

RELEVANCE IN THE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM
OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

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A PROJECT

Submitted to
the Graduate Studies Committee
of the School of Education
California State College, Bakersfield
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION

June 1974

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is hereby acknowledged to Doctors Donald C. Bridgman, Michal C. Clark, and Howard Rudd of the Faculty of California State College, Bakersfield, and also Joe M. Newton, of the faculty of Bakersfield College for their support and assistance in the development and completion of this study.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The community college is establishing itself as a vital ingredient of the educational system of today. Although this institution is growing at a rapid pace, it is still encountering many of the problems which have faced other institutions in our educational system. Are students of the community college automatically challenged in their academic pursuits once they become involved in the college curriculum? Is there a constant need to provide students with meaningful experiences and new challenges so that they can be adequately prepared to establish themselves in a working society? Blocker, Plummer and Richardson saw a need to challenge the community college student when they said, "The primary problem faced by the comprehensive community college is the challenging of students to grow to the limits of their abilities."¹

¹Clyde E. Blocker, Robert H. Plummer and Richard C. Richardson, Jr., The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 131.

To challenge these students, a curriculum has to be relevant to their interests and needs. Many different meanings have been given to the terms "relevant curriculum" and "relevant education." Maxwell and Winnett defined relevant education as that education which is useful to the student.² Berardi viewed a relevant curriculum as that curriculum which is meaningful to the times and situations that are currently existing.³ Thornton stated that community college curricula must be clearly relevant to the demands of modern times.⁴ Crews and Carr stated that, "Professional educators must be sensitive to students' needs and provide curriculum content, instructional materials, and appropriate methodology to meet these needs."⁵

Students are well aware of whether or not a curriculum meets their needs according to Edwards. He said that, ". . . students in community colleges will frequently

²Gerald W. Maxwell and William L. Winnett, eds., Assessing Relevance in Business Education, Relevance in the Education of Today's Business Student, No. 11 (Washington, D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1973), p. 282.

³Allen Berardi, interview held at Bakersfield College, April 22, 1974.

⁴James W. Thornton, Jr., The Community Junior College, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1972), p. 11.

⁵James W. Crews and Glenna D. Carr, "Reactions from Business Teachers," eds. Gerald W. Maxwell and William L. Winnett, Relevance in the Education of Today's Business Student, No. 11 (Washington D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1973), p. 280.

question the relevancy of specific courses within a chosen curriculum."⁶ He mentioned that students who have definite goals in mind are looking for the shortest route leading to the beginning of a career, and that many students often delay, or even forfeit their Associate Degree if they find courses irrelevant or redundant.

Why is a relevant curriculum necessary within the community college? Blocker, Plummer, and Richardson stated that curriculum and instruction are the two major dimensions which stimulate the learning process in students. They further mentioned that the purpose of such a curriculum is to induce change demonstrated in more mature behavior, intellectual development, and personal competence; and that curricula have to keep up with the changing social and economic patterns of today.⁷ Brossman stated that one of the foremost goals of post-secondary education is to prepare students to make a career choice and enter chosen careers successfully.⁸ Thus, the curriculum of the community college has to be relevant to the

⁶Ronald K. Edwards, "Junior and Community Colleges," Changing Methods of Teaching Business Subjects, No. 10, eds. Leroy Brendel and Herbert Yengel (Washington, D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1972), p. 259.

⁷Blocker, Plummer, and Richardson, The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis, p. 131.

⁸Sidney W. Brossman, California Views Toward State-wide Governance of Community Colleges (Tallahassee: Department of Higher Education, Florida State University, 1973), p. 30.

individual needs of the students. These students, according to Thornton, represent a cross-section of the community and bring with them a wide range of tested aptitudes and levels of attainment. They have a diversity of backgrounds, of preparations, of experiences, and of ambitions.⁹

What has been said regarding the importance of relevance within the business curriculum? Maxwell and Winnett stated that, "Relevant business education is that education which provides the business student with the knowledges and skills which he perceives to be realistic according to his personal goals and objectives."¹⁰ Glas remarked that, ". . . schools of business are professional schools and have not only the right, but the duty to develop curriculums to meet the demands of students and the business world."¹¹ Douglas, Blanford, and Anderson emphasized that when teaching adults, the business teacher must fit his instructional materials and teaching methods to what he feels are the needs and desires of his students.¹²

⁹Thornton, The Community Junior College, p. 145.

¹⁰Maxwell and Winnett, "Assessing Relevance in Business Education," p. 282.

¹¹R. E. Glas, "The Establishment of Curriculums in Higher Education for Business," Education for Business Beyond High School, Fourteenth Yearbook of the American Business Education Yearbook, XIV (Somerville, New Jersey: Somerset Press, 1957), p. 156.

¹²Lloyd V. Douglas, James T. Blanford and Ruth I. Anderson, Teaching Business Subjects (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 475.

Relevant, or meaningful, curricula have to contain material stimulating motivation. Maxwell and Winnett indicated that students, when they sense that their courses are relevant to their desires in life, become motivated.¹³ Callahan mentions stimulating motivation includes the selection of pupil materials, interesting narrative accounts in class lectures, relating course content to the life of the students, and using course-related projects geared to the students' interests.¹⁴ Motivation has proved to be an essential element to facilitate learning, yet can it be overlooked in the college classroom?

The Problem

Based on the information presented in the introduction of this study, two premises can be drawn. First, students desire a curriculum that is relevant to their interests. Second, faculty and administrators need to provide a curriculum that is meaningful to students.

The purpose of this study is to determine if a lack of relevance does exist within the business management segment of the community college curriculum. If irrelevance can be established, then an evaluation as to its nature should follow, along with recommendations as to

¹³Maxwell and Winnett, "Assessing Relevance in Business Education," p. 291.

