FREDERICK G. NICHOLS' PHILOSOPHY OF SECONDARY COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

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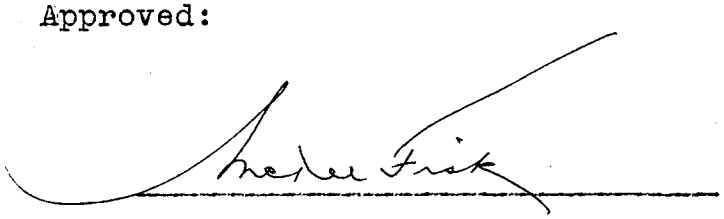

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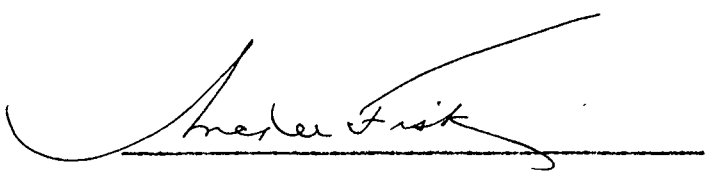

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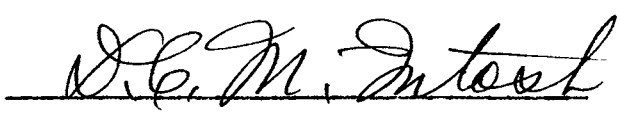

Dean of the Graduate
School

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

1. Introduction

In this era of collecting data, making research investigations and analyses in education, it is easy to overlook the fact that it remains the role of the philosopher to give life and meaning to scientific discoveries by a deep, understanding interpretation of them which is only possible by one who has, through long experience and work with his materials, had time to become wise, and who has been

> . . . in the crow's nest peering ahead through the fog . . . /who has been/ on the frontier seeking new thrills, experience, ideas, criticisms, proposals, sending out new shafts of inquiry, making new interpretations, new pageants out of old problems, and striking pupil imagination on a fresh side.[1]

Such a man is Frederick G. Nichols, Associate Professor of Education at Harvard University. Although he would, perhaps, be the last to call himself a philosopher, his professional contemporaries find the term applicable.[2]

Professor Nichols has been on the educational frontier since the turn of the century[3] and " . . . is probably the one to whom highest credit and praise is due for most

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[1] K. B. Haas, "A Plea for Consumer Education, "Journal of Business Education, 10:34, September, 1934.

[2] Louis A. Rice, "Professor Nichols Awarded E. C. T. A. Medal," Journal of Business Education, 10:22, May, 1935.

[3] Ibid.

substantial and far-reaching contributions to the professional advancement of business education."[4] Even though the brief, unadorned record of his professional life as chronicled in Who's Who in American Education[5] does not purport to reveal any of the drama behind his rise in commercial education, it traces very graphically his steady progress in this field.

Since a man's professional philosophy is inextricably interwoven with his life experiences, a short review of the high points in Nichols' activities as an educator is inserted here in order to furnish a background for a clearer understanding of the viewpoints regarding secondary commercial education as they are set forth in the chapters which follow.

Nichols' early teaching career included experience in both private and public schools. In 1899 he was appointed vice-principal and head of the department of commercial education in Montpelier Seminary, Vermont, where he served until 1902. He then went to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, where he was employed as head of the commercial department of the Martin School during the years 1902 and 1903. From 1903 to 1905 he taught in the high school at Schenectady, New York.

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[4] Paul S. Lomax, "On the Book Shelf," Journal of Business Education, 9:33, November, 1933.

[5] Robert C. Cook, Editor, Who's Who in American Education, New York City, The Robert C. Cook Co., 1931-1932, III: 396; and J. McKeen Cattell, Editor, Leaders in Education, A Biographical Directory, New York, The Science Press, 1932, (First Edition) p. 689.

He was the first city director of commercial education in the public schools in the state of New York, serving the city of Rochester in that capacity from 1905 to 1910, and from 1912 to 1917. From 1910 to 1912 he worked as state supervisor of commercial education in New York. Nichols was appointed Assistant Director of the Federal Board for Vocational Education in charge of Commercial Education in 1918, and held that position until 1921, when he became Director of Commercial Education, Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, where he remained until 1922. In that year he became Associate Professor of Education at Harvard University.

During his professional career, Professor Nichols has identified himself with such educational organizations as the National Education Association, having served as president of the Department of Business Education in 1924, and in 1935 he was awarded the bronze medallion by the Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association for distinguished service to that Association and to business education. He was president of the National Association of Commercial Teacher-Training Institutions in 1936, and he was elected president of the National Council of Business Education and Affiliated Associations for the year 1938. Other positions which further establish Nichols as a leader in his field, include: chairman of the Committee on Policies of the National Council of

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[6] Ibid.

Business Education, educational adviser to the Massachusetts Taxpayers Association, general adviser and manager of a two-year study of the testing for vocational ability, conducted under the auspices of the National Office Management Association, and membership on the Research and Planning Committees of the National Council of Business Education.

In addition to these activities, Nichols is the author or editor of many textbooks, teachers' books and innumerable articles dealing with the subject of commercial education.[7] Doubtless it is through the wide circulation of his writings that this pioneer commercial educator has wielded his greatest influence on secondary commercial education.

Nichols has made notable specific contributions in commercial education (1) to the field of organization and administration,[8] (2) to the senior commercial occupational field,[9] (3) to the secretarial field,[10] (4) to retail selling,[11]

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[7] A detailed list of the documents used in this study is included in the Bibliography.

[8] F. G. Nichols, "Organization and Administration of Commercial Education," Federal Board for Vocational Education, 1919, Bulletin No. 34, Commercial Series No. 3, Washington, D. C.

[9] Nichols and others, "A New Conception of Office Practice, Bulletin XII, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1927.

[10] F. G. Nichols, The Personal Secretary, Harvard Studies in Education, V. 23, Harvard University Press, 1934.

[11] Lucinda W. Prince, Bulletin 22, Federal Board for Vocational Education, Commercial EDucation Series, No. 1, Retail Selling, Washington Government Printing Office, 1918 (planned under the direction of F. G. Nichols).

and (5) to the junior commercial occupational field.[12] References are made from time to time to these contributions throughout this study.

2. Purpose of the Study

The secondary school, through its steadily increasing enrollment, continues to grow in importance as a phase of our educational system. The heterogeneous character of the high school population, due to its rapid growth, has caused the abandonment of the college preparatory objective as one of the principal aims of high school instruction. The problem of determining new goals to be achieved, which will be in greater accord with the status of the present high school personnel, has become the concern of educators in every department of the secondary school.

Commercial education, in particular, is in a state of change and uncertainty as a result of the many demands being made upon it by an increasing student body, composed of pupils with diverse "interests, aptitudes and abilities"[13] in the commercial field, and by the demands of an ever-changing economic order.

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[12] Survey of Junior Commercial Occupations, prepared under the direction of F. G. Nichols, Federal Board for Vocational Education, Bulletin No. 54, (Commercial Education Series No. 4), Washington, D. C., June, 1920.

[13] F. G. Nichols, Commercial Education in the High School, New York City, D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1933, Part I, Chapter I, p. 10.

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

> The use of the commercial department as a dumping-ground has reaped its just reward in indignation and criticism on the part of citizens who were forced to employ the unsatisfactory product resulting from this practice.[14]

Not only does the "dumping-ground" practice represent a problem, but there is also need for adjusting the curricula to the demands of business if this type of education is to function successfully as vocational training.

Non-vocational aspects of business training also represent a problem which is in need of solution. Educators are in disagreement as to the places of the vocational and non-vocational objectives of commercial education in the high school program.

> The need for a clearer conception by school administrators of the respective objectives of vocational and non-vocational business education, and their willingness to make requisite modifications in school organization and management constitute one of the pressing problems in secondary education today.[15]

With these difficult conditions confronting teachers, there is an urgent need for the formulation of a guiding philosophy of secondary commercial education. There is need

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[14] Lloyd V. Douglas, "A Fundamental Philosophy for Business Education," The Balance Sheet, 19:207, January, 1938.

[15] Nathaniel Altholz, "Business Education as Vocational Education," The Relation of Business Education to General Education, Monograph 40, p. 5, South-Western Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio.

for an adaptation of the wisdom of our frontier thinkers into a definite, clear-cut philosophy which will serve as a basic pattern for teachers to use in evolving a more effective program of secondary commercial education.

In view of this need of a philosophy as a point of departure, it is the purpose of this study to determine, in some measure, a summary of Frederick G. Nichols' viewpoints and philosophy of secondary commercial education, for

> In the field of 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.[16]

3. Materials and Method

Nichols is one of the most prolific writers in the comparatively new field of secondary commercial education.[17] Therefore, it seems logical, for purposes of this study, to approach the solution to the problem involved, through the media of available documentary evidence. This is found in the form of printed addresses, reports of research investigations, articles contributed to educational magazines, textbooks for high school pupils, and books designed for teachers of commercial subjects, of which Frederick G. Nichols is author. The most significant contribution for this study

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[16] Russell Edson Waitt, "A Plea for a More Appreciative Cooperation Between Scientist and Philosopher in Education," Education XLIX:517, May, 1929.

[17] See Bibliography.

is the book, Commercial Education in the High School, which represents a culmination of many years of research and experience in commercial education on the secondary level.

An investigation of contributing comments or sidelights on Nichols' viewpoints interpreted by other commercial educational writers is a second source of materials used.[18]

The data collected are divided and organized into topics according to what are conceded to be some of the most important problems with which commercial education is concerned today, and into which the high points of Nichols' philosophy seems to fall. These include, roughly, such important topics as terminology, objectives, problems of administration and supervision, curriculum content and materials, guidance, and student and teacher personnel, a discussion of which is found in the remaining chapters.

4. Definitions and Limitations

Philosophy. In ordinary usage the word philosophy lends itself to a variety of concepts, and each writer, apparently, is free to construct his own definition. The first use of the word, attributed to Plato, probably set the precedent for its loose usage, as the literal meaning, "love of wisdom," implies. Durant, in his Story of Philosophy, says, " . . . philosophy is synthetic interpretation . . . the philosopher is not content to describe the fact; he

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[18] See Bibliography.

wishes to ascertain its relation to experience in general, and thereby to get at its meaning and its worth; . . . "[19]

Dewey calls philosophy "a form of thinking."[20]

Combining the two definitions, philosophy may be understood to be "interpretive thinking," which is considered sufficient for an understanding of the term at this point. It must be remembered that in Nichols' case, one can never quite separate the researcher from the philosopher; rather, he is researcher and philosopher, as his major contributions show.[21]

High school commercial education. Nichols delights in "comment, criticism and challenge." It is characteristic of him to listen to another's views on a question, and then to present his own viewpoint after bringing to light the flaws (or perfection) in his predecessor's logic. This is his method in arriving at his definition of commercial education, set forth in Commercial Education in the High School. Since this discussion is limited to the secondary school, Nichols' definition of high school commercial education, which follows, will be used throughout this study.

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[19] Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy, Introduction, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1926, p. 3.

[20] John Dewey, Democracy and Education, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1920, p. 387.

[21] Major contributions based on research.

> This term covers that part of business education which is appropriate for boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and twenty, which may be given in all-day secondary schools, which has for its primary purposes the preparation of boys and girls for socially useful and personally satisfactory living, and more particularly for entrance into commercial employment with reasonable prospects of succeeding in their work by reason of the possession of (a) social intelligence and right social attitudes; (b) an initial occupational skill; (c) a reasonable amount of occupational intelligence; (d) a fund of usable general knowledge of sound principles of business; (e) a proper attitude toward a life work; (f) high ethical standards in accordance with which their business careers are to be developed; and (g) supporting general education of varying but substantial amounts.[22]

It may be pointed out that no distinction is made between the terms "business" and "commercial" when referring to education, and they are used interchangeably in this study merely to relieve monotony of expression, although Nichols generally uses, and seems to prefer the term "commercial."[23]

The terms "high school" and "secondary school" are also interchangeable.

There will be need, at various points in this study, of defining terms germane to particular topics, which may be explained more effectively at the time of their presentation. The next chapter, moreover, concerns Nichols' views on terminology in business education.

The boundaries for this study are implied in the title which itself sets, to a great extent, the limitations imposed on the discussion of Nichols' philosophy of secondary

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[22] Op. cit., (13) Chapter III, pp. 56, 55.

[23] Ibid., p. 55.

commercial education. However, it may be added, that only the public day high school is considered, and that the continuation schools and evening schools of high school rank are not included.

CHAPTER II

TERMINOLOGY

1. The Need For Standard Terms

There is, at present, much confusion as to the exact meaning of terms as they are used in business education. Doubtless the rapid growth, and the quick spread of this branch of education from the private business school to the public school, accounts partially for the lack of a set of definite terms which is meaningful and universally understood. A recent study shows, for example, that what is popularly known as "junior business training," is being taught under twenty-one different titles.[1]

It is little wonder, then, that Nichols deprecates this condition and believes that there should be some authoritative agency to standardize the terms that are used when referring to phases of commercial education. Almost twenty years ago, Nichols, cognizant of the need for a careful definition of terms used, made a plea for a standardized terminology.

> . . . without the standardizing influence of State or Federal cooperation there are many conflicting conceptions as to what commercial education really is; as to the subjects that are included within its scope; as to the methods that should be used in presenting accepted subjects; as to the time required

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[1] F. V. Unzicker and others, A Survey of Commerce Offerings in Twenty-six Cities and Towns, The Chicago Area Business Education Directors Association (unpublished), 1937.

> to secure a business education; and as to the whole terminology of this branch of vocational training . . .
>
> Business educators in both public and private schools are eager for an authoritative standardization that will place commercial education on a permanent and intelligible basis.[2]

Thirteen years later, he reiterates his plea for a unified set of definitions, when he says, "A standardization of terminology in this field should be attempted by some responsible agency."[3]

He voices his impatience with a confusing situation by asking, "How much longer will business-schools cling to outworn terminology?"[4]

These citations show Nichols' foresight and persistence in endeavoring to lead commercial educators to see and solve a problem which has grown in magnitude since he first sensed its importance many years ago.

At the present time the National Council of Business Education is working out a plan to standardize terminology in this field. The Council is endeavoring to do exactly what Nichols, the pioneer thinker in commercial education, has been advocating for such a long period of time. An excerpt from the Council's report reflects his viewpoint quite accurately.

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[2] "Organization and Administration of Commercial Education," Bulletin No. 34, Federal Board for Vocational Education, 1919, Washington, D. C., p. 50.

[3] "Terminology in Commercial Education," Criticism, Comment and Challenge, Journal of Business Education, 8:9, November, 1932.

[4] Ibid.

> Much confusion has resulted in business education, and in the field of general education as well, and many misunderstandings have arisen, because of the lack of a standardized terminology. This Council, representing the great majority of associations of business teachers and of business teacher-training institutions in the country, is in a position to develop an authoritative vocabulary of terms in this field, and to assign definitions to them of such clarity that all misunderstandings may be done away with. The preparation of this material will not only be welcomed by research bodies and by publishers throughout the country, but it will help business teachers in promoting the work in which they are so deeply interested.[5]

2. Misleading Terms

Nichols makes clear the dangers and injustice being done business students by the use of loose, vague, or misunderstood terminology. In one of his major contributions, The Personal Secretary, he states that

> this confusion in the use of the terms "secretary," "stenographer," and "office clerk" by schools is detrimental to the best interests of those who are engaged in the work of training people for office positions. It is detrimental to the good of thousands of girls who are misled into the belief that a secretarial status is assured them if they pursue stenographic courses in the secretarial school or college regardless of their aptitudes or abilities.[6]

In the preparation of the book, Nichols went to great length to investigate and collect material on which to base his conclusions regarding the duties and status of the position that the word "secretary," implies. Hence it is

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[5] "Report of the Planning Committee of the National Council of Business Education," (June 29, 1937), Journal of Business Education, 13:30, September, 1937.

