

# THE ROLE OF EQUIPMENT IN THE EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF STENOGRAPHIC SKILLS IN NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

*Ogunleye, Isaac Olugbemiga*

## **Abstract**

It is an assumption that "Technology poses no threat to the business educators". This means that, business educators are highly demanded and prized by employers of labour. Secretarial Education is one of the options of NCE business programme offered in most of the Nigerian Colleges of Education. The teaching of Secretarial Education skills is practical-oriented and demands adequate equipment in order to produce the desired results. This paper focused on the role of equipment in actualizing the much needed efficiency in the teaching of skills courses that are enshrined in Secretarial Education.

## **Introduction**

Until recently, the term, "Business Education", was synonymous with commercial education. Today, there is a general awareness of the concept of Business Education. Ulinfun (1992) in Ayanduba (1986) gave the latest and most acceptable definition of Business Education. According to him, Business Education is concerned with the education of the individual FOR business and ABOUT business. He analysed further that the former focuses on those who need career in business and the latter is for all students in the entire school system irrespective of their career aspirations.

Ulinfun (1992) said:

For the purpose of acceptability, especially at the level of tertiary institutions, business education is categorized into basic business courses .. secretarial course cluster.. and distributive education .. every course is competency-based and career oriented.

From the above point of view, it is noted that business education programme is made up of three components. Viz-a-viz. Accounting, Distributive and Secretarial Options respectively. Each of these options consists of varied number of courses. This explanation can be true of Business Education programme at degree level, but at Nigerian Certificate of Education level, business Education is made up of basically two options: Accounting Education and Secretarial options (NCCE Minimum Standards, 1996).

Secretarial Education option is made up of Shorthand, Typewriting and office practice/Management/Secretarial Duties. In this paper, the scope is on Secretarial Education option.

## **The Stenography Defined**

Arukwe (1992) in Roberts (1957) defined Stenography as "the science of taking dictation and transcribing it into mailable copy". It is purely the art of Shorthand writing and Typewriting.

From the above definitions, it could be observed tht Shorthand and typewriting are the skills in the art of stenographing. The questions now arise:

- (a) How can these skills be effortlessly and effectively imparted from skilled unto unskilled?
- (b) What are the relevance of equipment to the effective teaching of these skills
- (c) Are these equipment available at all?

Before attempting to answer these questions in relation to what the Minimum Standards prescribed by National Commission for Colleges of Education says, let us briefly look at the definitions and origins of the twin arts.

## **Definitions of Shorthand and Typewriting**

Shorthand is defined as the art of representing spoken sounds by written signs. Typewriting is herein defined as the art of processing and printing words and symbols by

means of the typewriter. It could otherwise be described as a subject that involves the use of typewriter.

### **History Of Shorthand And Typewriting**

**Shorthand:** Arukwe (1992) quoting Marou (1956) maintained that some kind of shorthand existed as early as the fourth century and an early invention of shorthand was attributed to Marcus Tiro, a freed Roman slave whose master was Cicero. One of the common shorthand forms with which we are currently familiar, the Pitman's Shorthand was invented by Sir Isaac Pitman in 1837. He called it the stenographic soundhand. Since then, many other forms have been evolved. This was confirmed by Arukwe (1992) quoting Dewey (1954) when he said:

In the century since Pitman inaugurated the modern era of English Language Shorthand, more than a thousand different systems of shorthand, not textbooks, systems have been published in English alone.

Some common forms of shorthand systems are Pitman system (1837); Pitman Greg (1893); Machine shorthand (1910); Speedwriting (1923); Stenoscript (1950); Forkner (1952); Stenospeed (1953); Brie Hand (1957); Century 21 (1974) and guichhand (1974) (Arukwe, 1992:58).

**Typewriting:** This subject has its peculiar history. Arukwe (1992:58) quoting Gould (1950) gave the account that the first typewriter was invented by an Englishman in 1714 with a patent no. 359 in the days of Queen Anne. The machine was so imperfect that few people had any use of it. Unfortunately, there was no straight record as to who really perfected this typewriter but by 1888 the typewriter had become an essential office machine. Originally two fingers were used to type, this later changed to four. Six, eight, then to the present nine-fingers method. Typing has also changed from sight typewriting to the present method of typing by touch.

### **NCE Shorthand And Typewriting.**

In an attempt to answer the first of the previously raised questions, let us see how the National Commission for Colleges of Education prescribed minimum standards to maintain in teaching the twin arts from year one to the terminal year of NCE Business Education programme (see appendix 1).

From appendix 1, these facts are noted. The prescribed contact hours for the teaching of shorthand in particular are not enough to combat the persistent high failure rate in shorthand, but one thing remains factual, the secretarial education students still have other business courses and an array of education courses to contend with.