¹⁴Sterling G. Callahan, Successful Teaching in Secondary Schools (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1971), p. 277.

how it can be diminished. The intent of this study is to either affirm or reject the hypotheses contained in the next section.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been set up in order to ascertain whether or not irrelevance exists in the business management curriculum within the community college.

Primary Hypotheses:

1. There will be a significant degree of irrelevance regarding the business management curriculum as viewed by students.
2. Faculty members of the community colleges are aware of irrelevance within the business management curriculum and are seeking to correct it.
3. Factors contributing to relevance can be combined to form the basis for a new business management course.

Secondary Hypotheses:

1. A significant number of business management students will indicate that their teachers have not given them outside assignments.
2. A greater percentage of business management students will indicate that they have not had

guest speakers and career information in their courses as compared to those who have.

3. A majority of business management students will declare that they have not had any outside assignments designed for them to become involved with the world of business; by observing and/or meeting the business leaders of the community.
4. Faculty and administrators will acknowledge the lack of use of simulation games and case studies.

Definition of Terms:

"Relevant curriculum": courses of study that are meaningful to the needs and desires of the students.

"Motivation": an internal desire by individuals to induce action often resulting from the use of incentives.

"Goldbricking": to loaf on the job or evade responsibility.

CHAPTER II

RELEVANT TEACHING METHODS

Of the many teaching methods in use today some have stood out as being more relevant than others. The employment of teaching methods has to take into consideration the interests of the students as well as the types of students society needs.

What kinds of students is society looking for? One of the most important needs in education today is that of producing individuals who are capable of solving problems. Douglas, Blanford, and Anderson said, "Today's educational philosophy strongly emphasizes the desirability of producing a graduate of our schools who is capable of solving life's problems as he meets them."¹⁵ Maxwell and Winnett commented that students need experience in practical problem-solving.¹⁶ Gordon said that skills in problem-solving and interpersonal relationships are needed by businessmen.¹⁷

¹⁵Douglas, Blanford and Anderson, Teaching Business Subjects, p. 65.

¹⁶Maxwell and Winnett, "Assessing Relevance in Business Education," p. 286.

¹⁷Robert A. Gordon and James E. Howell, Higher Education for Business (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 104-105.

What types of teaching methods are best suited to provide skills in problem-solving? Educators should be constantly seeking to initiate new methods of instruction, but many of the traditional ones are still proving themselves to be practical and relevant. Gordon and Howell mentioned that business schools should emphasize the use of case studies, role-playing, and other types of assignments that will give students some limited experience in dealing with the kinds of problems they will encounter in the world of business.¹⁸ Maxwell and Winnett stressed case studies and games among other methods as being effective tools in the improvement of problem-solving skills.¹⁹ Daughtrey looked at case problems as being a very effective way to help students gain an ability to solve problems.²⁰

Besides problem-solving skills, many business leaders and educators today recommend that students be exposed to the world of business first hand. Price, Hopkins, and Duff stated, "If there is to be relevance in the education of today's student, and especially of future students, there

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 135-136.

¹⁹ Maxwell and Winnett, "Assessing Relevance in Business Education," p. 286.

²⁰ Anne Scott Daughtrey, Methods of Basic Business and Economic Education (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1965), p. 565.

must be communication, reaction, interaction, and exchange of ideas and materials between educators and business."²¹

Kilchenstein felt that in order to make instruction more realistic, courses should involve students with the community by having them visit businesses, or inviting businessmen into the classroom. He also stated that the assignment of projects where students would have to visit businesses would add more relevance to the curriculum.²² Douglas made mention of the interview as a definite skill to be learned which would be valuable in many life situations. He mentioned that virtually all distributive workers employ the field interview in their work.²³

The supplying of career information to students, although not a method, is still critically needed. Students are often undecided as to their educational and occupational goals. Maxwell and Winnett stated that business teachers and counselors should work cooperatively to supply adequate and accurate career information to students, and that business teachers must take an active role in communicating

²¹Ray G. Price, Charles R. Hopkins, and Thomas B. Duff, "Basic Business," Changing Methods of Teaching Business Subjects, No. 10, ed. Leroy Brendel and Herbert Yengel (Washington, D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1972), p. 23.

²²Dolores Kilchenstein, "Parents and Community Leakers," Relevance in the Education of Today's Business Student, No. 11, ed. Gerald D. Maxwell and William L. Winnett (Washington D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1973) pp. 82-83.

²³Douglas, Blanford, and Anderson, Teaching Business Subjects, p. 458.

effectively with counselors and students alike. The rapport teachers have with students often provides opportunities for the discussion of career information.²⁴

²⁴Maxwell and Winnett, "Assessing Relevance in Business Education," pp. 288-289.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In order to establish the extent of irrelevance within the business management curriculum of the community college, the writer has used the interview and survey as instruments for gathering information.

Interview: Faculty and Administrators

The examination of literature in the area of curriculum relevance established a need for additional research. The writer wished to find out more about the organization of the community college as well as to inquire of faculty and administrators concerning curriculum relevance.

Interviews were conducted with personnel at Bakersfield College in Bakersfield, California. The persons interviewed represented the areas of student placement, counseling, continuing education, and business education. Each of those interviewed was asked questions relative to his current and/or past assignments. The questions asked (see Appendix A) can be classified into three categories as follows:

1. Questions about the make-up of the community college--its organization, its curriculum, and its students.

2. Questions regarding curriculum relevance.
3. Questions concerning the feasibility, relevance, and justification for a proposed course in business management.