[6] The Personal Secretary, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1934, pp. 3-4.

assumed that he has a true picture of the situation when he answers the question

> Do high-school stenographic pupils secure secretarial positions upon graduation, or soon thereafter? They expect to do so and are encouraged in this expectation, wittingly or unwittingly, by teachers and school authorities who have no very definite idea as to the nature of a real secretarial position.[7]

This is a disturbing indictment against secondary school educators, and also a challenge to correct the situation. But perhaps business men may also share in the failure to formulate meaningful definitions, for Nichols says

> Office jobs are not classified and labeled well enough to enable educators to chart a clear course in the preparation of young people for them.[8]

> . . . lack of an official classification of office jobs . . . greatly handicaps vocational advisers and educators in the efficient and effective discharge of their responsibilities. That commercial graduates are not adequately prepared for the kind of work they are expected to do is an almost universal complaint. The remedy for this situation lies in the direction of clarification and reasonable standardization of job terminology so that educators may know for what job they are to train.[9]

The following quotation strikes at the heart of the educational process, as it implies that its objectives are clouded by a haziness in meaning of terms used.

> The admitted indefiniteness of the terms "business career" renders the visualization of an ultimate goal difficult. The equally indefinite nature and elusiveness of the composite trait called "business ability" makes it well-nigh

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[7] Ibid.

[8] "Pre-Employment Training for Office Work--A Challenge to Employers," Office Management Series, O. M. 65, p. 24.

[9] Ibid., p. 25.

> impossible to foretell with any degree of accuracy the business career potentialities of the students whom we are training.[10]

There is also indefiniteness among educators as to just what is included in that body of subject-matter known as "social-business." Nichols expresses this uncertainity when he says

> The social-business subjects . . . are not wholly satisfactory from the standpoint of content and its organization, but until there are available subjects containing a better selection and arrangement of instruction material these subjects should be utilized more extensively.[11]

Consideration of Nichols' viewpoints expressed in the foregoing paragraphs indicates that he believes that the prevalent misleading terminology in secondary commercial education is a distinct injury to students who are taking training with the expectation of making a place for themselves in the business world.

3. Methods of Defining Terms

Nichols endeavors to formulate his definitions on findings from research investigations whenever possible. For instance, his definition of the term "secretary," was arrived at only after an investigation of the duties which many so-called secretaries performed in their daily work.

> . . . a secretary may be regarded as a composite of all office workers. Her only distinction would seem to be

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[10] "Pre-Employment Business Training--A Challenge to Educators," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Seventh Yearbook, 1934, p. 62.

[11] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 438.

that she is an unspecialized worker.[12]

Again, for his report, A New Conception of Office Practice, he made a study of office duties that were listed as "clerical" before he formulated his definition for purposes of the study. He said,

> the "clerk" is assumed to be one who performs office duties other than the taking and transcribing of dictation, or keeping of a set of books. Therefore, any non-stenographic, or non-bookkeeping worker may be regarded as a clerk.[13]

Nichols is constantly pointing out differences between terms in order to clarify his definitions. For example, he believes that a fine distinction should be made between commercial education and education.

> It seems clear to the writer that when commercial education is offered primarily for the achievement of aims of secondary . . . education other than the vocational aim, it becomes just education. It loses its differentiating characteristic and fails to serve the purposes of vocational education for those who seek preparation for entrance upon and progress in occupational life. It may be good education--even better than any other--but it is not truly commercial education.[14]

He seeks to clarify the difference between "business education" and "economic education," by saying that

> Commercial education and economic education are not one and the same thing . . . Business education for potential practitioners only; economic education for all others.

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[12] The Personal Secretary, pp. 4, 5.

[13] A New Conception of Office Practice, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1927, p. 43.

[14] "Cooperative Business Training," Criticism, Comment and Challenge, Journal of Business Education 8:31, 1932.

> The former is commercial education; the latter is general education.[15]

Nichols sometimes becomes fatiguing as a definer of terms. Because in his anxiety to be meticulous in his definitions, he qualifies them elaborately. In Commercial Education in the High School, for example, he uses two chapters to explain the need for, and to amplify, his definition of commercial education.[16]

One of his favorite methods is to present other writers' viewpoints or definitions, and then, like Socrates, "he finds it a simple matter to destroy one after another the definitions offered him,"[17] before presenting his own.

It will be noted from the discussion that Nichols believes that terms used in commercial education should be based on research findings when possible; that infinite care should be taken to clarify slight differences in meaning; that it is well to get a broad and critical viewpoint of terminology used by other writers in the field in order to form a clear-cut definition of one's own.

CONCLUSION

There has been an endeavor in this chapter to show that Nichols believes (1) that there is great need for a

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[15] "Blind Spots in Commercial Education," Criticism, Comment and Challenge, Journal of Business Education 8:31, December, 1932.

[16] Chapters III and IV, pp. 41-68.

[17] Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy, p. 23.

standardized terminology in commercial education by some responsible agency; (2) that the prevalent indefinite and loose terminology now used in commercial education is a source of danger to young people as it gives them a warped conception of objectives to be realized from their study; and (3) that educators should base their terminology on facts and critical study.

The next chapter pertains to Nichols' views of the general objectives of high school commercial education.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF SECONDARY COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

1. A Need for Achievable Objectives

The assertion has been made in recent years that the educational aims of the public high school curricula are indefinite, and that

> 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 proved ineffective, provision must be made whereby there will be allowed in the state supported schools discussion of the vital issues of contemporary life.[1]

Nichols has pointed out that when commercial education came into existence in the United States, the objective, "to prepare for business" was an adequate aim;[2] but that "preparation for office work," which has been substituted for the old objective by many who felt that the former was unsatisfactory, "lacks the comprehensiveness and definiteness of a suitable objective of vocational training."[3] It does not (1) meet the needs of modern business, (2) fulfill the accepted principles of vocational education, or (3) recognize

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[1] Ruby V. Perry, "What is the Youth Problem?" Abstract of a report by the American Youth Commission of the American Council on Education, Journal of Business Education, 12:15, October, 1936.

[2] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 206.

[3] Ibid., p. 211.

the varying attitudes, aptitudes and abilities of the business men and women of the next generation.

Furthermore, he asserts that

> No longer can teachers fall back on the theory that certain mysterious, intangible outcomes of their teaching justifies its cost. Something more definite in the way of results is expected. Hence the teacher must have concrete, appropriate, worthwhile, and reasonably achievable objectives toward which to strive if real values are to flow from his teaching.[4]

But he sounds an optimistic note when he says

> . . . that means to the achievement of appropriate outcomes of secondary education are far better understood today than they were in the past and that they are employed more directly and definitely than they were in the early period of the development of the secondary school. These changes pave the way for the commercial program whose outcomes are easily distinguishable, and to an extent measurable, in terms of the cardinal principles of secondary education.[5]

2. Cardinal Objectives

That significant piece of writing, the formulation of the Seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education,[6] has probably influenced the high school more than any other one factor since its adoption in 1918. These principles have made all branches of secondary education objective-conscious.

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[4] "Looking Ahead in Junior Business Training," National Business Education Quarterly, 1:21, October, 1932.

[5] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 16.

[6] Bureau of Education, "Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education," Bulletin No. 35, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1918. "This commission . . . regards the following as the main objectives of education: 1. Health 2. Command of fundamental processes 3. Worthy home membership 4. Vocation 5. Citizenship 6. Worthy use of leisure 7. Ethical character."

Nichols expresses his viewpoint of their effect on high school instruction in these words:

> The so-called seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education doubtless have been overemphasized in recent educational literature, but, though somewhat indefinite and unsatisfactory, they serve to indicate the extent to which the objective of high school education has undergone modification in recent years.[7]

The thread of their influence on his precepts of secondary school objectives runs through many of his writings. A quotation or two at this point will serve to illustrate.

> . . . it should be assumed that commercial education is concerned with the whole of education and should assume its full share of responsibility for the achievement of the common objectives of education on that level.[8]

> . . . every teacher should have in mind the health of her pupils . . . Every teacher should do what she can to see that the students' command of the fundamental processes is strengthened as much as possible. No teacher can escape some responsibility for developing in her pupils a right attitude toward home membership; nor can any teacher be entirely free from responsibilities for creating right mental attitudes toward civic responsibilities. Commercial teachers should do all in their power to develop ethical character and to insure the best possible use of leisure time. However, all of these aims are the common aims of secondary education and not the peculiar responsibility of the commercial teacher.
>
> . . . Civic education and development of ethical character are aims which are more closely identified with those of business education than are some of the others . . . but all should receive due consideration in the development of programs of business education.[9]

He says of the following objectives (which seem to represent his interpretation of the seven Cardinal Principles):

"No one of them can be ignored in any business training

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[7] Commercial Education in the High School p. 15
[8] Ibid. p. 4
[9] Ibid. p. 4, 5.

program . . . No commercial teacher should attempt to shirk his share of responsibility for the achievement of any of these objectives.

1. Health and a better appreciation of its importance and a clearer understanding of ways of acquiring and conserving it.

2. Ability to use fundamental processes in every-day life situations.

3. Ability and determination to play a worthy part as a member of a family circle.

4. Ability to perform the duties of some socially desirable occupation.

5. Understanding of the essential elements of the social organism of which the individual is a part and a determination to meet all civic responsibilities intelligently.

6. An appreciation of the fact that leisure is becoming increasingly abundant and ability to put it to good use from a social point of view.

7. Clear concepts of right and wrong fortified by established habits of acting in accordance with such concepts." 10

Nichols weaves the principles of the Cardinal Objectives into his writing again and again. Of the importance of health, he says

> It must be remembered that health is one of the objectives of secondary education and that responsibility for its achievement is the joint responsibility of all secondary school teachers, but especially that of the teacher who is giving vocational training.11

Of the development of ethical character, he says, "Where can ethical principles be more effectively taught

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10 Ibid., p. 226.

11 Ibid., p. 229.

than in the commercial classes?" [12] He concludes his reasons for its importance with this statement: "Thus it becomes a part of commercial education and must be accepted as one of its major objectives." [13]

Of the wise use of leisure time he says,

> Right thinking commercial educators gladly admit that ability to utilize released time in a socially satisfactory manner may be quite as important as ability to obtain and hold a job.[14]

A few more passages serve to emphasize Nichols' recognition of certain points in the seven Cardinal Principles as being vital objectives in the educative process. Note the intense practicalism in his viewpoint.

> One's physical well-being is dependent in no small measure on one's ability to provide for oneself and one's dependents the recognized necessities of life--wholesome food in needed quantity, healthful shelter which conforms to a decent health standard of living, appropriate warm or cool clothing for protection from the elements, recreation for relaxation in the interest of mental and physical health, leisure for activities which contribute to intellectual growth and those which may be regarded as social service.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> But new objectives, new instruction materials, and new instruction methods are required. The traditional commercial subjects are unequal to this task. They must be replaced by subjects specially designed to achieve these newer objectives.[15]

Thus it has been shown that Nichols believes that the application of the principles embodied in the seven Cardinal

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., p. 230.

[14] Ibid.

[15] "A Sound Philosophy of Business Education," The Business Education World, 16:445,446, February, 1936.

Principles of Secondary Education are important in the achievement of secondary commercial education aims.

The remaining topics in this chapter present objectives under a classification set up by Nichols in one of his articles: (1) Achievement of the Vocational Aims, (2) Achievement of the Social-Civic Aims, and (3) Personal Utility Outcomes.[16]

3. Achievement of the Vocational Aims

In a review of Nichols' Commercial Education in the High School, Dr. Paul S. Lomax expresses, in concise terms, the viewpoint that Nichols emphasizes many times in his writings and which is perhaps the most distinguishing feature in his entire philosophy of commercial education. Lomax states,

> The keynote to the author's philosophy is that business education should be essentially and distinctly vocational in its objective.[17]

It is not surprising that Nichols manifests this belief, for he bases most of his viewpoints concerning commercial education on a practical, or "common-sense" outlook. However, there is nothing particularly new or unique in such a point of view, for

> Contrary to general opinion /says Dewey/ popular education has always been rather largely vocational.
>
> Our higher education, the education of the university,

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[16] "National Research Program," Journal of Business Education 8:20, October, 1932.

[17] Paul S. Lomax, "On the Bookshelf," Journal of Business Education, 9:33, November, 1933.

> began definitely as vocational education. The university furnished training for the priesthood, for medicine and the law. This training also covered what was needed by the clerks, secretaries, scribes, etc., who have always had a large part of the administering of governmental affairs in their hands.[18]

It seems reasonable to believe that Nichols' years of service with the Federal Board for Vocational Education strengthened his emphasis on the vocational aspect of commercial education.

A discussion of the vocational aims as Nichols sees them will be made from the following standpoints: (1) Occupational skills, (2) Occupational understanding, and (3) Economic understanding.[19]

Occupational Skills. Nichols is always cognizant of the changing relationship between business and training for business. In 1923, he wrote:

> Business education is not, and cannot become static. It must ever be responsive to constantly changing social-economic conditions. It must continue to make its contribution toward the elimination of the proverbial gap between school and life.[20]

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[18] John Dewey, "Learning to Earn," School and Society, 5:331, March 24, 1917.

[19] Nichols makes approximately this division in the following places:
a. "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, 9:16, November, 1933.
b. National Business Education Quarterly, March, 1933, p. 24.
c. Commercial Education in the High School, p. 220.

[20] Junior Business Training, American Book Co., New York, 1923, Preface, p. iii.

A comparison of his objectives as outlined in the Prefaces in his textbook on Junior Business Training (1923), and Junior Business Training for Economic Living (1936), is a striking illustration of this changing point of view. In the earlier book he makes this statement:

> Part I may be regarded as an elementary study of the make-up or structure of business while Part II is at once preparatory to further study in the field of business and to entrance into certain junior commercial employments at the proper time.
>
> A further advantage of this plan of instruction will be apparent to those who are interested in the problem of providing business training which is suitable for boys and girls about to enter business.[21]

In the later book he says:

> When large numbers of junior clerical jobs were open to boys and girls fourteen to sixteen years of age, it seemed necessary to include vocational preparation as part of their early education. Now that such young people are not wanted in offices and stores, it is desirable to postpone the development of occupational skills until later.[22]

He believes definitely that specific preparation for occupational life should not begin earlier than the senior period and preferably the last two years of that period--in grades 11 and 12.[23]

These citations emphasize the fact that Nichols is a realist in that he believes in formulating vocational

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[21] Ibid., p. iv.

[22] Junior Business Training for Economic Living, Preface, p. iii, American Book Company, 1936, New York.

[23] "Vocational Objectives of Secondary Commercial Education," National Business Education Quarterly 1:20, March, 1933.

training objectives to meet the conditions of the business world as they are in reality, and that it is futile to train high school students blindly for work which they cannot secure when the training period is over.

> At graduation every vocational commercial pupil should be able to say truthfully that he possesses a marketable skill in one kind of office or store work and that he is prepared to render satisfactory initial service in that type of work.[24]

Nichols makes this prophetic statement regarding skill training:

> Skill development probably will not become obsolete as an objective of business education, but it will be relegated to a subordinate place to the extent that if it is retained it will be entitled to serious consideration and the best effort of which we are capable to insure reasonable adequacy and marketability. It is recognized that there must be well-defined vocational objectives if training is to be effective; and yet, despite our best efforts in this direction, objectives still are obscured by lack of knowledge as to what really is demanded of our graduates even in their initial positions.[25]

Occupational Understanding. Nichols believes that something more than occupational skills of the routine sort must be developed in high school commercial pupils. The following quotations substantiate this statement.

> Occupational understanding must be an outcome of real business training on any level. Related knowledge which is known to have promotional values must be an objective of commercial education.[26]

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[24] Ibid., p. 23.

[25] "Pre-Employment Business Training--A Challenge to Educators," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Seventh Yearbook, 1934, p. 62.

[26] Op. cit. (23).

