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ABSTRACT

This paper describes and evaluates the implementation of a two-semester course in Century 21 shorthand by an experienced business education instructor. Student characteristics, course organization, learning activities, and difficulties encountered by both students and the instructor are described for each course. Detailed evaluations of the characteristics of the Century 21 symbol system, the student texts (Collegiate Series), and the Teacher's Manual are provided for both learning and teaching. Advantages and disadvantages are weighed in comparison to the Gregg systems. Suggestions for other instructors in utilizing and adapting the lesson sequence and instructional materials are made, and revisions are suggested for the authors of the Century 21 texts. It is concluded that Century 21 has a number of weaknesses, and that, overall, it is no better than other systems. (JDS)

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LEARNING, TEACHING, AND EVALUATING
CENTURY 21 SHORTHAND

A Paper

Presented to the
School of Business
San Diego State University

In Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Special Study 499

by
Patricia A. Dresselhaus
April 1977

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2359 Olive Drive
Carlsbad, CA 92008
April 25, 1977

Dr. Maurice Crawford
Associate Dean
School of Business
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Dear Dr. Crawford:

After a summer's study of learning theory, I began teaching Century 21 shorthand to a small group of women who were all strong in English skills and, after a brushup, in typing competencies. Perhaps being an experimental class and being at MiraCosta College's new location in Solana Beach; the students expressed enthusiasm, working at least two hours at home on each lesson. Some continued on to a second-semester mixed class composed of both Century and Gregg Simplified students.

Because of my intense study during the summer and fall, I had little difficulty in forming proper outlines or applying theory principles. Then and now I have trouble recalling the proper brief or speed forms but no difficulty in reading and recognizing them from the plates. At first I dreaded the mixed class, but I found myself enjoying the challenge; and it has been fun comparing the theory principles.

Student accomplishment at the end of the first semester was discouraging as I expected more in their ability to read rapidly from the plates and to take dictation on familiar material. But if the teacher is forewarned about the vocabulary difficulty, she can readily adapt her objectives and grading system.

Using Gregg-prepared dictation matter (the Century is too difficult), by mid-spring, students have been taking three-minute dictation from speeds ranging from 60 to 90 words per minute. I had really expected a greater range upward; but from the extremely small size of the class, perhaps I have over estimated. But I firmly believe students should obtain an employable skill within two college semesters, considering both college costs and student time.

At this point, I am not convinced that Century 21 is better than Gregg; it is just one more system. Teachers might look to the high school texts for a more palatable arrangement of theory principles and dictation matter. Should you wish to use any part of this study and my experiences in your classes, you are welcome to do so as long as my name and reputation is credited (or discredited).

Perhaps an interesting note to conclude on would be an analysis of the outline by current students on the word "fascinating":

Gregg

26.

- Flowing
- Inner conflict
- Abstract, romantic
- Lively
- Reversed letters
- Prettier

Century 21

66.

- Counter clockwise
- Backwards in time
- Harsher, more masculine
- More aesthetic
- Square and angular
- More architecturally precise
- Forward looking
- Angular, jerky

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Dresselhaus

Mrs. Patricia A. Dresselhaus

CHAPTER I

NATURE AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I. THE PROBLEM

When the MiraCosta Community College District opened an off-campus facility to service a new community recently assigned to its authority, this writer volunteered and was assigned to develop a secretarial/clerical training program. Designed to train entry-level persons (as a clerk-typist) to mid-management-level persons (as an administrative secretary/assistant), the curriculum was to include training in shorthand. Since this writer had not taught shorthand for six years, she elected to learn and to teach a new symbol system, Century 21. She had studied Thomas shorthand in college and later learned, on her own, and taught both the Simplified and Jubilee editions of the Gregg shorthand system.

Purposes of the study. The purposes of this study are: (1) to learn Century 21 shorthand; (2) to teach this system utilizing good techniques; and (3) to evaluate the system.

II. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is delimited to the teaching of the fall and spring semester day students at the Solana Beach Center of MiraCosta College. Texts elected for use were the collegiate editions (5, 7). Because of the composition of the students, the Century 21 representative suggested using the third volume (7) for the second semester.

