depression, we could not find jobs for anywhere near a hundred per cent of the students who took commerce. Conditions are now worse. What shall we do with the increased enrollment? The public has demonstrated its belief in commercial education by sending its sons and daughters to us in increasing numbers. If, however, it ever comes to realize that only a few can hope to get jobs, its favor may veer and we may face restrictions or even abolition.<sup>6</sup>

He points out that the old days, when there was a shortage of stenographers and bookkeepers, have gone. The demand has increased, but the

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4 Blackstone, E. G., "Commercial Education" Encyclopedia of Educational Research, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 240.

5 Blackstone, E. G., "A Follow-up of Three Thousand Commercial Students," Journal of Business Education, Vol. 3, No. 6, March 1930, p. 39.

6 Blackstone, E. G., "In What Direction Must We Go?" Balance Sheet, Vol. 15, No. 3, November 1933, p. 99.

supply has overtaken it. We should recognize this by determining for each of our communities how many such workers are needed to fill the jobs available each year. Then we should try to limit our enrollment in commercial subjects so that after eliminating failures and dropouts, there will be enough left to fill the available jobs. This will mean smaller enrollments in these subjects, but will provide opportunity for a wider offering. He says:

It is time for commercial educators to realize that the traditional subjects of stenography and bookkeeping do not hold many promotional possibilities and that as stepping stones they are no better off than selling or office positions. From this follow-up, if this is to be accepted then, the further fact that selling and general office work are much more frequent should lead us to provide training in these subjects first, and then to add stenography and bookkeeping, if there is time and money and space enough left.<sup>7</sup>

Blackstone believes we should do all in our power to make Junior Business Training a required subject in all junior high schools. Throughout his writings he points out that every secondary school student should take at least one socio-business subject so that he may be more intelligent about our economic organization and operation. He says:

We should recognize the growing desire of pupils for at least a one-semester course of typewriting...make bookkeeping more valuable by including personal affairs and small business problems.<sup>8</sup>

He adds that with the development of consumer needs, such courses as Junior Business Training, General Business Science, and Consumer Education have become popular, but there seems to be an overlapping of objectives. In some schools junior business is required, while in others it

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7 Blackstone, E. G., "A Follow-up of Three Thousand Commercial Graduates," Journal of Business Education, Vol. 15, No. 6, March 1930, p. 35.

8 Blackstone, E. G., "In What Direction Must We Go?" Balance Sheet, Vol. 15, No. 3, November 1933, p. 100.

is elective. In addition to the above courses, there is a demand for courses in senior business, which requires experience and age that cannot be met by junior high school students. In some places, advanced consumer education is taught to senior high school groups and to adults.

He points out further that we should return subjects such as Business English and Business Arithmetic, to the English and Mathematics departments because they can be better taught there.<sup>9</sup>

Typewriting. As has been pointed out in previous chapters machinery is supplanting hand power in almost every part of our industrial life. The ability to typewrite has come to be almost a necessity, not only by people planning to enter business, but by every person in every vocation, from junior high school on through life.

Blackstone believes this so strongly that he thinks a movement should be made to make typewriting instruction available to all public school students during the junior high school period. To accomplish this aim, the curriculum should be made to include a one-semester course in typewriting which is as much a required subject as English, Social Science, or Penmanship. Under this plan every student would know the possibilities of typewriting in business and everyday life when they enrolled in high school. As he was quoted as saying in the preceding chapter:

Personal typewriting for everyone is a worthy deal. The modern world uses the typewriter for almost every type of communication. Every student, not just those in the commercial department, but those in all departments, may profit by making their slogan "typewriting for everybody".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Commercial Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Personal Typewriting," American Shorthand Teacher, Vol. 10, No. 3, November 1929, p. 104.



He adds that typewriting for vocational use should be taught largely in the eleventh and twelfth grades. However, some schools could offer vocational typewriting in the tenth grade so pupils can typewrite when they enroll for shorthand in the eleventh grade. This would simplify the transcription problem.

Blackstone thinks the chief objective in typewriting is vocational, but some schools are offering one or two-semester courses in typewriting for personal use. The principal reason for this is that jobs are available for only a limited number.

Stenography. Blackstone says that stenography is not a good stepping stone to business advancement except for a few, because it involves much more than taking and transcribing dictation. Barnhart believes especially should a stenographer be able to hear well and interpret directions.<sup>11</sup> He adds that at least one semester of secretarial training, devoted to non-stenographic duties, is essential in the training of stenographers. Greater attention to these extra duties seems necessary, and actual practice in handling various office situations is more effective than merely talking about them.