> Occupational understanding is quite as important an outcome of vocational commercial education as is occupational skill.27

> Manipulative skill is not the sole aim. Occupational understanding is quite essential.28

Economic understanding. In this instance, economic understanding refers to the limitations and the opportunities which office work imposes on the student who selects it for vocational purposes. Nichols believes that educators should consider it their duty to see that students are made aware of the limitations as well as the opportunities involved in office work as a vocation. He implies that economic understanding is an important objective of commercial education when he says,

> Vocational commercial education must lay a basis for future growth to insure ultimate promotion to higher levels of a business organization.29

He thinks that students should be made aware of the fact that

> Financially speaking, clerical work is less attractive than unskilled manual labor.30

This means, of course, that young people must be able to see the avenues of advancement leading from the initial

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27 Ibid., p. 24.

28 Ibid., p. 23.

29 "Vocational Objectives of Secondary Commercial Education," National Business Education Quarterly, 1:22, March, 1933.

30 Ibid.

job. The following quotation, written many years ago, is an expansion of this thought.

> It should be remembered that there are blind-alley businesses as well as blind-alley jobs. The big thing in a young person's life is to get a position in a business that has no upper limit of opportunity and with a concern that has an established promotion policy--the kind of firm that is more concerned about getting "promotion timber" than it is about "filling positions."[31]

4. Achievement of the Social-Civic Aims

The social-civic aims, as related to commercial education, are concerned with the student's efficiency as a consumer, with the wise use of his leisure time, and with his becoming a constructive citizen.[32]

These aims are necessarily related to the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, but Nichols places more emphasis on them than the incidental attention given them in the discussion of the Principles.

Chapter IV, "Social Intelligence and Right Social Attitudes," in his book on commercial education in the high school,[33] is itself a mass of quotable sentences, almost any one of which serves to illustrate his attitude toward the

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31 "Survey of Junior Commercial Occupations," prepared under the direction of F. G. Nichols, Federal Board for Vocational Education, Bulletin No. 54, Washington, D. C., June, 1920, p. 32.

32 "Objectives of Commercial Education," Criticism, Comment and Challenge, Journal of Business Education, 10:34, October, 1934.

33 Commercial Education in the High School, pp. 58-63.

importance of the achievement of the social-civic aims of commercial education. A few representative excerpts are repeated here for illustration.

> No education, specialized or unspecialized, can be defended on the assumption that it exists for the individual as an individual and not as a member of his social group. Obligation is a concomitant of dependency. Business education owes a debt to society on whose favor its very existence depends.[34]

> Business education is obligated to do what it can to preserve and add to social progress that has been made through the ages; to elevate the whole, of which it is a part.[35]

> One of the primary outcomes of business training should be consumer knowledge and, therefore, programs of business training should be set up with this function in mind.[36]

It can be readily seen that Nichols, though a staunch vocationalist, is not narrowly so. He is aware that all life values must be considered in formulating objectives.

He believes that

> Personal happiness, religious life, social interests, and personal friendships all are inextricably integrated with one's vocational life, and while in the process of giving business training emphasis may be placed more heavily on the vocational aspect of living, other aspects of a well-rounded life never should be entirely ignored.[37]

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[34] Ibid., p. 58.

[35] Ibid., p. 59.

[36] Ibid., p. 61.

[37] Ibid., p. 63.

5. Personal Utility Aims

It is only within the last few years that the personal utility aim has been used to any extent as a specific objective of commercial education. However, Nichols' writings show that he has some very definite beliefs concerning personal utility as an aim of secondary commercial education. In this discussion, the term "personal utility" refers to objectives which are set up to add to the efficiency of the students' personal lives, rather than those which are set up to emphasize occupational training.

Although this chapter deals primarily with general objectives, without reference to particular subjects, it is necessary to use a few specific subjects to illustrate Nichols' views of the personal utility aims.

Junior Business Training. A review of Nichols' New Junior Business Training lists "personal utility" as one of the aims set up in the textbook. The author states, "The purposes are as follows: Personal Use, to train young people to be able properly to attend to their own business affairs in preparation for wider fields."[38]

A verification of this viewpoint is found in Nichols' own words, "I look forward to the time when all teachers of junior business training will recognize that the foremost

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38 E. E. Sheldon, (book review) The Management Review, No. 12, XIX:424, American Management Association, New York, December, 1930.

value of this subject from the utilitarian viewpoint is what may be called its 'personal use value."[39]

Commercial law. Nichols says, "See that every commercial pupil has some contact with commercial law and that each at least becomes aware of his own peculiar responsibility for the laws under which we live."[40]

Typewriting. His view concerning personal use typewriting is unique and thought-provoking. He believes that the personal need for typewriting ability is not great enough to justify the early introduction of typewriting in the public schools.

> . . . it seems obvious that this need is not likely to become a reality before some wholly new writing device has superseded the thing we now call a typewriter, or the need for much written communication has ceased to exist.[41]

Nichols believes that if personal typewriting is to have any value as such it should do something more than develop a reasonable amount of skill in typewriting from plain copy; pupils must be taught to think and typewrite at the same time; typewriting must be used as a substitute for the pen

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39 "Looking Forward in Junior Business Training," National Business Education Quarterly, 1:21, October, 1932.

40 "Teachers' Examinations," Criticism, Comment and Challenge, Journal of Business Education, 9:8, 26, October, 1933.

41 "Personal Use of the Typewriter," Criticism, Comment and Challenge, Journal of Business Education, 8:9, November, 1932.

in original composition.[42]

Shorthand. He believes that many, but not all, commercial pupils should study shorthand for vocational reasons; others should study it for its personal utility values; still others should study it because they want it, without regard for its personal or vocational utility.[43]

He says, "Everyone probably should be able to write longhand; an increasing number of people should learn shorthand for personal use."[44]

Nichols states,

> A core of personal economic instruction should run throughout the high school program. Do not contend that the two- or three-year vocational typewriting or shorthand course is best for all who want these subjects for personal use only.[45]

The foregoing citations are presented to show Nichols attitude toward the personal utility aim. So far, his views regarding it are expressed only incidentally, since he is so definitely vocationally-minded. It seems certain, however, that if the trend toward mass education in the high school continues, and if the demand for a more varied program of

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[42] "Pre-Employment Business Training--A Challenge to Educators," Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, Seventh Yearbook, 1934, p. 66.

[43] Criticism, Comment and Challenge, "The National Council's Opportunity and Need," Journal of Business Education, 12:9, November, 1936.

[44] Op. cit. (42).

[45] "What is a Sound Philosophy of Business Education?" The Business Education World, 16:446, February, 1936.

commercial high school subjects continues, he will doubtless study the problem of personal use courses more fully.

CONCLUSION

It is a difficult task to extricate Nichols' objectives from his voluminous writings and crystallize them into a few clear-cut aims. However, this chapter has endeavored to show that Nichols believes that

(1) High school aims should, first of all, be achievable. The secondary school must recognize its own limitations and the pupils' limitations when setting up objectives.

(2) The Seven Cardinal Principles are worthy objectives, and the commercial teacher must consider that his work has a vital part in their achievement.

(3) Commercial education is primarily vocational.

(4) The vocational aim should endeavor to achieve occupational understanding, economic understanding, and give the student at least one marketable occupational skill.

(5) The early high school period should be pre-vocational and definite vocational preparation should be delayed until the later high school years.

(6) It is an obligation of the commercial teacher to incorporate the social-civic aim, including training in citizenship, efficiency as a consumer, and social intelligence in his objectives.

(7) Personal utility outcomes may be legitimate aims of the commercial department. The vocational and personal-

use objectives each have a place in the objectives of commercial education.

Nichols' policies and viewpoints regarding the functions of administration, organization and research in secondary commercial education, are discussed in the chapter which follows.

CHAPTER IV

ADMINISTRATION, ORGANIZATION AND RESEARCH

1. Administration

So far as the administrative function is concerned, commercial education is still in a rudimentary stage. During its formative years a satisfactory system of supervision failed to materialize, and now, while other functions are fairly well-developed, leadership and supervision are still in a backward state. One leader offers this explanation:

> Our progress has been slow in developing leaders largely because, first, we had not developed a sound philosophy; second, we did not have sufficient scientific educational background; and third, superintendents in charge of education systems lacked an understanding of commercial education.[1]

Nichols has long been identified with administrative work in commercial education, and was a pioneer in supervisory work. His experience in New York and Pennsylvania, where he served in an executive capacity, doubtless influenced him in forming that part of his philosophy which he holds regarding the administrative function of commercial education.

Need for Supervision. Nichols is a staunch advocate of sufficient and competent supervision in this field, and

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[1] Seth B. Carkin, "Trends in American Business Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Second Yearbook, New York, 1929, p. 6.

and he is constantly crusading for better leadership. He makes the somewhat startling statement that

> Most educational administrators--superintendents and principals--are wholly unaware of the fact that in the high schools over which they preside many professional crimes are being committed in the name of commercial education.[2]

In his bulletin, Organization and Administration of Commercial Education, Nichols states,

> . . . the Federal Government should take steps to show the need of competent State supervision of commercial education. In only two States is a specialist in this field employed by the State department of public instruction.[3]

According to Nichols, no other field is in such great need of leadership.

> Competent organization and administration of commercial education is needed now as never before; to see that it is responsive to changing conditions in education and in business; to see that its objectives are in line with present-day needs; to see that its instructional materials and methods are both economic and efficient; to ensure a teaching staff fully trained to meet the requirements of their positions ; to determine scientifically the kind, quality, and quantity of equipment needed to procure it with the least possible expenditure of tax money; . . . to place pupils at the conclusion of their training; and to follow them up long enough to appraise the training that they have received in terms of occupational requirements; in short to establish a reasonable degree of parity between Federal- and State-aided industrial education and locally supported commercial education.[4]

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[2] "Poor School Administration Results in Futile Attempts to Give Business Training," Education, 58:193, December, 1937.

[3] Federal Board for Vocational Education, Bulletin No. 34, p. 53.

[4] "Needed Economies in Business Education," Junior-Senior High School Clearing House, 8:211, December, 1933.

Nichols believes that the lack of supervising specialists to set standards accounts for commercial education's failure to attain as high a measure of quality of work as would be possible were there competent leaders to organize and direct the courses.

Passages such as the following are typical of his contention of the necessity for trained leadership if commercial education is to function adequately.

> However, it is clear to students of the problem that in every city of fairly large size there should be a full-time, competent director of commercial education; that such a director should be freed from regular teaching responsibility; that he should be given reasonable clerical assistance; and that he should be held rigidly accountable for results in this field. In smaller cities . . . the head of the commercial department should be freed from at least half of his teaching program and be given charge of the work in both schools.
>
> The cost of a trained director of commercial education in any city of size can be looked upon as an investment and not an additional expense.[5]

> No general educational administrator can be expected to supervise a field so complex and extensive as is commercial education; and yet no field needs competent direction more sorely . . . but in only about twenty-five cities has provision been made for adequate direction of commercial education, the most complicated field of them all, except "vocational" education which really means industrial and home-economics education.[6]

He believes that other kinds of vocational training have tended to keep pace with economic developments because of competent supervisors and directors in these fields. "Few state education departments employ specialists to assist in

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

bringing business courses up to the standard set for other courses."[7]

Intelligent Expenditure of tax money. Nichols is constantly aware of the tax payer, and commercial education's obligation of giving value received in the form of usable, up-to-date training.

He believes that there should be a curriculum revision which will give the kind of vocational training for which work is available for high school graduates. He believes that school officers should do something about this matter.[8]

> Why spend millions of dollars of public tax money on the wrong kind of training for hundreds of thousands of boys and girls, and as much more on the right kind of training for the wrong kinds of boys and girls? Why not get the facts, make them known to high school pupils, and act on them in the administration of our secondary schools? We do not need less vocational business training, but we need many new kinds of training.[9]

He believes that only those who are known with reasonable certainty to be trainable and employable should be enrolled in vocational commercial education; others should be classified as general educational students, for he thinks that to pursue any other policy is to lower standards, and to waste public funds.[10] This same feeling is expressed

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[7] "Poor Administration Results in Futile Attempts to Give Business Training," Education, 58:193, December, 1937.

[8] Ibid., p. 196.

[9] Ibid.

[10] "Vocational Objectives of Secondary Commercial Education," National Business Education Quarterly, 1:21, March, 1933.

when he asserts:

> Obviously, pupils who are not trainable, not employable, not promotable, represent a guidance problem for which business educators have a responsibility to the taxpayer, to the individual pupil, and to the business field at large.[11]

He is cognizant of the taxpayer when he says,

> Thousands of public secretarial schools also give business training which by implication or direct statement is offered as preparation for secretarial positions. This training is quite as costly as is that given in private schools, but the bills are paid indirectly through taxes and not always by those who receive the instruction.[12]

Unwise expenditures for equipment are a waste of the public's money.

> Waste of money for useless or inappropriate equipment is preventing the further expansion of commercial education in the right direction. Hundreds of thousands of dollars for typewriters, but not a penny for other office machines is the common policy of educational administration.[13]

He forecasts an end to poor management and unwise spending in these words:

> School administrators demand that every training program shall be organized with definite ends in view; they are applying principles of scientific management in the conduct of school affairs . . . Taxpayers no longer stand by while their hard-earned money is spent aimlessly. Costs are being counted; only in relation to results can they be figured accurately.[14]

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[11] "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, 9:10, October, 1934.

[12] The Personal Secretary, pp. 3,4.

[13] "Needed Economies in Business Education," Junior-Senior Clearing House, 8:210, December, 1933.

[14] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 194.

2. Organization

It is not the intention to discuss specific commercial education subjects in this chapter, but merely to outline Nichols' views on the general organization of commercial education as gleaned from his writings. A later chapter is reserved for a more detailed discussion of individual subjects.

Selection and Division of Subject Matter. In 1919 Nichols advocated dividing commercial courses in two parts--"elementary and advanced." The elementary period, as he outlined it, was to cover school years 7, 8, and 9, while the advanced period would cover grades 10, 11, and 12.[15]

To explain this further, he says,

> Elementary courses should include general subjects intended to increase civic intelligence, special subjects designed to prepare for specific occupations, and basic commercial subjects intended to lay the foundation for and arouse an interest in more advanced work. Advanced work should be so arranged as to allow specialization for definite vocations in the last two years of the upper school. Such an arrangement is desirable because it offers a greater incentive to hold pupils in school, affords a better preparation for the vocations included; makes for better classification of enrolled students; and more nearly meets the demands of modern business in any industrial community.[16]

Many of his ideas as then held were prophetic of, or identical with, his beliefs at the present time. Others were not. For instance, he recommends, in the elementary division,

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15 "Organization and Administration of Commercial Education," Federal Board for Vocational Education, Bulletin No. 34, 1919, p. 16.

16 Ibid.

special subjects intended to prepare for specific vocations. But later, when he found, through investigation, that pupils in these grades were not being employed readily, he was far-seeing enough to advocate the kind of course now popularly known as elementary business training, or everyday business, with little emphasis on direct job training such as he first advocated. There is no mention made of the consumer type of training for personal use such as he recommends in his later course; otherwise, the set-up and aims of the earlier and later periods coincide surprisingly well.

In a more recent article, Nichols asserts that

> . . . business subjects divide quite naturally into four groups--prevocational, technical (skill), related vocational knowledge or background, and consumer business education.[17]

Or,

> . . . there are two distinguishable periods of business training in the secondary school--the junior or prevocational and the senior or vocational.[18]

The prevocational period, required of all commercial students, should have as primary outcomes an understanding of the fundamentals of economic living, and try-out and exploratory experience, with the laying of a foundation for vocational courses as a secondary outcome. For the optional courses, the primary outcome should be a well-laid foundation for vocational courses through try-out and exploration, with the secondary outcome the attainment of consumer

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[17] "Desirable Outcomes of Teaching Business Subjects," National Business Education Outlook, Third Yearbook, National Commercial Teachers Federation, Detroit, Michigan, p. 2.