III. LIMITATIONS

Personal experience. Teaching techniques and evaluation methods are based on the writer's 28 years of teaching experience. A more objective study under a controlled class situation is under way by Dr. Doris Crank (1), Northern Illinois University. Results will be available by summer 1978.

Class composition. The fall semester class began with 11 students, three of whom had studied Gregg Jubilee system in past years. One student dropped out in November; another after the Christmas vacation. Two of the eleven had no prior college courses; two were nearing their four-year college degree (French and accounting majors); the remaining students were college graduates (Russian literature, sociology, English, psychology, and journalism). One was 18; the others varied in their 30's and 40's in age. All were tested for English competency before proceeding. Sections from two standardized tests were used: "Verbal Reasoning, Spelling, and Language Usage," Differential Aptitude Test, Form S; and "Comprehension I, II, and Mechanics of Writing," Educational Skills Test, College Edition, English. As standards could not be used because of the age and educational factors of the students, this writer judged students on the basis of the raw scores. These tests were judged adequate by the writer to determine English competency for later shorthand transcription. One of the dropouts was subsequently employed by this writer to teach the Business English Review class at the Solana Beach Center.

In the spring semester, five continued, with a new member who had been a strong Gregg Simplified student. Of the six students, one is the 18 year old with no prior college training; two with 3+ years of college (French and accounting); and three with college degrees (Russian literature and English majors). Of the four that did not continue, three are employed and one, because of a class conflict, is tutoring a beginning shorthand student.

Interestingly, the Russian literature major (having been graduated *summa cum laude*), entered the program without any prior business training or employment experience except for a short-term translation job for the Navy. Her typing experience was limited to a self-taught course on a Russian keyboard, so the instructor began training her on the American keyboard. By December, she obtained a part-time job assembling literature for a direct-mail agency; she is now taking dictation for this firm. Shortly she is to be interviewed for a high-level position in a Washington D.C. governmental agency, where she may utilize both her business skills and her translation ability.

One of the English majors, who had studied Gregg Simplified on a non-credit basis while attending college, relearned the Century 21. She has had difficulty in takes on new material, hesitating on whether to write a Gregg or a Century outline. One who had no prior college training (now employed full time) had no difficulty in relearning the new system or in taking dictation. She adapted readily, often using some of each system. Age and flexibility in nature may have been the cause; however, the English major has an extremely inquiring mind and continues to question and analyze the reasoning behind Century 21 symbols and concepts.

Both Century 21 and Gregg (Simplified, because of student's prior training) are taught in the second semester. All students use the Century transcript to write their lessons; for the text, the one student uses the Gregg Simplified refresher book and accompanying dictionary.

CHAPTER II

LEARNING, TEACHING, AND EVALUATING CENTURY 21 SHORTHAND

About two hours daily was spent during the summer of 1976 studying the first 45 lessons to master the theory principles. The first 18 lessons encompass an almost overwhelming concentration of all the brief, or as Century 21 calls them, speed forms; the first 33 lessons complete the theory principles. The following 12 lessons are review and heavily concentrated vocabulary expansion material.

Each lesson was read at least twice until some degree of proficiency in reading would ensue. By reading aloud, at least two senses were at work, helping this writer to comprehend the system more thoroughly. When stumbling on some phrase or word, the writer would incorporate the symbols into a "troublesome" list, which was later duplicated and handed to the students (Appendix B). Years of experience in teaching shorthand aided the writer in determining troublesome spots.

The greatest difficulty then and now was in learning and recalling the speed forms without conflict with the Gregg system. Of course, the students need constant reviewing and testing on the speed forms too.

During the learning period and throughout the first semester, the writer refused to work with the Gregg system, totally immersing herself into the new system.

I. THE FIRST SEMESTER

First-day oral and written instructions (Appendix A) indicated that this system was new and that the instructor was unsure of the superiority of Century 21 in comparison with other symbol shorthand systems. Entering Gregg students, with competent theory knowledge, were not encouraged to learn a new system; however, three students elected to do so (See pp 2-3).