Also, it is painstakingly noted that shorthand and typewriting are not given the special attention that they deserve. Not enough credit hours are given to the teaching of skill building and development, and in fact no special periods are allocated to the teaching of transcription, which is sine-qua-non to proficiency in shorthand writing in particular.

### **Equipment For The Teaching OT Shorthand And Typewriting**

The discourse herein highlighted tries to answer the remaining two of the previously raised questions. Man has collected information of one kind or another serve his daily needs. In his search for better ways of gathering and processing information, man has invented and improved many tools and equipment. Equipment, within the usage of this context is defined as tools that are needed in order to achieve a purposeful end.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education greatly realised the relevance of equipment to the effective teaching of Shorthand and Typewriting, when along with the prescribed course outlines, listed certain equipment and facilities to be used (See Appendix 11).

Oyedele (1992) said, just as textbooks must be selected and made available, adequate equipment and proper maintenance of equipment is also a necessary for an effective business education programme. Unlike other study areas., skill in typewriting can never be acquired by merely studying about them from a textbook. Skills are easily acquired by doing. A typewriting laboratory is not adequately, equipped if it does not have enough typewriters to provide one

typewriter in good working condition for each student that is enrolled in the class. A standard and well equipped typewriting laboratory should have all of the items listed in Appendix III.

Regrettably, not all Colleges of Education in the country can boast of having all or majority of the items catalogued in Appendix III. As regards the second to the last items in Appendix III (word processor), the trend in business world today has even shifted from electric typewriters to word processors and recently computer, but most secretarial education departments can not parade the prescribed number of word processors let alone computer, in their laboratory. Worst still, most business/secretarial education departments do not even have computers. Computer Appreciation (as a course unit in Colleges of Education) is a story telling affair.

Recent breakthrough in communication devices such as E-mail, Internet and networking which are all associated with computer are still mysterious in the sight of business/secretarial education students in our Colleges of Education. Even, the state of equipment (computer inclusive) in business education departments in some universities is a sorry sight.

The relevance of audio-typing equipment in perfecting the students' skills for tomorrow's challenges is quite interesting. Oyedele (1992) quoting Swanson (1969) observed that 'what has been called the language laboratory approach has been applied in the teaching of shorthand, typewriting, business communication and office skills'.

All the items listed in Appendix III are since qua non to the effective teaching of shorthand. Shorthand laboratory should have in addition to items in Appendix III, the following items:

- a. Dictating machines/ Tape recorders w-ith ear phones
- b. Recorded shorthand cassettes (for various speeds)
- c. Stop-watch/Stop-clock
- d. Shorthand reference books (dictionary, encyclopedia, etc.).

The use; of dictation machines or, alternatively tape recorders, in shorthand laboratory cannot be over-stressed. Olorunmaiye (1992) said that tapes (cassettes) with specialized terminology - business, technical, medical and educational can be made available in shorthand laboratory. He said further that short-form tapes, correlated with short-form charts in textbooks, may be provided so that the short forms may be practiced from dictation. Recorded shorthand cassettes are very useful for advanced shorthand writing, but it is however, sadly noted that the standard cassettes are very difficult to come by and the few ones are foreign-made.

## **Recommendation**

The important roles played by equipment in the effective teaching of shorthand and

typewriting had been uncovered in this paper. In the light of this, the followings are suggested:

- (a) For the effective teaching of secretarial education skills, the laboratories meant for instructions should be well equipped with modern and up-to-date equipment. This is necessary so as to produce business education products that will meet the challenges of today's business world. 'Anything worth doing at all is worth doing well'. If 'half bread is better than none' in most cases, it is not in the case of secretarial education.
- (b) The deliberate or otherwise omission of computer and its associated communication devices as part of equipment to be purchased for business/secretarial education department in the MCE Minimum Standards (Vocations - 1996) should be redressed in the subsequent review.
- (c) As business educators, let us act in a businesslike manner., the expenses for the procurement of word-processing, as contained in Appendices II and III, may be avoided if alternatively, the respective authorities could purchase enough systems (computers) which will be used in teaching Computer Appreciation to NCE students as Computing cannot be properly taught without computer. Then the opportunity should be exploited. The application software like word-processing programs (such as Word-Perfect 6.0 & 6.1 and MS-Word) could be bought at relatively cheaper price and installed in the computer system. This processing program is a good and permanent substitute for separate word-processing typewriter.
- (d) The business educators should organise a forum at which shorthand cassettes can be made, standardized and unified. This will help to combat the dearth of recorded shorthand cassettes in the shorthand laboratories.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Secretarial Education is one of the options available for Business Education students in Nigerian Colleges of Education. The core courses that constitute secretarial education are shorthand and Typewriting. Shorthand and typewriting are practical-oriented subjects that need adequate supply and maintenance of appropriate equipment. Presently, almost all the business education/secretarial education departments are plagued by the inadequate equipment for teaching and learning of these courses Oyedele (1992), in his own words:

Nigerian children and youth are being educated more in accordance with yesterday's world rather than in preparation for tomorrow's living.