[18] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 340.

skills useful in economic living.[19]

For the vocational period, Nichols believes that there should be a multiple-choice curriculum established, which would include competency in one subject to such a degree that the student would be ready for the initial position. There should be certain required subjects which would furnish background business knowledge, occupational understanding and a basis for promotions for greater occupational competency; and finally, there should be a senior business training course of the consumer type, the primary outcome of which would be "efficiency in handling personal economic problems of adult life." [20]

Nichols remarks that "the interests of neither consumer nor producer will be conserved by attempting to make a single-curriculum suffice for both." [21]

The one-year unit plan. Nichols has long been an advocator of the unit-year plan, which he says, offers a solution to faulty articulation between the junior and senior periods. He defines and gives the advantages of the unit-year program as follows:

> By this is meant a curriculum in which each year is complete in itself and yet articulates with the years immediately preceding and following. Such a curriculum is even more practicable now than it was in 1918 when it

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[19] Op. cit., (17), p. 18.

[20] Ibid.

[21] "What is a Sound Philosophy of Business Education?" The Business Education World, 16:766, June, 1936.

was first advocated as the remedy for the alleged evils of "short courses" covering a year or two.[22]

Selection and Division of Pupils. Nichols is a confirmed believer in the segregation of vocational and non-vocational pupils, and he is untiring in admonishing those who are concerned with commercial education to see that this is done. A few selections from his writings indicate his viewpoint:

> Only potentially trainable and placeable people should be accepted for and retained in vocational business classes. All other so-called commercial pupils should be enrolled for consumer business courses.[23]

> . . . in the cosmopolitan high school of the larger cities an organization of classes without intermingling of commercial and academic students should be insisted upon.[24]

> Let me insist that there is a quite apparent need for the segregation of vocational and non-vocational pupils at the point where real vocational training begins.[25]

As to the selection of students, Nichols stresses "interests, aptitudes and abilities" numberless times as being prerequisite to successful training, and he says

> Thus it would seem clear that only those who are known

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[22] "Desirable Outcomes of Teaching Business Subjects," National Business Education Outlook, Third Yearbook, National Commercial Teachers Federation, 1937, p. 2.

[23] Ibid., p. 10.

[24] Federal Board for Vocational Education, Bulletin No. 34, 1919, p. 61.

[25] "Some Readjustments in Vocational Business Education," Modern Business Education, II:8, March, 1936.

> with reasonable certainty to be trainable for an employable in commercial work of the kind for which vocational education is being given should be enrolled as vocational commercial pupils. All others who pursue commercial subjects should be classified and instructed as non-commercial; i. e., general educational pupils.[26]

However, this topic is discussed more fully in Chapter VI, under the topic, Student Personnel.

3. Research

Research, the tool of the educational scientist, is being employed to a greater extent now than ever before, in designing new administrative and teaching policies and practices for secondary commercial education.

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

> Research is the seeking after 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 shape our work accordingly. We should become familiar with the other fields of educational concern, and we should set up our own teaching with this broader concept in mind.[27]

The fact that Nichols' five most worth-while contributions to secondary commercial education were the result of extensive research investigations is adequate proof of his

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[27] "The Constant Need for Critical Reflection in Business Education," Journal of Business Education 10:6, May, 1935.

[26] National Business Education Quarterly, I:21, March, 1933.

belief that research is of vital importance in education.[28]

Dr. Edward J. McNamara testifies to the powerful influence that such men as Nichols have had in the field of educational research.

> Surveys of occupations have been made by leading educators such as Nichols, Charters, and others who have amassed a tremendous quantity of detail in reference to the various positions occupied by graduates and non-graduates of our secondary schools. 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.[29]

Frank J. McKee adds further testimonial to Nichols ability in research and cites two of his investigations as being outstanding contributions.

> This /assumption/ calls for a comprehensive, continuous survey of the business community. A beginning in such research has been made. I cite only two examples, both directed by Professor Frederick G. Nichols of Harvard. The first of these is A New Conception of Office Practice, and the second is The Personal Secretary.[30]

Dorothy C. Briggs also lauds the worth of Nichols' research contributions. She says, in part, concerning his study of office practice:

> A most excellent research problem of national scope was recently completed by Professor Frederick G. Nichols . . . Professor Nichols presents as a result of his survey, thirty-one conclusions, nor does he stop there. He goes beyond mere conclusions and gives a solution to

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[28] See list of contributions in Introduction.

[29] "Modern Trends in Business Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, Fourth Yearbook, III:22, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1931.

[30] "Guidance in Business Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, Ninth Yearbook, XX:189, 1936.

each problem he presents.[31]

In picturesque and inspiring words, Nichols himself expresses his philosophy regarding research. It is addressed to classroom teachers.

> Your work affords you endless opportunity for experimental work on your own account. Don't wait for someone to point out the weaknesses of your teaching procedures, or to reveal new and better ways of doing things. Develop the pioneer spirit; be a discoverer.[32]

Nichols' actions speak as loudly as his words--for it is he who leads the pioneer band of discoverers whose viewpoints open up new peripheries in commercial education.

CONCLUSION

Nichols' views on administration are based on real experience in the work and on common-sense thinking.

He believes that the time is at hand when commercial education can no longer go on with an adequate program without competent planning and constant supervision by people trained in that capacity.

He believes that vocational commercial education should be broadly divided into two periods--prevocational and vocational.

He believes that there are certain essential rules regarding the organization of secondary commercial education. One of these is the segregation of vocational and

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31 "Foundations of Business Education," First Yearbook, Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, 1929, p. 189.

32 "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, XIII:8.

non-vocational pupils. Another is that "interests, aptitudes and abilities" of students must be considered in organizing courses. This necessitates a multiple-choice program.

It is also Nichols' belief that there should be no mixed objectives in secondary commercial education. In other words, the line of demarcation should be drawn sharply between the vocational aims and the non-vocational aims. Vocational education, to be effective, must be based on job requirements, with adequate provision for a broad background of general business knowledge. Non-vocational education should be organized to give emphasis on the personal-economic problems as they are encountered in adult life.

Nichols believes that those responsible for commercial education training owe an obligation to the public, which makes such training possible, to give training in such a way as not to waste public money.

He believes that some provision should be made for those students who find it impossible to pursue the whole prescribed course. He offers the one-year unit plan as a solution to this problem.

Nichols believes that untiring research for the best solutions to problems of secondary commercial education is essential to its effectiveness as a means of training pupils.

The following chapter is a more detailed study of Nichols' views of the high school commercial curriculum.

CHAPTER V

THE COMMERCIAL CURRICULUM

1. Definition

A curriculum, in the usual sense, is the whole body of courses offered in an educational institution, or by a department thereof.[1] As the term is used in this chapter it is understood to include, not only the courses, but also such functions as guidance, placement and "follow-up."

Rugg's version of the word "curriculum" indicates how inclusive is its scope in present-day usage.

> The "curriculum"--an ugly, awkward, academic word, but fastened upon us by technical custom--is really the entire program of the school's work. It is the essential means of education. 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.[2]

The curriculum, therefore, is the means of realizing the educational philosophy.

Nichols maintains the opinion that 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

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[1] Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1936, p. 249.

[2] Harold Rugg, "The Twofold Nature of the Curriculum," (from American Life and the School Curriculum, Ginn and Co., Boston, 1936, pp. 18-19) Readings in Curriculum Development, Caswell and Campbell, American Book Company, New York, 1937, p. 159.

the prescribed course, and to recognize the importance of the "follow-up" which "means that success in a job is to be recognized as the only yardstick by which the course of study can be measured."[3]

It is the purpose of this chapter to set forth some of Nichols' typical views with regard to the following topics as they are related to the curriculum: (1) Initial-job subjects, (2) Social-business subjects, (3) Guidance, placement and follow-up, (4) Equipment and instructional materials, and (5) Testing.

2. Initial-job Subjects

For convenience of organization, the subject matter included in this topic is arranged under the four headings, (1) stenographic group, (2) bookkeeping group, (3) retail selling group, and (4) clerical group.

No exhaustive discussion of his views regarding all phases of each subject or topic is made in this chapter, but there is an attempt to arrive at Nichols' general viewpoint regarding the divisions of subject-matter, especially those about which he most often voices an opinion, or to which he has made some especial contribution.

By initial-job subjects are meant primarily those groups of subject-matter in which the student is given training, the outcome of which should result in a definitely

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[3] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 97; also Bulletin No. 34, p. 12.

marketable skill. Of course "marketable skill" implies occupational-use. However, as was pointed out in the chapter on objectives, Nichols gives some attention to the personal-use viewpoint, and it will receive, where feasible, consideration in this discussion.

Stenographic group. As has been pointed out previously in this study,[4] indefinite terminology has impeded progress in evolving a more effective program of secondary commercial education.

Training in the field of stenography, especially, has been impaired, according to Nichols, by failure to adopt terms which are always consistent in meaning and use, and which describe the duties included in the stenographic position.

> The general term "stenographer," includes stenographer clerks, personal stenographers, secretaries, reporting stenographers, and many other subdivisions of this field of office work. How competent one must be in taking and transcribing dictation depends on the nature of the job. Until we know just what a stenographic position involves in the way of duties we cannot prepare satisfactorily for such a position.[5]

Many times in his writings Nichols expresses the opinion that it is futile to attempt to train young people in stenographic work who do not manifest the aptitudes and ability for it. He expressed this point of view in his early writing and he has consistently held it throughout his professional

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[4] Chapter II.

[5] Office Management Series, O. M. 65, p. 25.

experience. This statement is supported by the quotations which follow.

> In almost no other field of training are there so many with the will to do and the will to be, but without the aptitudes and abilities required for success, as there are in the stenographic and secretarial field. Practically every girl in the high-school commercial department wants to be a secretary, however manifestly unfit she may be for this kind of work.[6]

> It is worse than wasteful to train for stenographic work one who has no language sense . . . it . . . is within the province of society to decline to spend large sums on training for which trainees are unsuited by aptitudes and abilities.[7]

> . . . only those boys and girls who have recognized ability in English, coupled with manual and mental alertness, should be permitted to study shorthand as a vocational subject.[8]

After an investigation of the training needed for the secretarial field, Nichols reaches the conclusion that

> High schools should not attempt to give the special training needed for secretarial work, as to do so deprives the prospective secretary of desirable general background education. It seems best to offer real secretarial training only on a post high school basis.[9]

Thus Nichols would not include secretarial training as a part of the high school program, since maturity and a general educational background beyond the high school level seem necessary for success in such work.

Two subjects in the stenographic field--shorthand and

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[6] The Personal Secretary, p. 24.

[7] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 66.

[8] Bulletin No. 34, p. 15.

[9] Op. cit. (6), p. 70.

typewriting--are discussed.

(a) Shorthand. In a very simple statement Nichols presents what may be considered his interpretation of the meaning of the word "shorthand." He says, "Shorthand is but the facilitating means for doing certain work connected with communication." [10] But he makes clear his belief that merely learning the shorthand system is not enough. "There is a great deal of training that needs tobe done after the mastery of the shorthand system has been accomplished." [11] This implies that the student must receive training in word usage, spelling, and all the other mechanics of acceptable work, as well as learning to write shorthand in a facile manner.

Since Nichols' views on the personal-use objective of shorthand have been discussed previously, it may simply be added here that " . . . shorthand . . . clearly should be reserved for those only who show reasonable promise of ability to master and use it successfully on a vocational or personal basis." [12]

Nichols believes that there are some explicit qualifications necessary for those who would elect shorthand as a

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[10] "Commercial Subjects," Commercial Subjects Bibliography, Review of Educational Research, 8:18, February, 1938, American Educational Research Association, A Department of National Education Research, Washington, D. C.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 27.

subject for vocational study.

> . . . the shorthand vocation can be selected with hope of success only by those who have a certain manual and mental alertness, a good vocabulary, a thorough knowledge of fundamental English, a good general education, and other important special qualifications. Nevertheless it is prevalent practice to permit any boy or girl to take this subject, at least until repeated failure demonstrates to the satisfaction of all interested parties the futility of further attempts.[13]

The last statement indicates that schools should not continue the lax practice of allowing students to study vocational shorthand, who obviously cannot succeed in this type of work.

The age factor must also be taken into account in the study of shorthand, especially when it is taught on a vocational basis. Nichols says,

> Whatever may be said for shorthand as a facilitating device for use in achieving the aims of elementary or advanced general education, nothing can be said for it as commercial education for boys and girls under sixteen years of age.[14]

This is in accord with Nichols' belief that it is futile to train young people for positions which they cannot obtain when the training period is over. There is no demand at present for the younger high school students in the field of stenography.

Of all the prerequisites for a successful mastery of shorthand, Nichols seems to stress English ability more than any other single requirement.[15] He goes further than

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[13] Bulletin No. 34, p. 12.

[14] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 105.

[15] See quotation 8.

stressing the fact that the individual student must have special ability in this subject. He believes that the construction of the shorthand curriculum in any school should be based on the proficiency of the students in English usage.

> No curriculum-committee should adopt a shorthand curriculum because it has worked well elsewhere if the people to be trained differ greatly as to ability to use English effectively.[16]

Nichols believes that boys should not be encouraged to study shorthand unless they can clearly see a value in it beyond the initial-job level. This supports his belief, as brought out elsewhere in this study, that the potential wage-earner must choose a vocation which has promotional possibilities.

> Some boys should study shorthand; but most boys should not. For those who have special aptitudes and abilities for this kind of work it may be advisable. For those who lack these aptitudes and abilities there is no place in the stenographic field. As a stepping-stone, shorthand has value for some boys, but only the gifted boy can use it as such. Boys who have a reasonably accurate basis for believing that they can become verbatim reporters, or secretaries to executives who want to develop understudies, should be encouraged to study shorthand.[17]

It may be concluded that age, English ability, mental and manual alertness are important considerations when selecting students for vocational shorthand. The personal-use objective is justified for some pupils. Shorthand mastery involves much more than learning a "system." Pupils,

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[16] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 110.

[17] Ibid., p. 212.

especially boys, should look beyond the initial-job level before electing shorthand as a subject for study.

(b) Typewriting. Nichols asserts that mastery of this subject should be accomplished in the shortest possible time in order to provide greater opportunity for worthwhile education of a more substantial variety.[18] Thus typewriting is simply a skill to be learned for the purpose of using as a facilitating device in all kinds of written communication.

As was brought out in an earlier chapter,[19] Nichols approves of typewriting as a non-vocational, or personal-use subject, as well as a vocational subject.

> An intensive unit of typing--say ten weeks--might be included for those [students in upper high school grades] who have had no typewriting earlier and who are not taking it as vocational training, but this should be optional.[20]

However, he has this to say regarding typewriting for the younger pupils.

> . . . it should be pointed out that typewriting in the elementary schools for children up to thirteen years of age must not be considered commercial education.[21]

Nichols' practical viewpoint of all commercial educational training is revealed when he raises these questions

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[18] "Commercial Subjects," Review of Educational Research 8:18, February, 1938.

[19] Chapter III.

[20] National Business Education Outlook, Third Yearbook, National Teachers Federation, p. 20.

[21] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 101.

concerning vocational typewriting.

> If pupils spend too much time on straight copying from made-to-print copy, where will they learn how to do a day's work in the office where little such copying is done? Do they get enough practice on tabulation, special typing on cards, rough draft, billing, handling carbon paper, looking up words, getting back to work after interruption, making corrections, etc.? Are our graduates able to do miscellaneous typing work expeditiously throughout a normal working day?[22]

He often voices his disapproval of the emphasis which teachers place on copying speed as distinguished from all-around typing ability.

> The typewriting teacher . . . is praised or criticized on the basis of the number of "words-a-minute" her pupils can write in fifteen minutes.[23]

Nichols views on typewriting in the commercial curriculum may be briefly summarized as follows:

(1) He approves of an intensive course, which will consume a minimum amount of time, for non-vocational students. The vocational course, also, should be accomplished as quickly as practicable.