Meeting four times weekly with one hour by arrangement in 50-minute periods, the students completed the first 50 lessons. Five times weekly would be more desirable. Time was needed to stop progression and review prior lessons as theory, speed forms, and vocabulary expansion are very intensive in the first 33 lessons.

When teaching the Gregg system, this writer evaluated students completing the first semester on theory tests, homework, taking and transcribing familiar material, and reading from text plates. On taking and properly transcribing the dictation, students earned an A for 80; B, 70, C, 60 (three-minute takes). On reading from Gregg plates, the students would earn an A for an average of 180+. Because of the complexity of the vocabulary, this type of grading was impossible in Century 21. One former Gregg student who had little difficulty in learning the new system could read 180 upward; however, as much as the students practiced, 130 upward was considered good. Grading was finally based on homework and mastery of theory principles. These students had a great deal of determination, studying at least two hours on each lesson.

The instructor's manual has additional dictation for each lesson, utilizing the theory or vocabulary used in that particular lesson. This writer found it extremely difficult to obtain speed on most of the Century dictation material found in the manual; the vocabulary was too difficult for speed building. However, with a de-emphasis on speed of dictation and a concentration on learning theory principles and being exposed to vocabulary expansion, students will have a firm basis for building outlines for unfamiliar material.

Students were required to spend at least one hour weekly on the tapes accompanying the text. Many spent far more hours, often checking out and practicing the tapes at home. The tapes tend to panic the students as the "voice" dictates far more rapidly than the students can recall the outline. Use of the cordless sound system was abandoned for this purpose because of the students mental "freeze" state. Use of the individual tape deck with multi-jack stations was then adopted. Students were encouraged to keep track of the footage counter for each section so that they could backtrack and re-listen to desired material.

The text. The first volume of the college series was well constructed in these ways:

- Except for the first few lessons, far more intelligent material was included in the lessons as opposed to the meaningless, repetitious (and sometimes innocuous) material found in the other symbol system. However, even in this text, some material was somewhat offensive to some students (reference to birth control, yipping dogs, crime-laden employee about to be dismissed). As with any text, the students realized the intent--to incorporate and reinforce theory and vocabulary.
- For quick and easy reference, the inside front cover includes all theory principles and a theory index shows the lesson and section where each principle is introduced. The inside back cover includes all the speed forms alphabetically and a speedforms index shows the lesson where each one is introduced. A handy Speedforms and Punctuation Learning Chart is available by separate purchase (Appendix C); this chart is best used from the beginning of the semester so students can refer to the speedforms in the various lessons (the back side gives the translation). Also available by separate purchase is a Speedforms chart in alphabetic order (with 100 common phrases on the back side); this chart is particularly handy for the second- and subsequent semester students (Appendix D).
- For quick and easy reference also is an alphabetic index of the 1500 most-used words and the lesson and section where each is used.
- In the introductory lessons, arrows signify the direction of movement in writing the symbols.
- Use of a second color emphasizes a new theory, word, phrase, or speedform. In the plates that follow the introduction, the newly mentioned symbol is also highlighted in the second color.

- Each lesson is subdivided into segments so that students learn a new principle, read and study this principle in connected matter, and then proceed to the next new matter.
- Before each exercise of connected matter, new words and phrases are shown to help students avoid stumbling when they encounter these unfamiliar words.
- A review section at the beginning of each lesson reinforces what was learned in the prior lesson; and a review section at the end of the lesson puts the theory into place. This writer found it helpful to assign the introductory review lesson of say Lesson 15 along with the assignment for Lesson 14 as a double reinforcement.
- Outlines are given reinforcement by being used over and over throughout the lessons. Students learn to recognize and hopefully recall the outlines more readily.

The theory. Eliminating many of the beginnings, endings, and omitted letters used in the Gregg system seem to reduce the learning load; however, in the Century collegiate series, the entire theory is learned in the first 33 lessons (about every fifth one is a review lesson) and the learning load is very heavy. The past tense is always disjoined, avoiding the problem of "Shall I use the blend?" A simple upward stroke is used for the "v" and "w," eliminating the troublesome "wo, wa, we, wi, wu, swo, swa, swe, swi, swu" as found in Gregg.