Various analyses of secretarial duties (Chartors and Wholley) have been made in order to determine what items other than typewriting and shorthand skills should be taught to stenographers and secretaries. A list of 871 items was formulated, including knowledge of letter styles, telephoning, handling mail, etc. The last or fourth semester should be used for studying these duties and for increasing dictation and transcription speed.

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11 Barnhart, E. W., Analysis of Work of Stenographer, Gregg Publishing Company, New York, 1937, p. 115.

Socio-business subjects. Blackstone has pointed out that every student should be required to take at least one of these subjects, which should be offered on a non-vocational basis. He adds:

If democracy depends for its successful existence upon an intelligent electorate, is it not the duty of some organization to provide the means whereby the electorate may become intelligent? It would seem that the task of providing at least a minimum of intelligence about national economic problems is the function of socio-business subjects.<sup>12</sup>

Bookkeeping. Bookkeeping teachers, just as teachers of Mathematics, Latin, and Greek, where vocational objectives have become negligible, have attempted to justify their subjects on the basis of providing background and cultural values. Wells made a list of aims and objectives for bookkeeping from all possible sources, selecting twenty-seven which stressed general background and social and personal values rather than vocational.<sup>13</sup> A test was then made to measure the attainment of these objectives and given to students who had not taken bookkeeping and to those who had. The differences were so slight that it was concluded that, although such general values might be achieved, they were not being achieved. It appears to Blackstone that in spite of all the talk about bookkeeping being valuable for all commercial students, there is little evidence that any but vocational values are actually being achieved and that no teacher can justify bookkeeping on any other basis.<sup>14</sup>

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12 Blackstone, H. C., "What Do You Mean Socio-Business," Balance Sheet, Vol. 16, No. 7, March 1935, p. 222.

13 Wells, Inez R., An Evaluation of Non-vocational Values Claimed in Bookkeeping, Masters Thesis, University of Iowa, 1932.

14 Blackstone, H. C., "Commercial Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 237.

In 1936, Chaney made a study of 131 schools in cities of 5000 population and reported that first year bookkeeping was as popular as ever, but that second-year classes were getting smaller due to the fact that jobs could not be found for the second-year students.<sup>15</sup>

However, Doctor Blackstone says:

Bookkeeping should be taught in all communities, even if they are small ones.<sup>16</sup>

Consumer Education. In the writings included in this study, very little has been written by Blackstone regarding consumer education. He has pointed out that one teacher could scarcely handle the course himself. He suggests that this course be handled by all of the departments.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Testing

Blackstone has had an active part in formulating a comprehensive testing program in commercial education.

If we continue to turn out faulty tests in the present period of refinement, we shall deserve criticism.<sup>18</sup>

He believes that testing is the means by which we can measure those objectives mentioned in preceding chapters.

Prognostic Testing. Doctor Blackstone believes that every available means for determining the success of students in vocational training should be used, but he has found that tests cannot insure success on the

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15 Chaney, D. S., Trends of High School Bookkeeping, Masters Thesis, University of Denver, 1936.

16 Blackstone, E. G., "Follow-up of Three Thousand Graduates," Journal of Business Education, Vol. 3, No. 6, March 1930, p. 37.

17 Blackstone, E. G., "Commercial Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 227.

18 Blackstone, E. G., "Steps in Test Construction," Journal of Business Education, Vol. 7, No. 5, April 1932, p. 9.

job.

For example, he says:

Sixteen studies have been made to determine how to select students who would be successful in bookkeeping. Toops<sup>19</sup> gave a battery of clerical tests, compared the scores with teachers' estimates of potential ability. Fitzpatrick<sup>20</sup> compared scores in the New York Regents examination in beginning bookkeeping with intelligence tests, etc., but little has been done to predict success in actual bookkeeping work in offices.<sup>21</sup>

Objective Testing. It is the opinion of Blackstone that objective tests are only partially effective as a testing device. Throughout his writings he has said very little regarding the testing material. He has made a test to classify errors in typewriting.

In criticising objective tests in general, he said they lack reliability, validity, good form, objectivity, and ability to measure specific traits.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. Summary

Throughout this chapter, Blackstone has indicated that typewriting should be compulsory. He has also said that in determining the curriculum, a job survey of the local community should be made. At the same time, he has suggested that account be taken of the possibilities that students will obtain employment outside their school communities.

He believes that at least one socio-business subject should be taken by every student, and that bookkeeping can hardly be justified on any

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19 Toops, H. A., Tests for Guidance, Teachers College, Ohio State University, 1923.

20 Fitzpatrick, H. J., Success in Elementary Bookkeeping, Masters Thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1923.