(2) The traditional typewriting course which emphasizes speed writing from plain print copy should be replaced by a common-sense, comprehensive course of training based on the kind of work which the typist is required to do under normal business office conditions.

(3) Vocational typewriting should not be attempted below

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22 "Typing Ability versus Copying Speed," Criticism, Comment and Challenge, Journal of Business Education, 8:8, December, 1932.

23 "Some Observations on Vocational Guidance in Commercial Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Ninth Yearbook, 1936, p. 26.

the high school level.

The topic, "Testing," in this chapter, contains further discussion of Nichols' views regarding the typewriting program.

Bookkeeping. Clarification of terminology, a major problem in all commercial education, extends to the field of bookkeeping.

> The "bookkeeper" /says Nichols/ may be anything from a mere record clerk to a highly important functionary in the field of accounting. What kind of person to train for this position, or what training is required, cannot be known until the term "bookkeeper" comes more nearly to mean the same thing to all employers.[24]

This illustrates the fact that Nichols believes that educators must have a clear understanding of the duties to be performed in any position before adequate vocational training can be given for that particular position. Moreover, educators must have accurate knowledge of the "kind of person," or the personality traits, which the position requires. This is in keeping with Nichols' theory of intelligent selection of pupils for vocational training.

Specifically, the key to Nichols' views regarding bookkeeping seems to lie in the fact that, for vocational training, the pupil must possess "figure sense."

> Accountants cannot be produced out of boys who are devoid of figure sense or analytical ability.[25]

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[24] Office Management Series, O. M. 65, p. 25.

[25] "Needed Economies in Business Education," Junior-Senior High School Clearing House, 8:209, December, 1933.

Other quotations lend support to this evidence.

> . . . facility in performing arithmetical computation is essential to any training for a bookkeeper's duties.[26]

> Thus it will be seen that a relatively smaller number of expert bookkeepers are required and that only a fraction of the boys and girls in our commercial classes have the necessary aptitudes for, interest in, or desire to train for this vocation.[27]

Nichols believes that two courses in bookkeeping should perhaps be developed in the commercial curriculum to meet the needs of all commercial students.

For the non-vocational group there should be "emphasis on the social, civic, and personal-use value of the subject as the low average ability of the group will permit." [28] For this group he would stress the "art of recording business transactions," while for the vocational group he would stress the "science of accounts."[29]

Thus Nichols believes that bookkeeping has personal-use values for some students, and that not every person who studies it is doing so for vocational reasons.

> . . . not every pupil who studies bookkeeping should be regarded as a potential bookkeeper; that the elementary

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[26] Bulletin No. 34, p. 38.

[27] "Survey of Junior Commercial Occupations," Bulletin No. 54, Commercial Series No. 4, Federal Board for Vocational Education, Washington, D. C., June, 1920, p. 18.

[28] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 27.

[29] Ibid.

> bookkeeping course doubtless has greater educational value for some pupils than have other subjects available to them; and that the elementary course in this subject should not be too highly vocationalized and difficult.[30]

In planning the commercial curriculum, Nichols would have teachers remember that

> . . . training for stenographic positions and bookkeeping positions /is/ desirable, but it is denied . . . that they are all that /is/ needed. Here are two good reasons why they are not. First, only about two per cent of office workers are bookkeepers and only about ten per cent are stenographers. Second, only a relatively small number of boys and girls possess the aptitudes, interests, and abilities required for these positions.[31]

Retail Selling. Frederick G. Nichols' name has long been identified with the retail selling field in commercial education.

"Retail selling" training which has had an impetus for expansion under the George-Deen Act, is now being identified as "distributive" occupational training which is more indicative of its scope.

Nichols says that "this term has been authoritatively defined by the Office of Education . . ."

> Distributive occupations are those followed by workers directly engaged in, or in direct contact with consumers when
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> a. Distributing to consumers, retailers, jobbers, wholesalers, and others the product of farm and industry /and I assume of all other products/,
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> b. Managing, operating or conducting a commercial service or personal service business, or selling the services of such business. (Garage, dry cleaning business, . . .)

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[30] "Pre-Employment Business Training--A Challenge to Educators," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Seventh Yearbook, 1934, p. 68.

[31] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 212.

> To still further clarify the definition, we notice that "Distributive occupations do not include clerical occupations, such as stenography, bookkeeping, office clerical work, and the like; nor do they include trade and industrial work followed by those engaged in railroad, trucking, or other transportation activities.[32]

As far back as 1919 Nichols was advocating that the "Federal Government should take the initiative in the development of suitable retail selling and merchandise courses."[33]

Training on a cooperative basis, between business men and educators, seems to be the keynote to Nichols' views concerning retail selling. He has consistently adhered to this belief since the days of his early experiments which set the precedent for the present practice of cooperative training in this type of vocational education.

Nichols is given credit for his early work in the field of retail selling in these words:

> Perhaps the most successful of the early experiments in teaching retailing in the high school was that of Professor F. G. Nichols of Harvard University when he was at Rochester, New York. It is interesting to note that many of the basic requirements for a successful course were included in this pioneer experiment. The chief requirement which Professor Nichols demanded was the cooperation of the merchants in the city.[34]

His collaboration with Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince won him further recognition as a contributor to this type of

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[32] "Vocational Training for the Distributive Occupations Under the George Deen Act, Journal of Business Education, October, 1937, p. 9.

[33] Bulletin No. 34, p. 55.

[34] Norris A. Brisco, "The Challenge of the New Federal Vocational Act Which Provides Training for Commercial Distributive Occupations," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Tenth Yearbook, 1937, p. 326.

training.

> In 1919 the school [Mrs. Prince's private school of salesmanship] was taken over by the graduate school of education of Harvard University and greater facilities were added. At the present time several large stores of Boston avail themselves of the services it offers. Under this arrangement the school directs cooperative training classes, as well as being a training school for certain types of educational and merchandising executives.[35]

Nichols believes that the distributive occupations should be incorporated in the high school curriculum where possible since there is greater opportunity for employment due to the fact that "more people are employed in this field (distribution of goods and services) than are employed in office work." [36]

The history of Nichols' activities indicates that he definitely supports the view that the commercial education curriculum must make provision for training students in the distributive occupations field if the curriculum is built on occupational demands, and if it is versatile enough to meet the demands of the students whose interests, aptitudes, and abilities lie in this field. It is evident that he thinks this training can best be given on a cooperative basis.

Clerical training. According to Nichols' plan for the commercial curriculum of the high school in 1919, he recommended that the elementary division, including grades 7, 8, and 9, lead to the general clerical positions; the advanced

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[35] Cloyd H. Marvin, Commercial Education in the Secondary Schools, Henry Holt & Co., 1922, New York, p. 19.

[36] Education 58:195, December, 1937.

training for grades 10, 11, and 12, lead to a multiple choice, in the fields of accounting, retail selling, outside selling, foreign trade, stenographic and secretarial work. This would provide five main channels into business.[37]

Less than ten years later Nichols made his contribution to this field, which was published under the title, A New Conception of Office Practice. Some idea of the scope and importance of his investigation may be gained from the following brief resume.

> Mr. Frederick G. Nichols has analyzed clerical office occupations and classified the office duties under 43 headings. The duties performed by each type of office clerk are listed. Twenty-one office positions are analyzed as to degree of desirability of each of the following characteristics: executive ability, knowledge of English, ability in figure work, eyesight, hearing, physical strength, and outstanding character traits. Such a study is of value to anyone responsible for the training of office workers. It emphasizes, for one thing, the many varieties of work for which the office worker must be prepared, and calls attention to the need for general business training.[38]

More recently, Nichols made this observation of the changed conditions in office work. In it also is his concept of the meaning of "office practice."

> Formerly there was but one way to make a beginning in a business career--through an office position, usually as bookkeeper. At a later date the stenographic position afforded the best avenue of approach to business. Today both of these positions are the most desirable gateways to business for some people, but not for all. Other equally desirable approaches are available in most offices of size. Systemized office work has brought into existence many new clerical duties. Machines have

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[37] Bulletin No. 34, p. 18.

[38] Haynes and Graham, Research in Business Education, C. C. Crawford, Publisher, Los Angeles, California, p. 115.

> invaded the office and created a demand for operators. New skills have been developed; office clerks are expected to possess them. No longer is it necessary that all office clerks shall be stenographers or bookkeepers, or even typists. The more or less common notion that stenographic and bookkeeping positions are the only ones for which secondary-school business training should be given is shown to be unsupported by the facts. /Survey of commercial education made in cooperation with the National Office Management Association/ . . . Any program of business education that is aimed solely at preparation for stenographic and bookkeeping positions is falling far short of meeting the full need for business education.[39]

Terms are confusing in this, as in many other subjects of the commerce curriculum. Nichols says of its varied nomenclature, and unorganized condition:

> . . . the need for its re-evaluation and reorganization from the standpoint of content and method is clearly apparent, in "office practice," or "clerical practice," or "business practice," or "secretarial practice" as it is variously called.[40]

He says,

> There is much confusion regarding the place of office practice in a high school commerce curriculum. This confusion is due partly to differences of opinion as to the need for any kind of skill training as a part of preparation for office work. But it also is due in part to misconceptions as to its true importance from an employment point of view. Approximately 90 per cent of office workers are non-stenographic and non-bookkeeping. Yet in spite of this fact office practice in a large proportion of our schools is but a subsidiary of shorthand or bookkeeping . . .
> Clearly a modern, functioning course in office practice waits on the production of new or reorganized instruction material suitable for use in giving such a course.[41]

Nichols makes it apparent that at the present time there is much difference of opinion as to just what is meant

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[39] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 302.

[40] Ibid., p. 357.

[41] Ibid.

by office training; as to the items which should be included in a course of study; and as to where it should be placed in the commercial curriculum. He is of the opinion that a worth-while course in clerical training must be based on the demands of modern business methods and procedures.

Job analyses, Nichols believes, must precede the preparation of needed course material, and "projects" or "job-sheets" will probably serve the purposes of instruction better than a conventional text because "no amount of study of any text, however good, will qualify a person to do office work involving any degree of manipulative skill."

He says,

> Actual practice under office conditions is essential. Such practice should be preceded by initial practice in the school clerical department and possibly in various school offices. But in the end the trainee must be brought into actual contact with the business office and given an opportunity to develop productive skill such as is required of office employees.[42]

Summary of Nichols' Views on the Initial-Job Subjects.

Secretarial training has no place in the high school curriculum.

Only students with the necessary interests, aptitudes, and ability should be permitted to enroll for vocational courses in shorthand, typewriting and bookkeeping; others should study them as general education.

English ability is a necessary requisite for the successful study of shorthand; arithmetical and analytical

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[42] Ibid., p. 358.

ability is requisite for the study of bookkeeping on a vocational basis.

The age factor is important in initial-job training. Preparing students for positions which they cannot obtain on account of extreme youth is futile.

The initial-job subjects should not be limited to the stenographic and bookkeeping groups because (1) many pupils do not have the ability and interest necessary for success in these subjects; (2) there are more students being trained in these fields than business can readily absorb at this time.

Training in retail selling on a cooperative basis, and general clerical training, should be incorporated in the curriculum because (1) many students have the interest and ability necessary for successful training in these subjects, and (2) there is a demand for well-trained workers in these fields.

3. Social-Business Subjects

Nichols' concept of the social-business subjects, as portrayed in Commercial Education in the High School, is as follows:

> It is not enough that technical skill subjects be so taught as to yield a measure of social intelligence. Certain other subjects, rich in social values, must be given an important place in the commercial curriculum. These subjects are known as "social-business" subjects. Among them are included commercial and economic geography, commercial law, business economics, principles of salesmanship, and principles of business organization and management. Such subjects, properly presented,

> yield large returns in the way of civic understanding. It is through these subjects that commercial education makes its largest contribution to the pupil's understanding of his economic environment.[43]

Here it will be noted that he seems to have the citizenship objective in mind. Further evidence of his belief that the social-business subjects can fulfill the mission of citizenship training for commercial pupils is embodied in this quotation:

> The apparent growing disrespect for all law is a challenge to commercial educators. No other teacher has the opportunity to do as much to foster a greater respect for law . . . A far more important task is one growing out of the necessity for taking steps to see that laws are worthy of respect . . . it is the thing called "public opinion," that really matters; and public opinion is the composite point of view of the men in the street--your present and former pupils. See that every commercial pupil has some contact with commercial law and that each at least becomes aware of his own peculiar responsibilities for the laws under which we live.[44]

Yet elsewhere Nichols advocates treating the social-business subjects as vocational training.

> Subjects commonly known as social-business subjects, in their present or revised form, should be regarded as vocational business training and taught as such. Such subjects may well become the most vital part of a vocational business training program in these days of kaleidoscopic changes in business routine.[45]

Another statement supports his approval of them as part of the vocational training program.

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[43] page 224.

[44] "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, 9:8, 26, October, 1933.

[45] National Business Education Outlook, Third Yearbook, 1937, p. 20.

> Call these economic background subjects what you will, but include them for every pupil in the vocational business department. Commercial geography, or economic geography; business organization, or business management, or business principles, or fundamentals of business, or just plain business; economics, or business economics, or economics of business; commercial law, or business law, or legal principles of business; any of these will do . . . It doesn't matter, so long as the right things are taught.46

Thus Nichols' thinking regarding the place of the social-business subjects in the high school commercial curriculum seems to lack clarity at the present time. This absence of a definite belief is evidence of his constant attempts to adjust his viewpoint to changing economic and business conditions as they affect the business office worker. He asserts that within the last ten years these subjects have been assuming more and more importance in the curriculum, due to the "great changes in the size and character of business organizations [which] have come about in the past decade."47 Business organizations tend to become larger and the office worker's position more highly specialized. This specialization very often is a hindrance to advancement, and office employment is unattractive on account of poor remuneration. He justifies the inclusion of the social-business subjects as vocational training on the grounds that a knowledge of the social-business subjects "seems to be the best available medium through which to offset the tendency to become

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46 "Modern Business Education," Southern Business Education Association, Lexington, Kentucky, March, 1936, p. 8.

47 Commercial Education in the High School, p. 435.

stranded on the clerical level." [48] These subjects furnish an understanding of the principles of business and other background knowledge which will make it possible for the clerical worker to advance beyond the initial-job level.

In forceful language, Nichols places the responsibility for a broader commercial curriculum, which will include the social-business subjects, on the commercial teacher.

> It is my opinion that what is commonly regarded as minor subjects in our field should for some pupils be regarded as majors; that competent teachers are sorely needed for the vitally important but woefully neglected newer subjects of commercial education; that competence in bookkeeping and/or shorthand and/or typewriting is no guarantee of competence as a teacher of commercial law, or commercial geography or other social-business subjects, or clerical practice, salesmanship or junior business training. Not until we quit the pernicious practice of treating the three traditional commercial subjects as the alpha and omega of business education are we likely to encourage pupils in considerable numbers to major in subjects which those in authority treat with scant respect.[49]

Hence the commercial curriculum must be freed from tradition. The commercial teacher-training institutions must train teachers who are competent to teach the social-business subjects. There is need for reorganizing the content of these subjects, perhaps, before they will function as adequately as they should. Nichols points out that thought and research are necessary before a wholly satisfactory offering in this line is possible.[50]

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[48] Ibid., p. 438.

[49] "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, 9:8, 26, October, 1933.

[50] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 437.

Consumer education. Of the meaning of consumer education, which is yet in a formative state, Nichols says,

> I believe there is a very sharp distinction between what is called "consumer knowledge" education and "economic" education for commercial work. The former has to do with the training of people in general to spend their income wisely and otherwise administer their economic lives. The latter has to do with the preparation of people to participate in business on a high social-economic plane.[51]

In agreement with his theory regarding segregation of vocational from non-vocational students, which has been referred to before in this study, Nichols declares that

> Only potentially trainable and placeable people should be accepted for and retained in vocational business classes. All other so-called commercial pupils should be enrolled for consumer business courses.[52]

He clarifies this further by pointing out the dangers of mixed objectives for the producer and the consumer groups.