Troublesome features. Because of the elimination of many indistinct vowels and the "e" sound as in "bit," it is difficult to recognize some words rapidly, causing both teacher and student to halt abruptly and attempt to "solve" the word. With second semester students, this writer has emphasized the unimportance of this omission so that students can read their notes and their dictation more readily. Second semester students write their homework from the transcript, checking back with the text only as needed.

Examples of the omission of the "e" (or as included as "i" in Webster's pronunciation) are:

Civil	s v l	
Film	f l m	
Fit	f t	

Angular and long vertical symbols are awkward. Within the plates, insufficient space is allowed so that often the symbols appear on the next line of the connected matter, making reading from the plates awkward. Even skipping every other line on Gregg-lined notebooks is awkward (and wasteful) so the writer special ordered wider lined notebooks as used for Pitman shorthand (Cascade brand). This wide-lined notebook has resolved some of the problem. Examples of awkward outlines are:

Negotiations

Refrigerator

Background

Legislative

Examples of the omission of vowels, which slows down reading and likely comprehension of dictation notes are:

Potential

p t n sh l

Foreign

fr n

Characteristics

k a r s t k s

Political

p l t cl

Ground

gr nd

Sufficiently



s f sh t ly

Police

p l e s

Women

w mn

The dash mark  is awkward; the capitalization mark, a character resembling the Gregg n is placed underneath the outline, causing some reading hesitation. John is written as . This writer continues to use the " for the capitalization.

Some outlines are confusing, causing the reader to stumble briefly:

What, vote ✓

Act, account 9 ✓

Fit, if it ✓

Without ✓

Pleas, please, police cec

From, firm 2

Very, we e

Worth, have our x

With his, was 1

Keep, equip 1

Youths, others n

Widely, vitally 2

One, won, win, have not 1

Alexander (a l g s s a n d r) 2

And perhaps some outlines could be better written for clarity in

line with the Century theory:

Instead of C

Purposely

Write as C C

Concave 4

Congratulate 4

Method of procedure. For college classes, continue to use the first volume into part of the second semester. The third volume could be used for the remaining part of the second semester and a subsequent semester if one is offered. However the instructor's manual gives many suggested alternatives. From this writer's experience, the first 50 lessons could be best handled as:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Lesson</u>
1	1ABCD
2	1E2ABC
3	2DE3AB
4	3DE4AB
5	4C5ABD
6	5CE6AB
7	6C7AB
8	7CD8AB
9	8C9ABC
10	10ABC
11	11AB12A
12	11CD12BC
13	Review 1-6
14	Review 7-12
15	13ABCD
16	14ABCDE
17	15ABCD
18	15E16ABC
19	17ABCDE
20	18ABCD
21	Review 13-18
22	Brief form test
23	19ABCD
24	19EF20AB
25	20C21ABC
26	21DE22AB
27	22CDEFG23A
28	23BCDEFGH
29	Review 1-8, theory test
30	Review 9-15, theory test
31	Review 16-20, theory test & write for homework related material (Appendix E)
32	Review 21-23, theory test & write for homework related material

<u>Day</u>	<u>Lesson</u>
33	24ABCDEF
34	25ABC & theory test on new words from 24 & 25
35	25DEFG26A
36	26BCDEF
37	27A, theory test from 25,26, dictation on 27A
38	27BCDE28A
39	28BC29A
40	29BCDE
41	Review 27-29, theory test
42	30ABCDEF
43	30GH31AB
44	31CDEFG
45	Review 25-31, theory test on new words
46	32ABCDE
47	32FG33ABC
48	33DEFG34A
49	34BCDE
50	35ACD, theory test on 32-34

Theory tests should be given weekly thereafter so that students can form unfamiliar words. Lessons 35 through 45 are review lessons. Lessons 46 through 56 cover punctuation rules, word selection, spelling practice, and transcription tips. From this writer's experience, it may be advisable to consider holding Lesson 35-45 for later review and go directly to Lesson 46.