Without adequate equipment and instructional resources, the programme designed to provide efficient training in secretarial education can not be effective.

### **APPENDLX 1**

#### **NCE Business Education Course Content Shorthand and Typewriting**

#### **YEAR ONE**

##### **First Semester**

Course Code	Course Title	Contact-hours
BED 116 117	Shorthand Theory 1 Typewriting (Keyboarding)	L-T-P 1-0-4

##### **Second Semester**

BED 126 127	Shorthand Theory 11 Typewriting (Keyboarding)	2-0-4 1-0-4
----------------	--	----------------

#### **YEAR TWO**

##### **First Semester**

BED 126 227	Shorthand Typewriting	2-0-4 2-0-4
----------------	--------------------------	----------------

#### **YEAR THREE**

##### **First Semester**

BED 316 317	Shorthand Typewriting	1-1-4 1-1-4
----------------	--------------------------	----------------

##### **Second Semester**

BED 326 327	Shorthand Typewriting	2-0-4 2-0-4
----------------	--------------------------	----------------

Culled from NCE minimum Standards for NCE programmes - Vocations. 1996)

**APPENDLX II**

**List of Equipment and Facilities for Teaching of Business Education Skills  
(30 Students)**

S/N	EQUIPMENT	NUMBER
1.	Typewriters (a) Manual	30
	(b) Electric	30
	(c) Selectric	5 or
	(d) Word-processor	5
2.	Swivel typing chairs	30
3.	Drop desk, typist desk or convetrical desk	30
4.	Copy holders	30
5.	Steel cabinets	3
6.	4-drawer filing cabinet	3
7.	Instructor's chair	1
8.	Instructor's desk	1
9.	Stapling machine	4
10.	Staple remover	1
11.	Guillotine (paper cutter)	1
12.	Perforator	2
13.	Stop-watch	3
14.	Wall-clock	1
15.	Demonstration stand	1
16.	Ruler (metric)	30
17.	2 or 3 big English/Shorthand	

**Source:** NCE Minimum Standards for Vocational & Technical Educations (1996)

**APPENDIX III**

**Suggested List of Equipment for Typewriting Laboratory**

- Manual typewriters (enough number and in good working condition)
- 1. Swivel typing chairs (enough number)
- 3. Typing desk (top-flat & enough number)
- 4. Instructor's chair and desk
- 5. Wall clock
- 6. Stop watch
- 7. Perforators
- 8. Guillotine machine
- 9. Rulers (metric)
- 10. Demonstration stand
- 11. English Dictionary
- 12. Stapling machines
- 13. Electric typewriters (enough number)
- 14. Audio-typing machine (in ratio 1 to 2 students)
- 15. Word-processors (in ratio 1 to 2 students)
- 16. Computers (installed with current unility software and connected with current communication devices/software (Adapted and modified from Appendix II.)

## **References**

- Ayanduba, M. O. (1986). "A Prefatory Address". *Business Education and Society, Educational Journal*. I (8).
- Arukwe, O. N. (1992). "Acquiring the Stenographic Skill for Self-Reliance and Economic Growth". *Educational Journal*. 2 (1). 58-59.
- Dewey. G. (1954). *Teaching Shorthand Proceedings of 1045*, Business Education Institute. Teachers College, University of Cincinnati.
- Marou, II. 1 (1950), *Hislory of Education in Antiquity*. London: Sheed and Ward.
- National Commission for Colleges of Education (1996) *NCE Minimum Standards for Technical and Vocational Education*. Kaduna: National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCE). 22-26.
- Olorumaiye, J. A. (1992). "The Theory and Methodology of Teaching and Learning Pitman Shorthand". Unpublished Instructional Material. Department of Vocational and Technical Education. ABU. Zaria.
- Onasanya, S. A. B (1990). *In Effective Secretary Nigeria* Longman Limited 1.
- Oyedele, J. F. (1992), Facilities for Business Education for Self-Reliance. *Business. Education Journal*. 2(4). 137 & 141.
- Pitman, I. (1837). *New Course - New Era Pitman Shorthand*. London: Pitman Publishing Company, viii.
- Roberts, R. W. (1957,), *Vocational and Practical Arts Education*, New York: Harper and Row' Publishers.
- Swanson, E. A. (1969). Self Instructional Equipment and Supplementary Aids. *Business Education, National Business Education Yearbook*. 1 (2). 161-171.
- Ulinfun, E. F. (1992). "Related Issues in Teaching and Evaluation of Business Education Courses, Focus on Shorthand Skill Development at Tertiary Institutions. *Journal of Technical Teacher Education*. 1 (1). II.