21 Blackstone, B. G., "Commercial Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 330.

22 Blackstone, B. G., "Steps in Test Construction," Journal of Business Education, Vol. 7, No. 5, April 1932, p. 11.

basis other than vocational. He has pointed out that promotion in stenography and secretarial work is slow because of the many duties involved in these types of work.

Doctor Blackstone believes that an adequate testing program is necessary to select students, to facilitate teaching, and to measure the degree to which objectives, both vocational and personal use, have been achieved.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESEARCH AND TEACHER TRAINING

## 1. Concepts of Research

Research as the tool of the educational scientists is being employed to a greater extent now than ever before, in an effort to design new teaching policies and practices for commercial education.

Benjamin R. Haynes presents a broad concept of scientific investigation:

Research is seeking after the truth, and it is not necessary nor is it always possible to enroll in a formal course in educational research in order to apply research or critical thinking to our teaching as well as to our learning...We should always be mindful that business education is merely one segment of education and we should set up our own teaching with this broad concept in mind.<sup>1</sup>

Doctor Edward L. McManara says:

In the large cities and towns of the country we find a constant endeavor to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the student. This compels research work in order to get facts. Surveys of occupations have been made...these surveys in the field of business education have been used to modify the kind of instruction and the scope of instruction in our secondary schools.<sup>2</sup>

Frank McKee points out:

Research cannot be left entirely to the universities. The commercial teachers can do their part...the contacts made by such a survey provide a closer relationship between commercial education and those who use the product of the commercial department.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Haynes, Benjamin R., "The Constant Need for Critical Reflection in Business Education," Journal of Business Education, Vol. 10, No. 6, May 1935, p. 30.

2 McManara, Edward L., "Curriculum of Secondary School," Fourth Yearbook, Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, 1931, p. 49.

3 McKee, Frank, "Research in Teacher Training," Ninth Yearbook, Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, 1936, p. 30.

Webster's concept is:

Research is a critical and exhaustive investigation or experimentation, having for its aim the discovery of new facts and their correct interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

In picturesque words Blackstone expresses his philosophy regarding research.

Research is diligent, careful, detailed investigation of an unbiased and scientific character.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout his research work he has emphasized that research is an objective investigation of some kind of another. It may aim to discover new knowledge, refine that which we have, or it may justify the repetition of a study for verification.

He thinks one should take nothing for granted; nor should he pass judgment until all the facts are collected; above all one should always be honest in his findings.

Research does not start out to prove anything, it is interested in finding the truth in a particular set of circumstances. To set out to prove something is an admission of prejudice at the start.<sup>6</sup>

Blackstone has pointed out that today some people think altogether too much about research, and that it is getting us into trouble. Everywhere people are making some kind of research. Teachers are making studies in their classes; supervisors and department heads are collecting data; and candidates for advanced degrees are writing dissertations or theses. He adds that a few are just trying to write and convince other

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<sup>4</sup> Webster's International Dictionary, Second Edition, G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, Mass., p. 2118.

<sup>5</sup> Blackstone, H. G., "How to Plan a Research Investigation," Bulletin No. 9, National Association of Commercial Teacher Training Institutions, March 1936, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Blackstone, H. G., "The Need for Research in Commercial Education," National Education Association Proceedings, December 1926, p. 397.

people of their pet theories. Some interpret their findings the way they want them and some just wish to get in the limelight.

Literature is full of futile studies, and the graduate libraries are full of unimpressive theses, with only here and there a study which merits consideration.<sup>7</sup>

Blackstone says that in the early days of commercial education, "research" was a group of terms no one could understand.

We shied away from it defensively and among ourselves tended to scoff at it, particularly where its results were contrary to our pet opinions.<sup>8</sup>

Now the public has a tendency to take all research for the truth, which is the wrong thing to do for there are good studies and weak ones. Blackstone thinks the weak ones outnumber the good ones.

Blackstone has formulated twenty criteria by which he thinks every research study should be checked. If the study meets the requirements set forth in these criteria, then he says the research worker may "take a much needed rest".<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Importance of the Teacher

The teacher occupies one of the most important positions in the educational system. The actions of a teacher, in the opinion of Doctor Blackstone, are as important as what he says. The teacher's preparation before and after assuming his professional duties are very important.

He says:

Teaching is great work. It is the passing on of knowledge from one who possesses it to one who does not; the leadership from ignorance to wisdom; and is the awakening of interests and ideas they are unaware of.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Commercial Education," Fourth Yearbook, Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, 1931, p. 32.