A 50-minute period is an inadequate length of time for all the activities outlined in the instructor's manual, particularly on the Vocabulary Preview of New Material. Perhaps instructors could use this section as the basis of theory tests. This writer covered the first 50 lessons in an 18-week, four-hours-a-week class, with the students finding the study very time consuming, but challenging and intriguing. Likely from the instructor's reaction from prior teaching experience in shorthand, the students were disappointed at their inability to take

the dictation more than 60 to 80 words per minute on familiar dictation.

II. THE SECOND SEMESTER

Since enrollees would be of varied ages and training and only a small enrollment was expected, a combination class was offered. Gregg Jubilee students were encouraged to take the night brushup class; or those weak in Gregg theory and wishing to continue with Gregg were referred to the high school continuing education program. However, one enrollee, a former business teacher with a Gregg Jubilee background, continues to practice on her own, assisting those who need help.

Instructions were given during the first week on objectives, texts, et al (Appendix F); however, within a short time, this writer ordered Gregg Simplified and Gregg Jubilee refresher course books along with the appropriate dictionaries. All students were required to prepare their homework from the Century transcript (7).

At first the instructor was rather panicked about conflict of theory between the Gregg and Century. However, in the first 10 lessons of intensive theory review, it became a matter of challenge and intrigue to be able to write the outlines in two to three different ways. The last section in each of these lessons contained theory words so the instructor would prepare a transparency showing the comparative symbols. The comparison was also interesting to the students. Dr. Beryl Haggblade, one of the high school text authors, in a conversation in April 1977, suggested that students have their own dictionaries, looking up needed outlines quickly, which would save teacher time and "get the teacher off the hook." The conflict this writer still has is in writing the correct brief or speed form in Century and the two Gregg versions; but with theory principles, little difficulty has been encountered in writing the appropriate outline.

This writer concurs with Dr. Haggblade in that each student should have a dictionary; the larger, more readable version is recommended.

The text. The text and instructor's manual, as with the first volume, continues to be well organized. Easy material for speed-building purposes is quite limited. Theory practice and vocabulary expansion is extensive. English and spelling principles are explained and applied. A section on "Pointers for Professionals" is relatively unimportant for advanced students (correcting errors by squeezing, using reference books). Test material is hidden at the rear of the instructor's manual rather than in the same lesson where the test should be administered. Adequate takes are given for two- and three-minute dictation.

If commas and other internal punctuation were included in the plates (i.e. Lesson 35A, split-run tests *split-run*), awkward phrasing (Lesson 29D, kind of *be*), wider spacing used in the plates so symbols avoid overlapping with next-line symbols, reading would be more fluent. Abbreviations (Lesson 35A, f.o.b. *f.o.b.*) written as a word makes one stumble in reading fluency. If proper names were introduced at the beginning of each section (Lesson 35C, Hughes Cookware *Hughes*), students would hesitate less long in reading the outline. Since students in this class are writing from the transcript, they are encouraged to write proper names in longhand, at least at the first encounter, and to use other methods in handling abbreviations and punctuation.

Ample material is provided and the text can serve for more than one semester. Lessons 1 through 10 are intensive review of theory; 11 through 25, a general review. Because of the composition of this class and the type of employment available in a more scientific community, this writer elected to proceed as:

Lessons 1 - 25, Theory Review
26 - 40, Manufacturing and Marketing

Lessons 51 - 59, Government, Public Administration
81 - 90, Educational Services
116 - 120, Data Processing
121 - 130, Technical/Scientific Services

Method of procedure. From the writer's experience, the following method would be recommended for the first 40 lessons:

In Lessons 1 - 10, the pattern is repetitive, with the first exercise a practice on speedforms and phrases; the second, theory review; the third and least important, pointers for secretaries; the fourth, punctuation and word differentiation; and fifth, words to study for next-day dictation. Students should be required to write the first, second, and fourth items from the transcript, reading in class from their own notes. Century students may read the Pointers for Professionals from the text plates for discussion purposes. The instructor can use the fifth exercise for comparative theory, illustrating the differences for the Century and other symbol shorthand outlines.