Interview: Representatives of
Community and Business

A second group of interviews was conducted with representatives from local businesses and the community for the purpose of establishing a market for the proposed business management course and to procure information for the course content. A random sample of eleven persons of management positions was contacted by telephone and asked to answer sixteen questions (see Appendix B). The businesses contacted represented a sample of the community in size and in purpose. All answers were then categorized and conclusions drawn.

Survey: Student Attitudes

One way of determining curriculum relevance is by asking the recipients--the students. A survey was selected as the most efficient and effective way of gathering this information (see Appendix C). A sample population of evening division students was surveyed to discover their attitudes regarding the present business management curriculum. Seven different business management classes were selected to complete the surveys, of which ninety students responded. The survey instrument itself was self-

explanatory in purpose and directions. Students were asked to choose the best response for each question and comment when applicable. There were a total of eighteen open-ended and single-response questions. A duplicate survey arising from a student who was taking more than one evening business management class was discarded. Completed surveys were collected, responses were categorized, and conclusions drawn. Survey questions can be classified into the following three groups:

1. Questions asking for personal information from students such as age, sex, and occupation.
2. Questions about student feelings regarding business management courses they have had.
3. Questions regarding student preferences for scheduling and course types.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The student population at Bakersfield College is increasing each year, according to the administrators and faculty interviewed. The business department especially is one of the four fastest growing departments in student enrollment with courses in business management gaining popularity among students.²⁵

Major Findings

Faculty and Administrators

As stated previously, the purpose for interviewing the faculty and administrators of Bakersfield College was to determine if irrelevance existed in the business curriculum. The respondents admitted that a lack of relevance was present in the business curriculum. However, they felt that a certain amount of irrelevance will always exist in any educational program. Berardi and Newton added that progress is being made in this area in the form of teacher

²⁵ Interviews with Allen C. Berardi, Fred Ittner, Clifton Garrett, Richard Harkins and Joe M. Newton, at Bakersfield College, Bakersfield, California, April 1974.

awareness, improved methods and techniques, and curriculum advisory committees.

The curriculum advisory committees represent an important step toward adding relevancy to the curriculum both currently and in the future, according to Berardi. He mentioned a twelve member committee made up of faculty and local business leaders whose purpose was to involve the college with the community and having the following goals: (1) to find out what is happening in the business community, (2) to communicate to the community the programs and objectives of the community college, and (3) to draw upon the experiences of business leaders in the planning of curriculum.

When asked if the business department had any means of evaluating existing programs and instruction, Berardi replied that instructors and their courses were evaluated every two years by students through the use of a questionnaire. He also stated that no survey of curriculum and instruction had been administered to business students to the best of his recollection.

Questions were directed at respondents concerning the reasons as to why certain courses were viewed as popular among students while others were not. The reason for a course being popular, they said, was due to its practicality and relevance to the students taking it. The

opposite is true, they said, for courses having a low popularity among students.

Chapter III mentioned a number of teaching methods that some educators felt were relevant in the teaching of business subjects. The writer asked the respondents about the use of these methods within their own institution.

The questions and their typical responses are listed below:

- Q. #1 To what degree do you employ the case study method at Bakersfield College?
- R. #1 The case study method is used mostly in courses dealing in business law.
- Q. #2 Do teachers use business games in their classes?
- R. #2 I believe we do to a limited extent in the personnel and human relations course, and quite possibly in the supervision course.
- Q. #3 Is career information being given to students in any of the business courses?
- R. #3 No. There is a need for such information to be given out to students.
- Q. #4 Have any of the business teachers employed the use of the interview as a method of providing relevance to their courses?
- R. #4 Only in the work experience programs.
- Q. #5 Is there a business club for students at Bakersfield College?
- R. #5 No. An interested teacher would have to start one and carry it through.
- Q. #6 Does the business department work with the placement office in finding jobs for students in their fields of study?
- R. #6 No. The placement office generally notifies us when a student is placed in a job. We usually have to contact

businessmen ourselves in order to make sure a student is employed in his field of interest.

Q. #7 Do you have seminars in which businessmen are invited to speak to interested students?

R. #7 No. This might be a possibility for the future.

As one can see by the responses above, there is room for improvement in most of the areas mentioned.

Survey of Students

The students surveyed were asked to respond as to whether or not their business management courses were helpful to their own goals and objectives. Of the seventy respondents to the question (see question #9 in Appendix C), 21% stated that the courses were either not helpful or sometimes helpful, while 79% felt that they were helpful. The 21% opens up the possibility that irrelevance could exist within the business management curriculum.

Students were also asked four questions having to do with the teaching methods mentioned in Chapter II. When asked if outside reports were required for their classes, 43% responded yes, 36% no, with 21% not responding. The most common types of outside assignments given to students were term papers. The types of term papers were not specified by the students, which could effect whether or not they were relevant to the course. The above figures seem to indicate that many of the instructors are using

the term paper as one method of providing a meaningful curriculum for students.

Three questions concerning guest speakers, career information, and outside assignments dealing with the observation and/or interviewing of local business leaders were given to students to find out if these teaching methods were being used to any extent in the classroom. Table #1 indicates that only about 41% of the students responding had guest speakers. Table #1 also shows that career information was given to only 22% of the respondents. Seventy-five per cent of the respondents to the question on outside reports were not given the opportunity to meet and interview the public (see Table #1). The above figures strongly indicate some weak points in the curriculum of many of the business courses.

Students were also asked to respond to open-ended questions concerning their likes and dislikes of business management courses they have taken as well as the instruction given. Of the total responses given, a greater percentage of students felt that the quality of the instruction, the relating of course content to their interests, and the fact that the material covered was of interest to them, were the biggest factors contributing to course enjoyment.

Students felt that the strong points of their instructors of business management courses were that they

were well-prepared, knowledgeable, helpful, and that they made the classes both interesting and relevant to their interests. The major weak points of their instructors were that they were not interesting and were inexperienced at teaching.