> Admit that the conventional commercial subjects have been organized and are being taught in the interests of those who are preparing for occupational life in the field of commerce. Be willing to concede that if these same useful vocational subjects are revamped to meet consumer needs, they will but imperfectly minister to the requirements of either group.[53]

Nichols implies that he believes that too much time should not be used for the consumer training courses.

> Do not assume that a full four-year program of consumer education is necessary for the achievment of the ends sought. May not a single, full-year course suffice? [54]

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[51] National Business Education Quarterly, 5:11, May, 1934.

[52] National Business Education Outlook, Third Yearbook, p. 10.

[53] "A Sound Philosophy of Business Education," The Business Education World, June, 1936, p. 5.

[54] Ibid.

Further evidence of his belief that some reserve should be practiced by educators when including consumer training in the curriculum is signified when he asks:

> Why try to pack too much consumer education into the high school years before a reasonable degree of maturity has been reached?[55]

However, he believes that commercial teachers can do much in the interest of consumer business education.

> Commercial teachers have the background, if not the specific training, needed for the further development of consumer courses, and should . . . take the initiative in developing such courses.[56]

The burden of developing adequate courses in this new field, then, is placed on the commercial teacher.

Briefly, Nichols' views on consumer education for commercial students are:

There must be no mixed objectives between the consumer and producer groups, and there must be a segregation of the vocational business group from the consumer group. He believes that commercial teachers are capable of developing consumer education courses. Consumer courses need not cover as great a period of time as the vocational courses (he suggests a one-year course). Consumer business education should be taught sparingly to the younger students.

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55 "A Sound Philosophy of Business Education," The Business Education World, February, 1936, p. 447.

56 Ibid.

Junior business training. Business educators agree that Nichols has blazed the trail for junior business training in the secondary school. His Survey of Junior Commercial Occupations, published in 1920, is conceded to be a significant milestone in the development of business training on the lower grade level.

> It was not until the appearance in 1920 of the Federal Board for Vocational Education bulletin on "Survey of Junior Commercial Occupations," prepared under the direction of Professor F. G. Nichols, now of Harvard University, that the movement /for elementary business training/ received its first real impetus.[57]

Another author expresses the same viewpoint.

> Without doubt the publication of A Survey of Junior Commercial Occupations, which made clear the vocational futility of typical high-school commercial subjects for children under seventeen, had much to do with clearing the ground for change.[58]

This survey revealed the futility of making specific vocational training the sole aim, or even the major aim, in the training of the younger high school pupils. It is interesting to note how Nichols' viewpoint on the vocational function of junior business training has undergone changes throughout the years. These changing views reflect changing economic conditions of which Nichols is constantly aware. The following excerpt is a graphic expression of his shifting

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[57] Lomax and Haynes, Problems of Teaching Elementary Junior Business Training, Preface, p. iii, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1929.

[58] Leverett S. Lyon, Education for Business, Third Edition, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1932, p. 420.

viewpoint.

> Professor Nichols wrote the first junior business book based almost solely on the vocational objective for the lower high school grades and vocational rehabilitation of adults. Now he has the latest book designed for the upper grades and with the social and exploratory objectives emphasized, though the vocational aim is not entirely eliminated in its broader aspects at least.[59]

In his most recent book on junior business training, Nichols himself describes the shift of vocational emphasis.

> When large numbers of junior clerical jobs were open to boys and girls 14 to 16 years of age, it seemed necessary to include vocational preparation as a part of their early education. Now that such young people are not wanted in offices and stores, it is desirable to postpone the development of occupation skills until later. By so doing, vocational training of the upper high-school years can be made more effective; background education which should precede it can be given; more tryout experiences to reveal aptitudes, interests, and abilities can be provided for; such elemental skills as ability to write well and compute accurately can be developed; a better understanding of occupational requirements can be assured; and the chance of mistake in the choice of an occupation for which to prepare can be greatly reduced. Thus, while not definitely vocational, this course may well be regarded as the first step in commercial education for those who are still undecided as to what should be their vocational choice, as it affords them certain elemental tryout experiences in handling business transactions, and helps them appraise themselves as potential workers in the field of commerce.[60]

His outlook for the future in junior business training is broad, with the development of pupil attitudes and points of view as the main goal. It is remote from his first viewpoint, and represents a social, rather than a vocational aspect of the subject.

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[59] Book Review of "Junior Business Training for Economic Living," (1936) in Modern Business Education, II:21, March, 1936.

[60] Junior Business Training for Economic Living, Cincinnati, Ohio, American Book Co., 1936, Preface iii.

> I look forward to the time when the results of teaching junior business training will be measured in terms of what the study of this subject has done to the pupil, rather than in terms of what it has added to his store of useful knowledge. Much of what has been learned will be forgotten. This is as it should be. Facts today will be out-of-date tomorrow. Factual knowledge, except for current use, always will be of less importance than ability to think effectively with respect to personal, social, and civic matters. Points of view, discrimination in the selection of facts upon which to reach conclusion, intellectual integrity and correct mental habits are far more important than mere acquired knowledge.
>
> It is my firm conviction that junior business training properly taught, can be made to produce most desirable changes in pupil attitudes, points-of-view, and habits of thought regarding some very important social, civic, and personal matters, while at the same time laying a foundation on which to build a sound business career.[61]

Summary of Nichols' Views on the Social-Business Subjects. Due to social and economic conditions, Nichols seems to believe that the social-business subjects are growing in importance as a part of the high school commercial curriculum.

They are an essential part of the training of every commercial pupil. Although not entirely clear on this point, Nichols seems to believe that the social-business subjects are essential as citizenship training, and also as vocational training. His reason for including them in vocational training seems to be to give the pupil a rich background of training to enable him to become more than an office worker on the initial-job level.

Before effective training in the social-business subjects can be given in the secondary schools, there must be some

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[61] "Looking Ahead in Junior Business Training Instruction," National Business Education Quarterly, 1:21, October, 1932.

provision made in the teacher-training institutions for training social-business subjects teachers.

Nichols believes that the producer (vocational) and consumer (non-vocational) groups of students must be separated if either group is to receive satisfactory training. Too much time should not be given to consumer courses, owing to the immaturity of the pupils.

The first course in business for high school pupils should emphasize pupil attitudes, viewpoints and thought habits which relate to social, civic and personal matters, as well as to lay a foundation for building a business career.

4. Guidance, Placement and Follow-up

Guidance. Nichols defines guidance as he conceives it in relation to commercial education, thus:

> . . . vocational guidance is not a single act, or a short series of acts, performed by some individual member of an educational staff by whatever name. It is a continuing process--participated in by many people and agencies. It has for its objective helping boys and girls, men and women too, in their efforts to adjust themselves to the demands and opportunities of a dynamic economic system, and to make such occupational readjustments as may be necessary from time to time in an economic world where order and chaos seem destined to chase each other around a more or less inevitable cycle.[62]

For convenience in presenting Nichols' views of guidance, the material has been organized under four headings, or principles: (1) segregation of vocational and non-vocational

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62 Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Ninth Yearbook, 1936, p. 23.

students, (2) potential occupational ability of students, (3) an understanding of the occupational requirements and opportunities of business, and (4) the teacher's responsibility for guidance.

Segregation. In reading Nichols' writings, it will be found that "segregation" is a theme which runs through most of his work. This is a natural result of his emphasis on the vocational phase of commercial education. Below is a typical example of his conviction on this point.

> So long as vocational and non-vocational commercial pupils are enrolled in the same classes and courses, so long will the job of guidance be neglected.
>
> Until then /segregation/ we have to be content with guiding pupils into or out of the commercial department; and regardless of their fitness for it, but few will be guided out of this attractive field.[63]

Occupational ability. Nichols is no academic theorist, as has been pointed out previously, but has kept himself in intelligent contacts with business and its relation to the potential office worker. He believes that students must be selected for vocational education, since office work requires certain native abilities and aptitudes which students must possess if they are to enjoy any degree of success in their work.

Illustrations concerning his belief in potential ability as a requisite for vocational training follow.

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[63] "Some Observations on Vocational Guidance in Commercial Education," Ninth Yearbook, 1936, Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, p. 27.

> . . . pupils who are not trainable, not employable, not promotable, represent a guidance problem for which business educators have a responsibility to the taxpayer, to the individual pupil, and to the business field at large. Courageous thinking on the solution of the problem is a first requisite in wise reconstruction of secondary business education.[64]
>
> . . . when fewer than twenty per cent of those who attempt preparation for a calling actually enter it and carry on with even moderate success, there must be a reason.
>
> Teachers should convince administrators that commercial education is not "all things to all men."[65]

Occupational requirements and opportunities. Nichols believes that students of vocational commercial education must consider the promotional opportunities leading from the initial-job level if they are to achieve the economic returns which they have a right to expect from their life work.

> . . . at least the foundation of promotional training should be laid in the high school as a part of a vocational commercial education . . . . boys and girls must be taught to appreciate the limitations of their initial jobs to envision an ultimate goal toward which they may strive, to understand the relation of their first jobs to other jobs higher up, to chart an advanced training program that will lead quite surely to advancement in line with their aptitudes, interests, and abilities; and, in short, to purposely plan their business careers from the point of initial employment to a worthy goal.[66]
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> Before those who are contemplating a secretarial career can reach a decision regarding their fitness for such a

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64 "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, October, 1934, p. 10.

65 "Some Observations on Vocational Guidance in Commercial Education, Ninth Yearbook, 1936, Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, pp. 24, 25.

66 National Business Education Quarterly, I:23, March, 1933.

career, the duties of this position and the traits one should possess or develop to succeed in it must be known.[67]

The teacher's responsibility for guidance. Nichols states that there should be

> . . . recognition of the fact that vocational guidance is the base upon which any successful program of vocational training must rest, and that those responsible for the preparation of boys and girls for occupational life must carry their full share of responsibility for building and maintaining this essential base.[68]

The vocational guidance function is divided into four periods.

> First, the general period during which the necessity for vocational choice and training will be emphasized and much general information regarding the various fields of social service will be made available to pupils not yet ready to make a vocational choice . . .
>
> Second, the prevocational period during which, through counseling, exploration, try-out courses, careful consideration of aptitudes and interests with appropriate testing, and such other means as may be devised, pupils should be helped to decide upon the best approach of business to adopt.
>
> Third, the early vocational period, during which specific preparation for the initial-contact job should be given along with the development of an appreciation of the importance of the choice of an ultimate objective toward which to strive after entering upon employment.
>
> Fourth, the early employment period, during which the worker should be helped in the effective use of all that he has learned and in discovering how to make experience yield its largest educational returns as he forges

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[67] The Personal Secretary, 1934, p. 9.

[68] "Some Observations on Vocational Guidance in Commercial Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Ninth Yearbook, 1936, p. 22.

ahead toward his ultimate goal.[69]

He would hold the vocational guidance advisers primarily responsible for guidance in the first period; the second period should be carried on by the vocational guidance workers with the cooperation of the commercial department; the third period should be the primary responsibility of the commercial department, with the cooperation of the guidance department, while the fourth period should be accomplished through the cooperation of commercial educators, vocational counselors, and employers.[70]

The commercial teacher is not wholly responsible for guidance, but it can be readily seen that his obligation to students is important at all stages of their training.

In accordance with his belief that the traditional subjects, stenography and bookkeeping, must necessarily give way to a broader commercial curriculum, Nichols believes that teachers do not guide pupils into such courses as business law, commercial geography, principles of business, which subjects can make their business training "fruitful as a point of departure in the achievement of a worth-while business career."[71]

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[69] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 260.

[70] Ibid.

[71] "Poor Administration Results in Futile Attempts to Give Business Training," Education, 58:196, December, 1937.

Placement and Follow-up. Nichols believes that the commercial educator's responsibility to the vocational student does not end with mere guidance and teaching, but that the responsibility must follow through to the initial-position, and that "placement and successful functioning on the job are the essence of vocational training."[72]

> Guidance is not likely to be the concern of those who have little responsibility for outcomes of their teaching in terms of vocational placement and success on the job.[73]

He believes that continued responsibility for jobs must be placed on those who train pupils for jobs.

> Until success in the initial position has been demonstrated, the vocational training activity has not been completed.[74]

Nichols believes that some of the evils of the "dumping ground" activity would be remedied if school administrators took the responsibility for placement.

> A little experience in trying to place commercial graduates and drop-outs would go far toward remedying the situation which has resulted from the "dumping ground" practice . . . . It will soon be apparent to any school official who tries to place his commercial students that many now enrolled in this department are manifestly unsuited to this kind of training.[75]

He summarizes his convictions concerning placement and

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72 "Vocational Objectives of Secondary Commercial Education," National Business Education Quarterly, 1:21, March, 1933.

73 "Some Observations on Vocational Guidance in Commercial Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Ninth Yearbook, 1936, p. 27.

74 Ibid., p. 28.

75 "Poor Administration Results in Futile Attempts to Give Business Training," Education, 58:196, December, 1937.

follow-up in the following quotation. Although this was an early pronouncement, he has held steadfastly to his belief throughout the years.

> . . . it is essential that the local authorities assume full responsibility for the placement of all students who when they leave school are qualified for employment. Placement alone is not enough. The attempt should be made to fit every boy and girl into the kind of position for which he or she is best suited by education and personal characteristics. Such placed students should also be followed up to insure merited advancement as soon as possible.[76]

5. Equipment and Instructional Material

Equipment. Nichols believes that commercial education owes a debt to the other vocational fields, namely, agricultural, industrial, and homemaking education, because they have shown that no adequate vocational training can be given without sufficient equipment. Though millions of dollars have been spent in equipping these other departments, the commercial department is as yet inadequately equipped for vocational training.

He states that the private business schools of the eighties and nineties maintained elaborate equipment which enhanced the value of their training a great deal. The sponsors of commercial education in the public schools, until ten or twelve years ago were blind to the need of equipment beyond a few desks and typewriters.

Nichols' version of the present condition and what he concedes to be a proper future procedure for correcting it,

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[76] Bulletin 34, p. 62

is expressed in these words:

> So long as high school business education is largely of an academic nature little equipment is needed; but if it is to be truly vocationalized it must square with actual practices in the business office and store. With 89 per cent of all office workers doing non-stenographic and non-bookkeeping work, and with scores of labor-saving devices and machines to be operated, it should be apparent that if preparation for modern office work is to be given, modern office equipment for training purposes is needed. Industrial educators have demanded and obtained equipment adequate to their needs. Commercial educators need not hesitate to ask for what they need.[77]

Concerning the school plant, he observes that

> The size and arrangement of rooms in the local school tend to place restrictions on the kind of commercial education that can be offered. An old, out-of-date building may prevent desirable differentiation, the use of adequate equipment, proper division and sequence of classes, out-of-class use of essential equipment, laboratory work, and many other recognized factors in high school commercial education. Limitations imposed by inadequacy or antiquity of school plant must be taken into consideration.
>
> It should be added, however, that the size, adequacy, modernity, location, and interior arrangement of the local school plant do not influence offerings in the field of commercial education as they do in other vocational fields. However, they do have an influence and must be given due consideration in setting up a general commercial curriculum or a program of special curriculums.[78]

As to the value of a course in machine-clerical work in particular and all vocational commercial courses in general, he says,

> It is doubtful if a school should attempt to train for machine-clerical work at all unless facilities for practice are available in some form. It seems better judgment to undertake only training that can be given successfully with the facilities at hand, regardless of what other schools may offer.[79]

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[77] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 87.

[78] Ibid., pp. 120, 121.

[79] Ibid., p. 123.

This is further evidence of Nichols' intense practicality. Each school must build as practical a course as possible with the available facilities, rather than imitating another school where conditions may be vastly different.