In Lessons 11 - 25, the pattern is also repetitive, with the first exercise one emphasizing speedforms and speedform related words (except for Lessons 22, 24, 25); the next two exercises, theory refreshers and vocabulary builders; the Pointers for Professionals; the punctuation and word differentiation, and words for study. The assignments may remain about the same. The instructor needs to assist students in the formation of new words introduced in the theory and vocabulary expansion section.

Related (and some unrelated) dictation material is given in the instructor's manual; but nearly all the material is difficult for speed-building. At the rear section of the instructor's manual, test material is given after the completion of Lessons 10, 15, 20, and 25, with speeds ranging from 70 to 100 words per minute on two- and three-minute takes.

Beginning with Lesson 26, specialty fields are introduced, with some limited explanation of terms related to the field. The more technical words are highlighted in a second color, making it easier for the instructor to pick out words for emphasis. The Pointers for Professionals and the final word lists may again be omitted, except for discussion purposes in class.

Accomplishments to date. Regardless of the present students rather superior capability, the small-size class is discouraging as the slower one feels that she is not keeping up. In reality, these students have superior English competency so that whatever they take, they can transcribe in mailable form. Since they are also enrolled in a related typing skill builder class, no problem exists with the mechanics. Students are encouraged to use the Correcting Selectric (10 in the classroom) and prepare the mailable copy on the first attempt.

The class meets four days weekly of which two days are double hour periods. The weakest student shorthand-wise has been reassigned to continue with Volume I, working from the correlated tapes and from unfamiliar tapes. The other students work periodically from the correlated tapes (likely too rapid) and the one-two-three minute unfamiliar material tapes. They also check out the tapes for home practice. Depending, of course, upon the difficulty of the material, they can transcribe at mid-spring semester at rates varying from 60 to 90 words per minute on three-minute, unfamiliar material. With spurt dictation, they can take up to 130 words per minute on one-half and one-minute material.

The philosophy of this writer is that students should be able to obtain an employable skill within two semesters of college instruction. At the present rate of accomplishment, these students will obtain bare minimum speed rates as perhaps unrealistically required by employers.

Since little or no time is required to work on English skills, spelling, comprehension, or typing mechanics, these students should be able to obtain higher speeds, especially with their dedicated study, interest, and determination. Camaraderie and concern for one another is exceptionally high. The class is small. The most and least rapid shorthand students are fluent in two or more languages. They know theory well; they do have difficulty in deciphering their own shorthand notes.

In discussing this writer's concerns with Dr. Haggblade, he also expressed his concern about the difficulty of the vocabulary in the college volumes. He felt that the high school texts were better organized and that the volume he wrote might better be used in the college as well, at least for the dictation. This writer intends to obtain a copy.

CHAPTER III

THE COMPETITORS

Perhaps one of the reasons this writer elected to choose another system of shorthand to teach was the indifferent attitude toward change or improvement as reflected by the more popular system specialists and the almost insulting selection of an inept representative to service the needs of teachers in this area.

Pompousness reigns throughout Gregg's 1975 critique (2) with little or no substantiating material:

Statement (2:2): Century 21 uses 28 characters found in the Gregg alphabet to represent the same sounds as in Gregg; in addition, it uses 15 characters found in Gregg to which different meanings have been assigned. These changes will have a major impact on the student's ability to take and transcribe the dictation.

Reaction: So? How? What is the substantiation?

Statement (2:6): A serious flaw in any symbol shorthand system is the representation of two unrelated sounds by the same symbols (i.e., poor, pure; wise, vice; get, jet). . . Because each of the different sounds given above is assigned a separate symbol in Gregg Shorthand, no such transcription problems will develop.

Reaction: The w and sw has always been troublesome in the Gregg system; the Century reduced the problem. The yu (few) remaining identical with the u causes this writer somewhat of a concern.