Probably the most interesting of the survey questions was #20--suggestions for course improvement (see Table #3). The most frequent response by students was the relating of course content to the job situations of students. There were also responses asking that more guest speakers be used in classes, and that more role-playing should take place. The majority of the responses relate to the actual needs of the students.

Summary

The above findings indicate that irrelevance is present in the business management curriculum of Bakersfield College, and that the primary and secondary hypotheses appear valid. The faculty and administrators admit that there is room for curriculum improvement. The students indicated by their responses some of the weaknesses existing in the present curriculum.

Minor Findings

The following findings are considered minor in importance in that they are not relevant to the initial hypotheses:

1. The average age of the sample student population was 32.2 years. There were seven female students with an average age of 33.9 years, and eighty-three males with a mean age of 32.0 years.

2. The nine major occupational classifications for the student sample are listed in Table #2. These classifications might prove to be a valuable source in determining the marketing potential of future business management courses.

3. All but five of the students in the student sample were attending evening division classes only.

4. Approximately 65% of the students surveyed were carrying between 10 and 15 semester units of course work.

5. Approximately 76% of the students surveyed preferred the class schedule of a one three-hour session.

6. The largest percentage of sampled students favored the 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. time schedule in which to have their classes.

7. Of the 85 students responding to a question giving them a choice of selecting future management courses, 29.1% responded that they preferred courses in problem-solving, 32.7% to courses in decision-making, 35.5% to courses dealing with the improvement of management skills, and 2.7% to other courses.

8. Bakersfield College has a current enrollment of between 11,000 and 12,000 students--5,000 day and 7,000 evening students.

9. The estimated per cent of the student population enrolled in business courses at Bakersfield College was between 10% and 15%.

10. The quality of the evening division classes is the responsibility of the day administrators.

11. The business courses that the faculty and administrators felt could be more meaningful to students were business mathematics and business finance.

12. The business subject areas appearing to be of most interest to students were accounting, secretarial training, and business management.

13. The subject area within the business department that was declining the most in interest and enrollment was shorthand. The reason given for this decline, according to Berardi, was that students felt the course involved too much work.

CHAPTER V

COURSE PROPOSAL

This chapter proposes a new business management course for Bakersfield College which has been designed to increase relevance. Even though this course is being proposed for Bakersfield College, it can easily be adapted to the management curriculum of other institutions. The title of the proposed course is, "Management Problem-Solving and Decision-Making." This course will look at how problems can be defined and analyzed, as well as how to arrive at possible solutions through the processes of decision-making. The course will also look at how management skills can be improved so as to better prepare individuals to solve problems.

Justification Of Need For Proposed Course

Chapter II pointed out that skills in problem solving were needed in today's business world, and that schools should provide learning experiences in order to enhance these skills. Interviews of community college personnel revealed that a few courses do provide these experiences, but that no single course had been designed that focused heavily on this subject. All of those inter-

viewed agreed that a course of this type might have merit if its existence was justified.

The writer used two methods to find out how the public might respond to such a course--the student survey, and an interview of community businessmen. Students were found to favor, almost equally, courses dealing in problem-solving, making decisions, and improvement of job skills (see Secondary Findings in Chapter IV). This finding lead the writer to design a course with these topics in mind. Students indicated by their responses to question #20, that they desired a course which was relevant to their job situations. Of the nineteen suggestions given by students to improve business management courses, five concerned job relevancy.

The results of interviews with community businessmen indicated that most of them were desirous of their employees improving job skills through additional education. Of the total of eleven businessmen interviewed, only two saw no need for their management personnel to attend the community college to improve their skills. One of the respondents felt that the company to which he belonged provided ample instruction for training personnel, while the other stated that management personnel were already graduates of college and would learn all they needed to know on the job itself. The nine businessmen who saw a need for their staff to attend the community college also felt that the courses

being offered should concern the job interests of students. They also indicated their approval of the proposed course and said they would cooperate with the community college in its promotion. They indicated that if they were aware of the types of courses being offered in the community college, and if their staff had a need for certain skills, they would not hesitate to recommend these courses to them. When asked if they gave their employees any incentives to attend courses, two businessmen replied that their companies reimbursed employees when they completed courses as well as to cite the accomplishment in the employee's personnel file. The other seven businessmen indicated that the only incentive was the recording of the completed course in the personnel files of employees.

Another objective of the interview was to find out if businesses had common needs or problems which could be added to course curriculum for discussion. If certain needs or problems stood out as being more prevalent than others, then their discussion would help establish relevance in the classroom. The businessmen were, first of all, asked questions about the operations of their business. All but two of the businessmen indicated that their company had job descriptions for each job. All of the respondents indicated that they had a training program for their employees. Five out of eleven of the businessmen interviewed said that their company has conducted studies

on how the telephone is being used by employees to communicate with the public.

The businessmen were also asked to define some of the problem areas they encountered in the daily operations of their business. General personnel problems, conflict due to dual authority, and a lack of communication were problem areas that were cited more than once by the respondents. Other areas presenting problems were motivation, dishonesty, union affairs, carelessness, employees' inability to follow-up on assignments, federal legislation, and the need for more company-oriented personnel.

When the respondents were asked to enumerate the type of personnel problems they encountered most frequently, they responded by citing communication, turnover, and the inability of employees to get along with one another as their three major problem areas. Absenteeism, carelessness, fair play, union strife, the lack of follow-through on assignments, and "goldbricking," were other problem areas mentioned.

The respondents were also asked to specify the type of topics they would like to see covered in a business management course dealing with the daily problems that beset management. Communication was by far the most chosen topic with four choices, followed by time management with two, and motivation with two. Other areas of interest were political trend legislation, interpersonal relationships, labor relations, the interviewing and

hiring of job applicants, and learning how to relax amid the pressures of being a manager.