Other instructional materials. Closely linked with the problem of equipment is the question of other materials of instruction. Nichols explains his concept of instructional materials thus:

> . . . there should be two types of instruction materials --that which is foundational to further study of commerce and that which lays a foundation for economic living.
>
> Each type of instruction material used on the pre-vocational level can and should be used to produce three outcomes --better understanding of one's aptitudes, interests, and abilities through exploration; a proper foundation for further study in the field of commerce; and better basic principles of personal economic living.[80]

He thinks there is need for better instructional material for teaching the social-business subjects.

> The exact nature of these latter subjects [social-business] will depend on the character of available instruction material. As soon as the proponents of greater emphasis on the "economic, political, and business life of our times" see to it that usable instruction material is available, courses in commercial law, business economics, and commercial geography will give way to new courses, either as a part of general education or as a part of the specialized curriculum for commercial pupils.[81]

The foregoing quotation indicates Nichols' indefiniteness as to whether the social-business subjects are to be regarded

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[80] National Business Education Outlook, National Commercial Teachers Federation, Third Yearbook, p. 20.

[81] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 185.

regarded as vocational or general education.

Another quotation expresses this same idea.

> Materials of instruction and appropriate methods of teaching now available are inadequate to the task of training all high school pupils to think more clearly about economic methods and to act in accordance with sound economic concepts; hence better instruction materials and methods must be developed.[82]

Summary of Nichols' Views on Guidance, Placement and Follow-up. Nichols' emphasis is on vocational guidance. Guidance in high school vocational business education is a process which must be carried on from the pre-vocational period through the initial-job stage of training.

It is not the responsibility of the commercial department alone, but involves all agencies which are concerned with the pupils' training.

There must be segregation of the vocational from the non-vocational commercial students if the training of either group is adequate.

Placement is a function of guidance, and high school vocational commercial education courses should be adjusted to meet the needs of business and students as they are found through the school administrators' placement and follow-up activities.

Teachers and pupils must have an understanding of occupational requirements and opportunities.

Successful training can only be given with proper and adequate instructional materials and equipment.

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82 "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, 9:8, January, 1934.

6. Testing

Recently there has been definite action taken in formulating a comprehensive testing program in commercial education. As is characteristic in any pioneer work in this field, Nichols has had an active part in promoting the program.

> A Committee . . . has engaged without interruption in arduous research and experimentation with a testing program under the guiding genius and inspiring leadership of Professor Frederick G. Nichols of Harvard University.[83]

Prognostic testing. Nichols believes that prognostic tests should be used as a partial means of selecting vocational stenographic and bookkeeping students.

> Every school day tens of thousands of girls who possess none of the aptitudes, interests, or abilities required for stenographic work are trained for this work in which they have little chance of success. Other tens of thousands are encouraged to study bookkeeping without first being tested for aptitudes for this kind of work.[84]

He believes that every available testing means of forecasting student success in vocational training should be used. For example, he says,

> The stenographer must possess the necessary manual dexterity to write very rapidly. This . . . can be discovered through the student's penmanship activities, or through specially constructed writing tests. There must be coordination between the ear and hand. Likewise this may be tested for through dictation to be taken in longhand. The stenographer must possess word-sense, a good mastery of sentence structure, a good vocabulary. Again,

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[83] Nathaniel Altholz, "President's Address," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Tenth Yearbook, 1937, pp. xix, xx.

[84] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 252.

> these things can be determined through tests and the measured results of teaching existing subjects.[85]

Another means of selecting stenographic students is taken from the Committee's report on testing.

> If those who complete vocational stenographic courses are tested at the conclusion of such courses, it should be possible to use the results of such testing in guidance activities during succeeding years and thus eventually to reduce the number of misfits who persist in their attempts to become stenographers far beyond the point where it has become apparent that they never will succeed in achieving their goal.[86]

Achievement testing. The Committee's report on typewriting testing reflects Nichols' common-sense viewpoint on the subject. It is a sharp departure from the inadequate "words-a-minute" procedure which has been the chief vehicle for testing typewriting achievement for so many years. The emphasis in the testing program advocated is on production, and

> such a test will reveal whether or not the testee has a sufficient knowledge of typewriting to function as a typist; it will show whether or not he has sufficient speed to turn out a respectable amount of work at a given time; it will indicate whether he is a spurt typist or one who can maintain a reasonably high rate of speed over a considerable period of time without undue fatigue or deterioration in the quality of work turned out.[87]

New-type tests. It is the opinion of Nichols that

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[85] Ibid., p. 286.

[86] "Measuring for Vocational Ability in the Field of Business Education," (Joint Committee Report), Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Tenth Yearbook, 1937, p. 17.

[87] Ibid., p. 36.

the objective, or so-called "new-type tests," are only partially effective as a testing device.

> True-false, completion, and word-choice tests are winning favor regardless of their absurdity for measuring productive ability. As measuring devices for determining how much useful background business knowledge has been acquired, or how much occupational understanding is possessed, they may be quite effective. But as a means of measuring the degree of occupational competency which has been developed by a vocational business course they are little better than no test at all.[88]

The following quotation concerning final examinations, which is taken from the Committee's report, is an incite into Nichols' philosophy of testing:

> This whole matter of final examinations should be studied carefully and better measuring devices for use at the end of vocational courses should be devised and used. Such measuring devices should include those which are designed to measure the amount of useful business information a student has acquired, others which reveal the amount of occupational understanding which he has been able to obtain through independent investigation as well as through the normal activities of the course, and still others which can be relied upon to reveal the productive capacity of the student in relation to the job for which he has been prepared. Such a final examination, or set of examinations, should be of incalculable value to the students, to the teacher who is to recommend him, and to the employer who is to employ him. Without such a final test we are likely to be without any trustworthy evidence that we have achieved the goals which we had in view in giving the course.[89]

Summary of Nichols' Views on Testing. Testing is an important function in the vocational commercial training program.

Through the intelligent use of prognostic tests, a student personnel with appropriate aptitudes, interests, and

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[88] Ibid., p. 14.

[89] Ibid., p. 15.

abilities may be selected with more satisfactory results than is otherwise possible.

Achievement tests which measure production such as the business office requires should be emphasized.

Objective tests are not adequate measures of productive ability, although they may be useful for measuring background business knowledge, or occupational understanding.

Comprehensive final examinations, including a measure of the amount of useful business information which the student has acquired, his occupational understanding, and his productive capacity, should be given at the end of the training period.

CONCLUSION

From the evidence in this chapter, the following conclusions are reached concerning Nichols' viewpoints on the curriculum of business training in the secondary school.

The stenographic and bookkeeping group of subjects do not constitute an adequate variety of curriculum offerings.

There should be a more rigid selection of pupils for these groups of subjects, based on their interests, aptitudes, and abilities. If potential stenographers lack language sense, and potential bookkeepers do not have figure sense, they should not be considered as vocational students.

There is a personal-use value in these subjects for some students, and some are justified in studying them on that basis.

A provision for retail selling should be made in the curriculum, as the occupational demand justifies this type of training. A cooperative plan is desirable.

Clerical training has a place in the high school commercial curriculum. It must employ modern business procedures and methods if it is to be effective.

Skill training is not enough. The curriculum should provide training in the social-business subjects if pupils are to gain the necessary and desirable economic background.

The commercial educator's duty is only partly done if he does not provide a program of guidance. In addition, he should accept the responsibility for pupil placement. Even then the work is not complete. The "follow-up" function must operate, if a complete vocational curriculum is achieved.

Commercial education cannot function without adequate equipment, any more than can any other vocational curriculum. Other instructional material, likewise, must be adequate. There must be (1) foundational material for further study of commerce, and (2) instructional material which lays a foundation for economic living.

Testing, of both the prognostic and the achievement types must play an important part in the high school commercial curriculum. There should be a final test which will give evidence of the achievement of the objectives of any course. This is important to teacher, student, and also the prospective employer.

As a final resume of his beliefs regarding the commercial curriculum, an interesting summary in Nichols' own words is given. The vocational emphasis has been the dominant note in his beliefs concerning the curriculum. There is a distinctly defensive tone in the quotation, which is doubtless due to his consciousness of the attacks made by other educators on his decidedly vocational viewpoint of commercial education.

> No one in the profession has more consistently fought for the retention of sound vocational training in our public secondary school program than I have. No one has endorsed what has come to be known as "consumer business education" more sincerely or fervently. Surely no one has pointed out more often the need for preserving and improving the older type of training designed for the prospective producer, while accepting and developing the newer type which is intended to prepare young people to meet their full responsibilities as consumers. Few, if any, have devoted more time to the improvement of teaching skill subjects. Not many have more consistently urged the inclusion of social business subjects in every vocational business training program.[90]

[90] The Bulletin--Tri-State Commercial Education Association, Fall, 1937, p. 7.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONNEL

1. Students

Aptitudes, interests, and abilities. These three words form a theme that runs through practically all of Nichols' writings. There is a noticeable increase in the frequency of its use within the last few years. In his book, Commercial Education in the High School, Nichols makes constant use of this triad of words, which is significant, because it reveals that he is ever aware of the importance of individual differences when training students.

> Each individual is entitled to an opportunity to obtain for himself the largest possible measure of personal development through the discovery and nurture of his own aptitudes, interests, and capacities as long as such personal development does not lead in anti-social directions.[1]

He stresses over and over again the necessity for the students' possession of "interests, aptitudes and abilities," if they are to succeed vocationally in the field of commercial education, especially beyond the initial-job level.

> Initial-contact office jobs may be used as stepping-stones but only by those whose training, aptitudes, interests, and abilities fit them for advancement to higher places in the business world.[2]

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[1] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 9.

[2] "Criticism, Comment and Challenge," Journal of Business Education, February, 1933, p. 33.

Need for Better Personnel in Commercial Vocational Classes. Nichols protests against using the high school commercial department as a dumping ground for inferior students.

> The commercial department is still the dumping ground for the misfits from a purely academic point of view. This does not mean that pupils of highly intellectual ability are not found in this department. In it will be found pupils whose intelligence borders on the subnormal and others who outrank their most competent academic classmates. All have the objective of vocational preparation; only a fraction of them can realize this objective in the strictly commercial field. Yet all are taught the same subjects, in the same way, and in mixed groups that range over the full scale of human intelligence from subnormality to near genius.[3]

> . . . the commercial department is the dumping ground for academic misfits . . . Its most serious consequence lies in the utter hopelessness with which any serious vocational commercial preparation can be attempted under such conditions.[4]

He admonishes teachers to

> Recognize the need for better student personnel in our vocational commercial classes. Fight for a division of our commercial pupils into two groups--the truly vocational and the non-vocational. See to it that only those who are potentially trainable for the jobs chosen are admitted to the ranks of the former group.[5]

Personality. This is an elusive word, which looms important in educational problems, especially in the formative years covered by the secondary school. Morrison clarifies the

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[3] "Needed Economies in Business Education," Junior-High School Clearing House, 8:209, December, 1933.

[4] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 24.

[5] "What is a Sound Philosophy of Business Education," The Business Education World, 16:762, June, 1936.

meaning of the term in these words: "In brief, personality at any given level of individual development is the resultant of the sum total of learnings to date."[6] This would seem to indicate that the development of desirable personality traits for business must begin early in the training if the desired outcomes are realized by the end of the training period.

Nichols believes that personality development is an essential part of the commercial educational program. It is at once the most vital and the most difficult part of the teaching function.

> . . . all of your teaching . . . will be futile if you do not develop well-integrated personalities who possess the essential traits of character for which you train boys and girls; and no amount of labor, artisanry, or professionalism can accomplish the result. It can be accomplished only by artistry of the highest order.[7]

> . . . without good personality traits no amount of the subject-matter you teach or the skills you develop will enable your trainee to succeed on the job, and . . . the early development of good personality traits is the best means of assuring real success in teaching subject matter and developing skills. So instead of treating trait development through personal contacts as something to be done if and when there is time for it, treat it as the sine qua non of sound vocational training and give it the right of way over other more conventional teaching activities.[8]

Although he would make the teacher responsible for

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[6] H. C. Morrison, Basic Principles in Education, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1934, p. 229.

[7] The Bulletin--Tri-State Commercial Educational Association, Fall, 1937, p. 6.

[8] Ibid., p. 7.

personality development, he recognizes its intangibility.

> The most illusive thing in the world is that vague quality called "business ability." Some pupils posses and show it. More do not. Some possess it--as is revealed years later--but do not show the slightest trace of it in school.[9]

Nichols points out that failure may be due to lack of desirable personal characteristics, as well as to many other things, but that no student is vocationally educated if he has failed in any of these things, which, in the aggregate, make up a well-trained worker.

> Failure may be due to personal characteristics such as laziness, discourtesy, or what not; or it may be due to lack of essential aptitudes and abilities; or it may result from physical defects; or from what is called student ability--the ability to learn from books; or it may be charged to a combination of any or all of these defects and to no shortcomings of either curriculum or teacher. But, whatever the explanation it does not alter the situation; vocational training has not been given.[10]

Nichols minimizes the importance of subject matter, and stresses the greater importance of the personality element when he says:

> It is the kind of boy or girl and the vigor and intelligence with which his or her school work is attacked that count most; not the particular subjects studied.[11]

Special Ability. A lack of special ability, Nichols observes, is frequently a direct cause of failure in office work. Such specific individual characteristics as "language

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[9] Office Management Series, O. M. 65, p. 24.

[10] "Vocational Objectives of Secondary Commercial Education," National Business Education Quarterly, 1:21, March, 1933.

[11] Op. cit. (9), p. 22.

sense," or "figure sense" must be considered when making a choice from the multiple-curriculum.

> Many young people lack the language ability to insure success as stenographers but possess the kind of personality that makes for success in the salesmanship field. Boys who like a more active life than office work makes possible may be interested in and admirably suited to the outside selling vocation. Advanced courses must comprehend more than customary commercial courses. Aptitudes are beginning to manifest themselves.[12]

> Unless one has a flair for English, can spell, has language sense, is mentally alert, is physically active, is nervously stable, has a retentive memory, is willing to work hard, possesses a reasonably good personality, and is a loyal worker, she is not likely to do well as a stenographer . . .[13]

A forceful manner of expression reveals how strongly he thinks on this subject.

> Acceptable stenographers cannot be turned out of the mill unless suitable grist is brought in. Bookkeepers cannot be made of people who are devoid of figure sense or mastery. Salesmen cannot be started toward a successful vocational life unless persons with essential personal traits, mental capacity, and fundamental command of language are available for training. Even prospective machine-clerical workers must possess certain aptitudes, abilities and interests.[14]

Ultimate promotion. Promotion is an immanent feature of Nichols' philosophy of vocational commercial education. He is persistent in his view that the student and teacher must possess a vision of the future as well as the immediate

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[12] Bulletin 34, p. 22.

[13] "Some Observations on Vocational Guidance in Commercial Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, Ninth Yearbook, 1936.

[14] "A Sound Philosophy of Business Education," The Business Education World, 16:762.

aspect of job training. For example,

> The novice who gets the promotion which is essential to ultimate success must possess something more than the skills involved in clerical work . . . the ultimate success in business life will depend more on what they know about business than it will on the skills which they use in the initial position.[15]

> Those who are not only trainable for and employable in initial-contact clerical and selling jobs, but who also are promotable from this level, should be encouraged to prepare for work in this field. All others should be trained in other directions.[16]

Nichols makes the positive statement that initial-contact clerical and store positions are not satisfactory as end-points of a business career, because they do not pay enough.[17]

> . . . only those who are potentially promotable should prepare for and seek office positions.[18]

> There are many other initial-contact jobs open to our boys and girls who lack the interests, aptitudes, and abilities required for advancement from the office clerical level. It is our duty to apprise them of this fact, and to point out the danger of stranding on the clerical level and what such stranding will mean in their adult economic life.[19]

The importance of pupils' "aptitudes, interests, and abilities" is again brought into the picture when he says,

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[15] F. G. Nichols, Editor's Introduction, Business Organization and Practice, Cornell and McDonald, New York: American Book Co., 1936, p. iv.

[16] National Business Education Quarterly, I:21, March, 1933.

[17] Ibid., p. 22.

[18] Ibid.