Responsibilities of teaching. Doctor Blackstone believes the teachers can and should help solve some of the world problems today. However he does not believe that teachers can correct every maladjustment.<sup>11</sup>

He believes teachers should make desirable changes in pupils, but these changes should be in traits, attitudes, appreciation, and power, rather than in knowledge and skills even though the latter are more easily taught.

In the interpretation of desirable changes in students is where disagreement arises and particularly so since in the daily treatment of numerous specific items of information and skill, there is danger of losing sight of broader and vital elements.<sup>12</sup>

Doctor Blackstone observes that too often teachers think almost wholly in terms of subject matter and school keeping and not so much about social responsibilities. He thinks every teacher and administrator must study this problem.

Business teachers should familiarize themselves with occupational information so they can help their students and advise with them.

He asserts that teachers should cultivate closer cooperation with business leaders, they should invite the business men into the classrooms and get some publicity regarding the commercial department.

Blackstone believes teachers should not have students reciting rules about debits or credits or putting a typewriter margin stop at a certain place without knowing why they do it. He says:

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11 Blackstone, E. G., "Research in Teacher Training," Ninth Yearbook, Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, 1936, Pp. 10-19.

12 Ibid., p. 23.

Too often students are told and shown exactly how things are to be done, with no understanding of the reasons for them, because the teacher thinks that it takes too long to permit students to experiment to find the best solution, that pupils will start wrong and develop wrong, or that they are too young to understand or appreciate the reasons for what they are being taught...such students are being taught to repeat mechanically certain items of information which is worthless.<sup>13</sup>

He also believes that the teacher should allow the students to ask questions. If in typewriting a student is doing something wrong and the teacher notices it, he should permit the student to continue that way if the student thinks it is correct. However, the teacher should make suggestions, but should not tell why the procedure is wrong until the student asks.<sup>14</sup>

Evaluating teaching. If teachers are to be responsible for good teaching, they must have some means by which they may check themselves and their work to see that they are getting the desired results.

Blackstone has outlined several criteria by which teachers may check their teaching. These may be summarized as (1) securing proper spirit of pupil-teacher relationship, (2) getting students to plan and use judgment, (3) making effective assignments, (4) using practice procedures, (5) treating of individual differences, (6) providing for trait development, and (7) maintaining an adequate testing program.<sup>15</sup>

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13 Blackstone, E. G., "Criteria for Evaluating Teaching," Business Education World, Vol. 13, No. 3, Pp. 48-49.

14 Blackstone, E. G., Personal Typewriting, The Gregg Publishing Company, New York, p. 20.

15 Blackstone, E. G., "Criteria for Evaluating Teaching," Third Yearbook, National Commercial Teachers Federation, Vol. 3, 1937, p. 40.

He points out that teachers should treat students as adults. They should give them responsibilities and by all means show them the necessity for a plan by which to do things.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Teacher Training

The curriculum must be an important element in the study of commercial teacher training. A study of the needs in the field of teacher training and the means by which it may be improved would be very important in developing adequate and, broadly speaking, more scientific training in the field of commercial education.

Blackstone points out that:

Curricula for commercial teachers as well as those for any specific type of teaching should conform to the requirements of education and be constructed and altered only upon the data and facts revealed by a study of needs and job analyses. Such teachers upon graduation would be able to satisfy the needs for which they are trained, and should be rated without distinction upon the same basis educationally and socially with all the other teachers and professional groups.<sup>17</sup>

Doctor Blackstone is aware that there are different requirements with regard to teacher training in different states, but he has confined his writings largely to a few major phases. These include business experience of commercial teachers, length of commercial curricula, and practice teaching. These problems are common among teacher training institutions regardless of their locality.<sup>18</sup>

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16 Ibid., Pp. 47-49.

17 Blackstone, E. G., Commercial Teachers Curricula, Research Studies in Commercial Education, No. 11, January 1929, p. 49.

18 Blackstone, E. G., "Standards for Practice Teaching," Bulletin No. 11, National Association of Commercial Teacher Training Institutions, January 1937, Pp. 2-9.

Business Experience. Doctor Blackstone has pointed out that it will take a lot time to work business experience into the curricula of schools. He does think that it would be beneficial for teachers to secure some business experience before attempting to teach commercial work. He has stated that a little experience would be better than none, but he admits that some of the best teachers have had no business experience.<sup>19</sup>

Length of Curricula. Blackstone believes that as much time should be required for the preparation of commercial teachers as is required in the preparation of teachers of academic subjects. He says:

There appears to be no reason why the person who undertakes to teach bookkeeping, junior business training, economics, etc., should have less training than the person who undertakes to teach history or English.<sup>20</sup>

He believes that a curriculum of less than four years is unsatisfactory for the complete training of a prospective teacher.