The topic areas above that appear to be more prevalent and which might lend themselves to discussion in the proposed course are the use of the telephone, communication, conflict due to dual authority, turnover, employee conflict, time management, and motivation. If this course did become a part of the existing curriculum within a community college, students should also be encouraged to discuss their own needs and problem areas.

The potential market for the proposed course is hard to estimate. Almost all of the respondents to the student survey indicated their interest in one of the three subject areas covered by the course. All of the businessmen interviewed showed interest in the course, and each of them estimated the number of personnel of management potential with their company locally who might be interested in taking a management course of this type. Table #4 shows the type of businesses the respondents were engaged in and the management potential for the proposed course.

Desirability Of Proposed Course
In The Community College

Thornton stated that one of the philosophic guidelines of the community college was to provide a situation

by which students could bring their occupational skills up to date, or perhaps learn new skills so that they could advance in their work.²⁶ Certainly the course will fit this philosophy in that problem-solving and decision-making are skills which add to the betterment of individuals.

The community college personnel interviewed saw the need for more courses in business management, especially since this subject area was becoming more popular with students. When questioned, they also stated that a course of this type could easily fit into the existing curriculum without too much conflict with other courses and instructors. The reactions of students and businessmen have already been elaborated on in the previous section under justification.

Feasibility Of Proposed Course

As stated above, this course could easily fit into the business management curriculum. No special equipment would be needed for the course other than audio-visual, and the instructional facilities would be the same as those used for other business management courses. Only one instructor would be required to initiate the course and it is preferred that he have both an educational background in business as well as actual business experience. The costs of the

²⁶Thornton, The Community Junior College, p. 36.

course will be the same as the more traditional courses in business management such as personnel and supervision.

The course should be advertised both on campus and in the community. A special effort should be made to contact businesses employing large numbers of management personnel. An estimated number of students enrolling in this course initially would be between twenty and thirty, with an anticipated increase once the course has been established and has gained support from students.

Course Design

MANAGEMENT PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING

Three hours per week

Number of Units: 3

Prerequisites: None

Catalogue Description:

A study on identifying and approaching business problems. This course will also view the processes involved in decision-making, and how to improve management skills. Problems common to many businesses will be discussed and applied to case studies.

Testbooks:

How to Build Management Skills; Joseph G. Mason, McGraw-Hill, 1965.

Case Analysis and Business Problem Solving; Kenneth E. Schnelle, McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Supplementary Materials: Teacher

Incidents in Applying Management Theory; Richard N. Farmer, Barry M. Richman, and William G. Ryan, Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1966.

Solving Salesmen's Slumps; The Institute of Real Estate Brokers of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, March 1965.

Advanced Management Journal; Vol. 29, No. 1, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., January 1964.

Course Objectives:

1. To develop a more positive attitude regarding the management of personnel and business operations.
2. To help students become aware of ideas and techniques that would lead to the improvement of management skills.
3. To bring about a better understanding of how to isolate and approach business problems.
4. To help students understand and work with the processes involved in decision-making.
5. To help students become aware of possible problems within a business organization which could lead to inefficiency.
6. To encourage students to survey their own business operations for problem areas of inefficiency.

Behaviorial Objectives:

1. By the use of class discussions and objective examinations, students will demonstrate their knowledge of assigned readings.
2. Students will show their understanding of the problem-solving model as evidenced by class discussion.
3. All students will improve in their problem-solving and decision-making abilities through the use of case studies.

4. Students will be able to apply their understanding of the problem-solving and decision-making processes by completing an outside project.

Means of Achieving Objectives:

1. Assigned reading from texts.
2. Lectures and class discussions.
3. Study problems and case studies.
4. Films, filmstrips, and tapes.
5. Guest speakers when available.
6. Role-playing and brain storming situations.

Measurement and Evaluation:

1. Objective and/or subjective examinations.
2. Study problems and case studies.
3. Completion of a term project.
4. Student participation.
5. Attendance.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Improvement of Management Skills

1. Defining Your Role and Responsibilities
 - a. Acme Paint Company - case study
 - b. Sam Schultz - case study
 - c. The Buyer - case study
 - d. Sparkling Cosmetic Company - case study
 - e. Who Is Responsible? - case study
2. Working With Your Employees
 - a. Procuring information

- b. Encouraging innovation
 - (1) John Winslow - case study
 - c. Communication
 - (1) Oral
 - (2) Written
 - (3) Listening is important
 - (4) Movie - "Are You Listening?"
 - (5) Multipurpose Products Company - case study
 - (6) Pointed Pencil and Pen Co. - case study
 - d. Motivation
 - (1) Egbert Wingate - Technical Expert - case study
3. Sharpening Your Skills
- a. Idea production
 - b. Decision-making
 - c. Using your time
 - d. Using tensions that motivate
4. Delegating Authority
- a. The Mobile Crane - case study
5. Evaluating Your Performance

II. Problem-Solving

- 1. Finding Problems
 - a. Complex problems
 - b. The Case Method
 - c. The Problem-Solving Model

2. Analysis of Your Problem
 - a. Statement of your problem
 - b. Statement of facts
3. Solving Your Problem
 - a. Possible courses of action
 - b. Advantages and disadvantages of alternative courses of action which will lead to sound decisions
 - c. Selection of best alternative
 - d. Implementing your selection
 - e. Reporting decision recommendations
 - f. The Research Approach
 - g. Using the Problem-Solving Model
4. Case Studies
 - a. The Atlantic Printers
 - b. The Landon Standard Service Station
 - c. The Kaibor Armament School
 - d. The Brandt Bakery
 - e. Peninsula Air Service