[19] "Some Readjustments in Vocational Business Education," Modern Business Education, March, 1936, pp. 7, 8.

> One who has not the aptitudes, interests, and abilities which are essential to at least some of the commercial employments on the higher levels of a business organization should not be encouraged to prepare for office work, however apt he may be in that kind of work.[20]

Nichols sums up the deplorable condition in the commercial education department of the secondary school which results because of disregard of "interests, aptitudes, and abilities," disregard of special ability traits of personality, and lack of segregation, in these words:

> Thus it comes about that standards in the business courses get scaled down to the level of a much diluted student personnel; good students fail to get the training they need to meet initial job requirements; poor students fail to get even a minimal general education which will assist them in making their social, civil, and vocational adjustments; no students get the consumer economic education needed for handling their personal financial affairs; too few students who by hook or crook happen to get business positions have the background business knowledge which is essential to win promotion; and commercial teachers however competent and progressive, are forced to fritter away their time and strength teaching classes in which misfits and capable students are about evenly divided.[21]

2. Teachers

The teacher concept. Nichols says that

> . . . in a very real sense, every human being who lives in association with others is a teacher. . . . Only the hermit can avoid affecting for good or evil the lives of others. Therefore all should seek to improve themselves in the art of teaching even though many never enter the profession.[22]

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[20] Ibid., p. 7.

[21] "Poor Administration Results in Futile Attempts to Give Business Training," Education, 58:198, December, 1937.

[22] "Teaching, A Fine Art," Education, 53:6, September, 1932.

He also asserts that there are three concepts of the occupation of teaching--that teachers are laborers, that they are artisans, that they are professional people.[23]

He elaborates the same concept when he says,

> Thus it may be admitted that teaching is a profession, an art, and skilled labor; that those who teach should acquire professional training; that such training must develop the art of teaching; and that no teacher can succeed without the willingness to work hard as a skilled laborer.[24]

Nichols looks on teaching, in its last analysis, as an art.

> The teacher, whatever may be said for him as a laborer, an artisan, or a professional, must be an artist--which is to say an idealist.[25]

He believes the teacher's place in society is an important one, and although "the teacher is no longer on a pedestal," he asserts

> . . . it is still true that any individual teacher may so teach and live as to achieve for himself a position of greater influence for good than any other social worker can hope to achieve.[26]

Nichols believes that each candidate for the teaching certificate should acquire competency in at least one skill subject and one social-business subject.[27]

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[23] The Bulletin--Tri-State Commercial Education Association, Fall, 1937, p. 9.

[24] "Teaching, A Fine Art," Education 53:7, September, 1932.

[25] Op. cit., (23), p. 15.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 45.

His views of the three R's in the commercial training program are as follows:

> Too many shorthand, typewriting and bookkeeping teachers are being trained. Too few clerical-practice teachers are being trained. . . It is wasteful for teacher-training schools to withold their support from the movement to provide retail-selling education for those who prefer it to office training.[28]

However,

> Good teachers of vocational shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping, and commercial arithmetic are needed. But teachers who are something more than subject teachers, who can see the vocational-training picture whole, and who know more about occupational requirements, are indispensable. The commercial field of vocational education is the only one in which the great majority of teachers are wholly without experience in the jobs for which they are allegedly preparing workers.[29]

Nichols asserts that

> . . . this is an age of specialization. Each teacher is expected to be somewhat of a specialist. However, the teacher who aspires to any appreciable degree of greatness must master the fine art of teaching as a generalist while being employed as a specialist.[30]

Thus commercial teachers must have broad background of information, in addition to highly specialized knowledge.

But he admonishes teachers to guard against the dangers of over-specialization.[31]

Nichols believes in actual business training for teachers.

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[28] Ibid., p. 46.

[29] "A Sound Philosophy of Business Education," p. 7.

[30] "Teaching, A Fine Art," p. 9.

[31] Ibid.

> Until vocational commercial education ceases to be given as so many "subjects," [and] more commercial teachers have had actual experience on the job for which they assume to give training . . . there is little prospect that training for initial commercial employments, . . . and ultimate promotion will be achieved.[32]

There is a modification of his previous point of view in the statement which follows. It shows a sane and broad viewpoint regarding business experience for teachers.

> Certain kinds of commercial training can be given successfully by teachers who have had no business experience even though it is stated often that no vocational training should be given by any but skilled and experienced artisans. Other kinds require skilled practitioners.[33]

Trait development. Nichols places a responsibility for trait development on the commercial teacher.

> The teacher-artist, or artisan, if you will, must find ways and means of dealing with groups as individuals. The real teacher-artist can not be estopped from doing so. He will take less time to impart knowledge to the group from without, and more time to stimulate the development of the individual from within.[34]

There is no doubt of his belief in the importance of trait training when he says,

> . . . [business men] are right in demanding that commercial teachers assume some responsibility for the development of desirable personalities as well as trained minds and skilled fingers.[35]

And

> No amount of preaching can be relied upon to develop

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[32] National Business Education Quarterly, p. 24, March, 1933.

[33] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 89.

[34] "Teaching, A Fine Art," Education 56:10, September, 1932.

[35] Commercial Education in the High School, p. 159.

> desirable characteristics. Not even example can be counted upon too heavily in this matter. Practice to insure habituation is essential. Commercial teachers can do much to develop the desired qualities by daily and firm insistence on high grade business conduct in all their student relationships.[36]

He believes that many fail to make satisfactory occupational adjustments because personality defects which true artist teachers could have prevented have gone uncorrected. He believes there is no escape from the responsibility of trait development.

> . . . the real teacher . . . will regard what he does in the way of good trait development as being far more important than what he does in the way of teaching the subject matter of his courses.[37]

The teacher training program. In 1919 Nichols made this statement:

> Of all the teachers engaged in commercial work, fully 75 per cent of them have had no special training for their profession.[38]

In 1934 he paints a changed picture of the situation. He asserts that most commercial teachers are approaching or already excel the best standards set for their academic colleagues. He believes, however, that they do not change their training and viewpoints to fit the changing economic needs.

> It is not so much a question of ability as it is of attitudes and viewpoints.[39]

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[36] Ibid., p. 160.

[37] The Bulletin--Tri-State Commercial Education Association, Fall, 1937, p. 11.

[38] Bulletin 34, p. 50.

[39] "A Sound Philosophy of Business Education," The Business Education World, June, 1936, p. 763.

In accordance with his beliefs for the pupil training program, Nichols believes that

> It is quite important that prospective teachers be given an opportunity to prepare to teach subjects that are in harmony with their interests, aptitudes and abilities as it is that prospective office and store workers should be afforded a certain range and choice in the matter of vocation. A multiple-curriculum program is essential.[40]

Nichols believes that

> . . . the program [of teacher training] must contain all the essential elements that, in turn, go into the making of a sound business-training program in the secondary school. Organizers and administrators of commercial teacher training must see to it that a reasonable degree of vocational competency is acquired by their trainees.[41]

He says further

> Commercial teachers should possess the personal characteristics and occupational intelligence which they are expected to develop in their pupils . . . they should be business like in the best sense of the term and hold their pupils up to the highest possible standard of business conduct in every way.[42]

> Truly successful teachers will be good citizens and, more or less unconsciously by their conduct, will stimulate their pupils to assume gladly and thoughtfully their full civil responsibilities.[43]

Teacher cooperation. Nichols believes that teachers can only keep a true perspective of their work by sensible cooperation with their fellow workers.

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40 "Administration and Supervision of Business Education," Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, 1930, Third Yearbook, p. 45.

41 Ibid., p. 46.

42 Commercial Education in the High School, p. 161.

43 Ibid., p. 13.

> . . . teachers must master the fine art of cooperating intelligently, effectively, and willingly with their fellow-teachers. All must minimize the evils attendant upon over-departmentalization in our public schools.
>
> Such departmentalization is a real obstacle in the way of achievement of the common aims of secondary schools, however important it may be that specialists shall teach the various subjects which make up the program.[44]

Nichols is eloquent in his statements regarding the true mission of the teacher.

> The mere mastery of subject-matter in a field of teaching may secure for one a place in the teaching profession, but it is no guarantee of his effectiveness as a teacher. Knowledge, broad and deep, is essential, perhaps indispensable, to a successful teaching career; but with the shifting aims of education there can be no real certainty that real success in teaching will be directly proportionate to the breadth and depth of knowledge possessed by the teacher. Skill in the effective use of such knowledge as is possessed surely is an important factor in the work of any teacher. Thus the art of teaching may be quite as important as is the professional aspect of this great calling. For this reason we must not glorify teaching as a learned profession while wholly denying or neglecting its art implications.
>
> True artistry depends upon qualities which, while possible of development, may not be created by professional study. Much valuable professional knowledge can be acquired, many classroom tricks or techniques may be learned, and a limited amount of teaching ability can be counted upon as an outcome of study in a school of education. But the art of using that knowledge, those classroom techniques and that teaching ability must be acquired through experience and surely will be beyond the reach of many who, professionally speaking, should be master-craftsmen.[45]

The commercial teacher training curriculum should include a broad, general education, as well as specialized training for the commercial field.

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[44] Ibid., p. 9.

[45] "Teaching, A Fine Art," Education, 56:8, September, 1932.

> The teacher, regardless of his subject, must by the very nature of his relationship to his pupils, influence their thinking on important matters entirely outside his special field. He must stimulate clear thinking to the end that clean-cut viewpoints may be established, while at the same time adhering to his own points of view. He must master the fine art of living in a more or less confidential relationship with his pupils without sidestepping these great life problems and without unduly influencing his pupils in arriving at solutions of them. The mastery of this fine art will depend more on what kind of a person he is, and what he does, than on what he knows and teaches.[46]

CONCLUSION

A summarization of the points set forth in this chapter concerning some of the definite views held by Nichols regarding the student-teacher personnel, includes:

Both students and teachers must have their aptitudes, interests, and abilities taken account of, if they are to be trained for successful work.

Educators must recognize that there is need for two divisions of students--non-vocational and vocational. Those not potentially trainable should not be permitted to enroll in the vocational commercial education courses.

Personality development is an essential part of the commercial educational program, if students and teachers are to guard against failure.

Teachers must recognize the causes of failure in their students. Failure is anything, from lack of student ability or indifference to physical defects, which prevents the student from becoming an efficient worker.

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[46] Ibid., p. 12.

Special ability for the particular type of business training desired is essential for both students and teachers.

Pupils and teachers must be cognizant of the future, as well as of the immediate, aspect of vocational training. Although their immediate goal is the initial job, they must be aware that it is an undesirable end-point in their careers. Routine jobs are not a source of satisfaction from an economic standpoint.

Nichols holds to the ideal that the true teacher is an artist, not merely an artisan, or a laborer.

The teacher-training program is inadequate. There must be a broad enough program offered so that commercial teachers may choose training best suited to their abilities. Teachers should receive training in both skill and social-business subjects. They must know more of the essentials of occupational requirements by actual contact in the field in which they are preparing to teach.

Commercial teachers must have a broad view of the whole school's program, and keep a sensible perspective of the importance of their own line of work in relation to the offerings of the school as a whole.

Trait development is perhaps more important than subject matter in the educative process.

Specialization and departmentalization must give way to broader aspects of the teacher's mission.

A true teacher must master the fine art of living.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary

The high points in Frederick G. Nichols' philosophy of secondary commercial education, as set forth in the conclusions contained in the foregoing chapters, are summarized in a brief review.

(1) It is imperative that commercial education adopt a standard terminology, compiled by some responsible agency, which uses facts and critical study as a basis for such a set of terms.

(2) All objectives set up for secondary commercial education must be achievable within the limited capacities of high school pupils, and within the limitations of the high school curriculum.

Occupational understanding, economic understanding, citizenship training, consumer efficiency, and social intelligence, should all be included in the objectives of the high school commercial department.

(3) An adequate program of secondary commercial education is only possible under the leadership of people trained in that capacity, who plan wisely and supervise constantly.

Research for the best solutions to constantly arising problems must be a continuous process in this field if commercial education fulfills its obligations to pupils, and to business.

(4) A multiple-choice curriculum must be provided, so that commercial students may choose offerings best suited to their various interests, aptitudes, and abilities.

In addition to skill training, subjects which yield adequate economic background training, are essential as a part of the high school commercial curriculum.

Vocational training should be divided into two periods--the pre-vocational and the vocational.

There must be segregation of vocational and non-vocational students.

Guidance is a necessary part of the commercial educational program. This function extends from the pre-vocational period to the initial-job period.

No high school business program is adequate unless it contains a comprehensive testing program.

(5) Educators must provide for the development of acceptable character and personality traits. Teachers themselves should exemplify the traits which they expect their students to develop.

Commercial teachers must possess a broad general education in addition to specialized knowledge. Occupational understanding, through actual contact with business, is essential for the imparting of vocational business knowledge.

The teacher of business education must possess an understanding of the whole educative process, and the commercial department's relation to the whole school's program.

2. Conclusions

Upon casual reading of his voluminous writings, one may come to the conclusion that Nichols is self-contradictory. This study has endeavored to show, rather, that his is an unfolding or a fluid philosophy, in that he constantly seeks to change his viewpoints as the needs of the social-economic order's requirements for secondary commercial education change.

Nor are his beliefs arrived at by the "arm-chair" method. He is constantly immersed in some research program of national scope and importance. This study has shown how phases of his educational policies have grown from these scientific findings. Thus, Nichols is no empiric--his interpretations are based on research and experiment. Scientific findings in the educational field are of greater value with philosophical interpretation such as that which Nichols furnishes.

A review of his writings shows that Nichols' present views of what secondary commercial education ought to be, in the light of his research investigations, are far ahead of the actual conditions under which commercial education is now administered in most high schools. He is a frontier thinker.

Nichols believes that vocational business training is effective only in terms of business and economic requirements. Such things as antiquated teaching methods and equipment, too much emphasis on the old triumverate of typewriting, bookkeeping, and shorthand, which has dominated the secondary commercial educational curriculum for many years, must give way to

a broader conception of commercial training, if it is to survive. Economic understanding is fundamental in any thorough vocational commercial program. Business training must keep in constant adjustment to a constantly changing economic order.

If Nichols seems unduly biased toward a vocational point of view, it is because he believes that, in our complex economic system, satisfactory living is based on the ability to earn a living. He holds no narrow conception of the latter phrase, however, and maintains that the pupil is not vocationally trained in the commercial field unless he has a background training which will take him beyond the initial-job level.

Although he believes that true vocational training in commercial education should be limited to those who possess the necessary aptitudes, interests, and abilities, this does not deny the American democratic ideal of free education for the masses. It simply means that it is futile, as well as unjust to the child, according to Nichols' viewpoint, to train him for an occupation in which he will be a misfit, whether due to lack of appropriate personality traits or mental or manual ability. At the present time, there is no absolutely sure way to identify occupational misfits before or during training, but Nichols is courageous enough to attempt an approach to the problem by assisting with such work as the construction of a comprehensive testing program for vocational ability.

All business education, according to Nichols, which does not have the vocational objective, yet adds to the pupil's efficiency as a citizen, should be recognized as general education, or more specifically, social science.

Nichols is no exalter of traditional subjects simply because they are traditional, but believes if more adequate courses are needed, teachers should not hesitate to discard worn-out subject matter.

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. It is assuming a place of respectability among the academics. If this belief is true, it is because such far-seeing educators as Frederick G. Nichols have fought courageously and consistently for business education's right to a place of equality in the ranks.

Nichols' philosophy is unfinished. He is probably just approaching the height of his productive power and worth in the field of secondary commercial education, and it is doubtful if a static philosophy would be desirable. What he believes today may not be what he will believe tomorrow in the light of new investigations, or the demands of a changing social order.

If it were possible to look back from some future vantage point, commercial education would probably be revealed as being in a very crude state today. But the way for a refinement, in which there will be no thought of a dualism between the vocational and the cultural, is being sought by

such pioneers as Frederick G. Nichols, who have caught a vision of the ultimate goal.

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

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