...the four-year curricula for commercial teachers should be eliminated and adequate four-year, or possibly even longer, curricula substituted.<sup>21</sup>

Doctor Blackstone believes that since commercial teachers are directing many activities, they must have some understanding of extra-curricular activities and school business to become successful teachers.

Practice Teaching. Practice teaching has long been accepted as one of the essential elements in the education of a prospective teacher.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Blackstone, E. C., "Commercial Teaching Curricula," Iowa Monographs, Vol. 4, April 18, 19, 20, 1929, p. 225.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

Miss Frances Henderson has reported that her first-year teachers of typewriting who did not have practice teaching as a part of their training course, did as well as the ones who had practice teaching.<sup>22</sup>

Doctor Blackstone points out that in 1934, at the Commercial Instructors Round Table of the National Commercial Teachers Federation, an attempt was made to set up standards for practice teaching. The committee did not make a report in time to be published so Doctor Blackstone wrote what he thought should be required of practice teachers.

He said that practice teaching should be required of experienced teachers, the same as inexperienced, unless there is positive evidence that they are capable teachers. Being an experienced teacher is by no means conclusive evidence of capable teaching.

According to Blackstone, a clinical year--a sort of internship--in which a student might teach a full schedule under capable supervision is desirable. This would probably require five years of training instead of four and would no doubt bring up many administrative difficulties, but these could probably be overcome.<sup>23</sup>

He believes that until the clinical year is established, the minimum of practice teaching should be a full term or semester of five days a week for each subject. There should be only one practice teacher to a class and he should pass at least one collegiate subject matter course in the work of the class in which he is to teach.

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<sup>22</sup> Blackstone, E. G., "Standards for Practice Teaching," Bulletin No. 11, National Association of Commercial Teachers Institutions, January 1937, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

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Student teachers should make lesson plans for the course at its beginning. These plans should be submitted to the critic teacher. Records of all conferences between the critic teacher and the student teacher should be kept in a notebook by the student teacher.

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## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

## 1. Summary

The high points of E. G. Blackstone's philosophy on secondary commercial education, as set forth in this study, are briefly summarized as follows:

(1) All objectives which are set up for secondary commercial education should be meaningful, within the capacities of high school pupils, and within the offerings of the high school curriculum.

Occupational information, economic understanding, citizenship training, consumer efficiency, social intelligence, and self development should be included as objectives of the commercial department of the secondary school.

(2) A curriculum must be provided to meet the demands of the community and to furnish an opportunity for students to choose subjects best suited to their various interests and abilities. These subjects must develop traits as well as knowledge and skills.

There must be two phases of curriculum; namely, the vocational for the students who expect to use the knowledge and skills obtained from the vocational subjects as means of earning a living, and the personal-use phase for all to use in everyday life. There must be a differentiation of these two phases of curriculum and a segregation of the students.

There must be an adequate testing program in commercial education by means of which the teacher can measure what the student has learned.

Blackstone has formulated criteria by which teachers can check their teaching to see if their methods are effective.

(3) Commercial teachers must possess a broad general education, preferably including business experience. Blackstone also believes in requiring practice teaching and arranging the curriculum of commercial teachers so they would serve a one-year internship before entering the field of active teaching.

An adequate program of secondary commercial education is possible only under the leadership of well trained people who plan wisely and supervise constantly. The teacher must develop the character and personality of the students; he should also exemplify the traits they expect students to develop.

(4) Research for the best solutions to constantly arising problems must be a continuous process if commercial education is to fulfill its obligations to pupils and to business itself.

## 2. Conclusions

After reading Blackstone's writings one may come to the conclusion that not all of his beliefs are arrived at by the "arm-chair" method. He is constantly immersed in some research program of great importance. His interpretations are based on research and experimentation to a high degree.

A review of his writings shows that Blackstone's present views of what commercial education should be and accomplish, in light of his research investigations, are far ahead of the actual conditions under which we now labor. An illustration of this is his proposed clinical year in practice teaching.

Blackstone believes that vocational objectives have been over-emphasized. Too much emphasis is placed on bookkeeping, typewriting,



and shorthand for vocational use. He thinks such emphasis must give way to greater emphasis upon the personal-use objectives of commercial education. Business training must undergo constant adjustments.

As this study is brought to a conclusion, it leaves a conviction that secondary commercial education is becoming more and more important in the public school system, and is being respected increasingly by the other departments of the school.

This attempt at a delineation of Blackstone's philosophy and point of view can only be regarded as a prefatory study, which may open the way for a more zealous investigation that will furnish a deeper insight into the thinking of a man whose position of prominence in the history of commercial education is assured.

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