III. Common Management Problems

1. Using the telephone
 - a. Movie - "If An Elephant Answers"
 - b. Movie - "How To Lose Your Best Customer Without Really Trying"
2. Absenteeism
3. "Goldbricking"
4. Turnover

5. Overcoming the sales slump
6. Dual authority conflict

COURSE CALENDAR

- I. Class Schedule: One 3-hour session per week
(16 weeks)
- II. Lesson Plans:
 - Session #1
 - Objectives: To help students better define their roles and responsibilities as managers.
 - Activities:
 1. Introduce course by passing out course outline.
 2. Explain textbooks, project, and class assignments.
 3. Lecture on roles and responsibilities of a manager.
 4. Assign section #1 readings in Mason book.
 5. Pass out case problems to be discussed at session #2. (see course outline)
 - Session #2
 - Objective: To acquaint students with the need of working through employees to gain results.
 - Activities:
 1. Discuss reading assignment.
 2. Break class into groups to discuss assigned cases. Have spokesman give a summary of group findings.

3. Lecture and discuss problems of oral and written communication.
4. Discuss how listening is important to communication and show film, "Are You Listening?"
5. Assign section #2 readings in text and pass out copy of case study - Winslow.
6. Remind students to begin work on project.

Session #3

Objective: To prepare students to be conscious of their management skills and their effect on others.

- Activities:
1. Discuss assigned readings.
 2. Collect assigned cases and discuss.
 3. Play tape containing study problems and discuss. Topic: Communication
 4. Assign section #3 readings.
 5. Pass out case problems for discussion at next session.
 - a. Multipurpose Products. Co.
 - b. Pointed Pencil and Pen Co.
 - c. Egbert Wingate
 6. Assign roles for role-playing situation at next session.
Topic: Delegating authority

Session #4

Objective: To help students see the need to delegate authority as a way of contributing to efficiency.

- Activities:
1. Discuss readings and cases assigned.
 2. Carry out role-playing situation.
 3. Assign section #4 readings.

Session #5

Objective: To help students see the need of constantly evaluating their performance in order to insure against errors.

- Activities:
1. Discuss assigned readings.
 2. Guest speaker invited to speak on successful management. Question and answer period to follow.
 3. Mention midterm and supplies needed.

Session #6

Activities: Midterm - Objective examination on readings and class discussions. Have students read chapters 1-4 in Schnelle.

Session #7

Objective: To help students gain insight on how to isolate problems through the use of various methods.

- Activities:
1. Discuss the nature of problems, the case method, and the problem-solving model.
 2. Play a tape recording of brief case studies concerning problems. Students are to respond after each case is presented as to what they feel are the problems involved.
 3. Assign chapters 5-9 in Schnelle.

Session #8

- Objective: To help students see the need for conducting a complete analysis of the problem before decisions are made.
- Activities:
1. Discuss assigned readings.
 2. Divide the class into groups and give each member of each group the same case study. Groups are to arrive at a consensus of opinion within five minutes time as to what they think the problems involved are. They will also state the basis for their opinion.
 3. Assign chapters 10-12 in Schnelle.
 4. Assign case studies to be discussed at session #9.
 - a. The Atlantic Printers
 - b. The Landon Standard Service Station

Session #9

- Objective: To help students improve their skills in decision-making and be able to use them to solve case problems.
- Activities:
1. Discuss readings and cases assigned.
 2. Have students read The Brandt Bakery silently in class and then discuss case orally.
 3. Assign chapters 13-15 in Schnelle.
 4. Assign the Peninsula Air Service case.

Session #10

Objective: To enable students to further improve their problem-solving skills as indicated by class discussion of case study.

- Activities:
1. Discuss assigned readings.
 2. Have students group together for the purpose of reaching a group decision agreeable to all members. They are to discuss the Peninsula Air Service case.
 - *3. Explain in detail the concluding class project to be handed in at session #16.
 4. Have students prepare for next session by bringing to class a list of possible problem areas within the operations of their company.

Session #11

Objective: To introduce to students the need for businesses to incorporate good telephone policies regarding communications with customers.

- Activities:
1. Show film, "If An Elephant Answers."
 2. Show film, "How To Lose Your Best Customer Without Really Trying."
 3. Pass out ditto on typical telephone conversations and have students respond.

*Project will entail that students survey their places of employment for potential problem areas or needs which could lead to inefficiency, and submit a paper giving their recommendations as to how these areas can be changed. Students who are unable to do this, will be required to analyse a prepared case study with the same purpose in mind as that above.

4. Pass out ditto on cases involving absenteeism and "goldbricking" to to discussed at next session.

Session #12

- Objective: To acquaint students with some of the reasons underlying business problems involving absenteeism and "goldbricking."
- Activities:
1. Discuss the terms absenteeism and "goldbricking" and the cases assigned from last session.
 2. Pass out ditto containing many of the reasons underlying the problems of absenteeism, "goldbricking," and turnover.
 3. Discuss the reasons for turnover.
 4. Pass out ditto on case involving employee turnover to be discussed at next session.

Session #13

- Objective: To assist students in discussing intellectually some of the reasons causing the sales slump.
- Activities:
1. Discuss assigned case on turnover.
 2. Refer to booklet, "Solving Salesmen's Slumps" as part of the discussion of this subject.
 3. Have a role-playing situation by two class members involving a sales manager and his salesman. Have class respond as to the actual reasons this salesman has failed.
 4. Pass out ditto on sales problems to be discussed at next session. Also included on the ditto will be a case study concerned with the sales slump.

Session #14

Objective: To help students learn some of the reasons contributing to employee conflict and dual authority conflict.

- Activities:
1. Discuss ditto assigned from last session.
 2. Discuss some of the reasons that are responsible for employee conflict.
 3. Explain what dual authority is, and how conflict can occur because of it.

Session #15

Objective: Overview and evaluation of semester.

- Activities:
1. Review of course content during semester.
 2. Discuss any last minute problems concerning project with students.
 3. Devote some of class time for any material not fully covered in previous sessions.

Session #16

Objective: To evaluate students on course material covered throughout semester as determined by a class project and final examination.

- Activities:
1. Have students hand in class project.
 2. Final - Objective examination on readings and class discussions. Two short case problems will be included.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary And Conclusions

This paper began by reviewing the literature concerning the meaning of relevance and relevant curriculum. It was found that a curriculum has to be relevant to the interests of students, and that it is the duty of the school system to provide experiences to achieve this. Motivation was mentioned as an important ingredient in achieving relevance.

A brief review of some of the relevant teaching methods in use today was discussed. It was mentioned that students needed skills in problem-solving in the business world of today, and that such teaching methods as case studies, role-playing, and business games were effective tools to teach these skills. Other teaching methods such as projects and interviews (which enable students to interact with the business community) were mentioned as ways of contributing to relevance within the business curriculum. Also mentioned was the need for career information in today's classrooms in order to provide students with the information they need to

help them make decisions about their own educational and occupational goals in life.

The study sought to either affirm or reject the primary and secondary hypotheses. The first primary hypothesis proved to be valid. A significant degree of irrelevance was found to exist in the business management curriculum according to students. Twenty-one per cent of the students surveyed indicated that business management classes were either of no help, or of little help to their pursuits and goals in life. The writer feels this percentage indicates that problems of course irrelevance do exist for a large number of students. It was also found that most of the students surveyed responded that many of their management teachers did not use the teaching methods described in Chapter II. Also, from the responses to the open-ended survey questions, many students felt that some courses were not meeting their needs.

The second primary hypothesis was also affirmed. Faculty members interviewed were aware of irrelevance existing within the business curriculum. They named a number of classes which they felt could be more meaningful to students, and mentioned what is currently being done to provide a relevant curriculum.

The final hypothesis was also considered to be valid, in that many of the relevant methods cited earlier

in the study were used to design a new business management course. The course was designed around the established need for students having problem-solving skills. The teaching methods used to promote these skills, and to help establish a course which was meaningful to students were case studies, role-playing, brain storming, group work, guest speakers, class discussion, films, tapes, and the class project.

All of the secondary hypotheses proved to be valid. The first secondary hypothesis was true because a significant number of students (close to one-half of those responding) indicated that none of their business management teachers had given them outside reports of any type. The second hypothesis concerned guest speakers, and it was found that 59% of the respondents had not had them in their courses. Also concerned with this hypothesis was career information, and it was found that 78% had not been given this information in their classes. The third hypothesis was valid because 75% of the student respondents did not have outside reports calling for them to observe and/or meet the public. The last hypothesis also proved true in that the college faculty and administrators interviewed did indicate by their responses that case studies and business games are used only to a limited extent in the business department.

The study also included minor findings which the researcher considered as not being pertinent to the primary hypotheses. These findings were of interest to the researcher, however, in that they described the sample population, the institution used for the sampling, and they provided more information about the business curriculum itself.

The study ended with the course proposal. The justification of need for the course, its desirability, and its feasibility were given in order to substantiate its possible existence. The course outline and lesson plans then followed which included teaching methods that would provide relevance to the course.

Recommendations

This effort represents a small contribution to the large subject area of curriculum relevance. Much work is yet needed, not only in the business curriculum but in other subjects as well. Some irrelevance will always exist in the curricula of the community college as well as in other schools. Instructors and administrators should constantly seek to establish as relevant a curriculum as possible. Only through a relevant curriculum can students see the relationship of education to their own interests and desires in life.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GIVEN TO FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS AT BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE

1. Describe the average business student attending the evening division according to sex, age, occupation, and reasons for attending?
2. Do you know if a survey has ever been taken which might describe the average evening business student at Bakersfield College?
3. Is the evening division growing in student attendance?
4. Has the area of business management been growing?
5. How many business management courses do you offer?
6. Do you have any statistics on the amount of students who are majoring in business management?
7. What per cent of evening business classes contain females?
8. Over the last few years, has the attendance of females increased in courses of business management?
9. What subject areas in business seem to be of the most interest to day students? How does this differ from the evening courses?
10. What area of business seems to be declining in interest in the day and evening?
11. What courses in business management seem to be the most popular with students? Why?
12. What courses in business management seem to be the least popular with students? Why?

13. Do you see a need for any additional courses in the business management area?
14. Have you ever surveyed business management students on their attitudes regarding curriculum and instruction?
15. Are the business department administrators responsible for the quality of the business courses taught in the evening division?
16. What do you feel the term "relevant curriculum" means?
17. Does irrelevance exist in business management courses?
18. Are faculty members aware of present inadequacies within the curriculum? Are existing problems discussed among faculty members as a whole in order to pool ideas?
19. What means of course evaluation do you have?
20. What courses do you feel could become more meaningful to students?
21. Is the business department seeking to correct or improve existing courses so that they become more meaningful to students? How?
22. Do you think that a course which concentrated on the problems that a businessman might encounter during the daily operations of his business would be of interest to students?
23. Do you offer a course in problem-solving at Bakersfield College?
24. Do you feel that a course in problem-solving would appeal to students?
25. Would this type of course fit easily into the existing curriculum at Bakersfield College?
26. Would you forecast any problems of other personnel accepting a course in problem-solving as part of the existing curriculum?
27. Can you think of any additions or deletions that might improve this course proposal?

28. Are you aware of any counseling or career information being given in classes?
29. Have any teachers been employing the interview as a method of providing relevance to their course?
30. Is there a business club at Bakersfield College?
31. Do you have a seminar program at Bakersfield College which invites business leaders to lecture to students?
32. Are simulation games being used by teachers as a method of providing relevance to their courses?
33. What type of a time schedule do you have for most of your evening business management courses?
34. Are teachers given a free hand to change instruction and methods?
35. To what degree do you employ the case study method at Bakersfield College?
36. Does the business department work with the placement office in finding jobs for students in their field of study?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GIVEN TO COMMUNITY
BUSINESSMEN IN BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA

1. What is your name?
2. What is the name of the company for which you work?
3. What is the title of your position in this company?
4. What is the current address of this company?
5. What type of business is this company involved in?
6. How many employees are working in this company?
7. If you were to list or define any problem areas in the daily operations of your business, what would they be?
8. Does your company have a job description for each job?
9. Has your company ever conducted a study on how the telephone is being used by employees to converse with customers?
10. Do you have a training program for newly hired personnel?
11. What personnel problems seem to be the most prevalent in your company?
12. If you were to take a business management course dealing with the daily problems that beset management, what topics would you like to see covered?
13. Would you recommend a course of this type to your management staff if the situation warranted it?

14. How many people of management potential in your company might be interested in taking this type of course?
15. Would you be willing to promote such a course?
16. What incentives does your company provide to employees for taking courses that would improve their skills?

APPENDIX C

CURRICULUM SURVEY OF COURSES
IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Purpose: This survey is being conducted to evaluate the present curriculum of business courses. Your cooperation is necessary to provide suggestions for both present and future policies.

Directions: Please circle the best response for each question and comment when applicable.

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Occupation: _____

1. For what reason are you now attending junior college?
 - a. working towards an A.A. degree
 - b. improvement of job skills
 - c. other _____
2. What is your current status as a student?
 - a. attend day classes only
 - b. attend evening classes only
 - c. attend both day and evening classes
3. How many units are you currently enrolled in?
 - a. 3 or less
 - b. 4 to 9
 - c. 10 to 15
 - d. 16 or over
4. Have you ever taken any courses in business management?
 - a. yes
 - *b. no

*If the answer is NO, then move on to question #17.

5. List the types of business management courses that you have previously taken. Example: Personnel Management

6. Which of the above business management courses did you enjoy the most? _____
Why?

7. Which of the above business management courses did you like the least? _____
Why?

8. What was your purpose for taking the above business management courses?
 - a. recommended by employer
 - b. fulfills requirements of major or minor
 - c. other

9. Did you find the courses in business management helpful to your own pursuits and goals?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. sometimes

10. Estimate the percentage of class time, on the average, that was spent on discussion of the class textbook.
_____ %

11. Were any outside reports required for these classes?
 - *a. yes *If YES, then what type of reports
 - b. no were they?

12. Were community and business leaders invited as guests to lecture in these classes?
 - a. yes
 - b. no

13. Were you given any career information regarding possible future job opportunities in business?
- a. yes
 - b. no
14. Were you given any outside assignments that required you to observe and/or meet the business leaders of the community?
- a. yes
 - b. no
15. List below those strong points that you admired most in the instructors you have had in business management.
16. List below those weak points that you feel your instructors in business management could improve upon.
17. State which type of class schedule that you would prefer to have for business courses.
- a. three one hour sessions
 - b. two one and a half hour sessions
 - c. one three hour session
 - d. Saturday session
 - e. other
18. Which of the time schedules below would you prefer to have your classes?
- a. before noon
 - b. between 12:00 p.m. and 5:00
 - c. between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
 - d. between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.
 - e. other _____

TABLE 1
STUDENT RESPONSES OF TEACHING METHODS
USED BY THEIR INSTRUCTORS

Type of Method Used	Teachers Using Method	Teachers Not Using Method	Per Cent Using Method
Guest Speakers	29	42	41%
Career Information	15	53	22%
Outside Project (Interview)	17	52	25%

TABLE 2
NINE MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS OF
SAMPLE POPULATION OF STUDENTS

Occupational Group	Number in Group
Salesmen	15
Managers	11
Clerks	7
Bank Employees	5
Mechanics	5
Engineers	4
Electricians	4
Postal Employees	4
Other occupation groups	55
Total Sample	90

TABLE 3
 SUGGESTIONS BY STUDENT SAMPLE AS TO COURSE
 IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Type of Suggestion	Number of Responses
1. Courses should be related to job situation	5
2. Need improved audio-visual aids	1
3. Need more guest speakers	2
4. Need instructors who have better attitudes	3
5. Need more emphasis on first line supervision	1
6. Need more emphasis on sales supervision	1
7. Need better texts	1
8. Need a course in decision making	1
9. Would like to see a course on how to conduct a meeting	1
10. Would like to see more role-playing situations	1
11. Need time to make up classes	1
12. Need certificate of course completion to be sent to employer	1

TABLE 4
 BUSINESSMEN'S ESTIMATION OF STUDENT POTENTIAL
 FROM THEIR BUSINESSES FOR THE
 PROPOSED COURSE

Type of Business	Potential Students
County Employment (Department of Personnel, County of Kern)	300
Banking (United California Bank)	10
Oil Company (Navy Oil Company)	3
Retail Department Store (J.C. Penney Company)	8
Retail Department Store (Sears, Roebuck and Company)	17
Restaurant (Hilton Inn)	3
Newspaper (Bakersfield Californian)	18
Hospital (Bakersfield Memorial Hospital)	17
Oil Company (Standard Oil Company of California)	*
Chemical (Mobil Chemical Company)	*
Health Services (Kern County Health Department)	20

*Indicates those companies whose managers were not able to, or refused to estimate their potential students for this course.

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