Statement (2:7): It should be clear that students come into shorthand class already accustomed to different ways of writing the same letter--both clockwise and counterclockwise. . . Longhand uses different-direction joining to achieve facility and speed in writings; it does not cling to a

rigid motion of "one direction only" at the sacrifice of facility, fluency, and speed. Like longhand, Gregg Shorthand provides for alternative joinings.

Reaction: Longhand is cumbersome, so why compare with a poor method of communicating? In Century, the single direction vowel or s has been no problem; with the th after an o, somewhat.

Statement (2:11-12): Obtuse angles should be avoided in shorthand if at all possible. . . An acute angle is better than an obtuse angle, because acute angles are easier to maintain in fast writing. . . Obtuse angles are rare in Gregg Shorthand partly because the alphabet was specially designed to avoid them and partly because the insertion of vowels gives the outlines greater legibility.

Reaction: The obtuse angle in Century is troublesome and awkward and may account for a slowdown in dictation. Insertion of vowels in Century would help greatly in reading from plates, notes, and cold notes.

Statement (2:4): Century outlines tend to leave the hand of the writer far below the line of writing. This situation is alien to longhand writing, where the writer's hand is never left more than one line above or below the line of writing.

Reaction: The first sentence in the statement is true, affecting both dictation and reading fluency. The second sentence is meaningless.

Statement (2:9): Neutral vowels (called schwas) and the short i are omitted within the body of an outline. . . These outlines without vowels will be difficult to transcribe correctly, let alone rapidly.

Reaction: The omission is troublesome but not hopeless.

Statement (2:17): The use of the disjoined t will materially slow down the shorthand writer because of the many penlifts it requires. . . and to write different outlines for homonyms (build, billed).

Reaction: The disjoined t has simplified dictation. If penlifting is a problem, Gregg needs to look to its w (the underscoring of a vowel) and its many other penlifting beginnings and endings.

The Don Reese presentation. In the South-Western Monograph (4), a more learned observation of the Gregg system is presented. Reese (4:1) observed:

In some respects the study of shorthand is even more complex than the study of language or cursive writing, however, because the written responses (signs) are made to oral stimuli; and the speed of response to discriminated sound perceptions is a critical element in the efficient performance of the shorthand writer.

Perhaps the inclusion of more of the vowel sounds would have made formation and translation of the shorthand symbols in Century easier.

The author continues to emphasize the four important contributors to the successful performance in learning shorthand: the student, the shorthand system, the teacher, and the materials of instruction. The school has only limited control over the student and the shorthand system, so these two contributors are relatively fixed. The other two contributors are more flexible: the teacher through improved methodology; the materials through improved implementation and supplementation (4:1-2).

Reese (4:2-5) lists these symptoms of shorthand learning difficulties:

- Lack of fluency in reading shorthand notes
- Hesitancy in formulating written outlines
- Failure to employ the principles of word construction consistently
- Failure to automatize the reading/writing of brief forms
- Failure to write outlines precisely enough for easy reading and transcribing
- Inability to distinguish sounds in word and word elements and reproduce them in shorthand
- Inconsistency in attempts to reach intermediate goals
- Inability to retain once-learned materials
- Failure to reach expected standards of terminal performance
- Dropout rate (culmination of one or more of the above)

Reese (4:5) mentions that at the end of the shorthand program, students should be able to take a three-minute dictation letter at 80 words a minute and transcribe this material with 95 percent accuracy.

Of course, Reese was implying that at least a minimally acceptable intermediate goal be achieved. This writer is concerned about the possible attainment of higher speeds within the two-semester framework.

An extensive analysis into the research of theory introduced and repetition of words is explained in Reese's presentation. Apparently a valid study, Reese's major findings on high school Gregg textbooks reflected:

- No discernible pattern of repetition of words illustrating Gregg Shorthand principles exists.
- No attempt to control the vocabulary, either the words used to introduce principles or the words used to reinforce the principles in the connected matter is evident (4:35).

This Monograph emphasized the lack of quality materials in the instruction of shorthand; no emphasis was made regarding the system.

The Susie Hess presentation. In South-Western's 1977 publication (3), helpful suggestions are given to teaching Century for the first time and to teaching classes with students of more than one system. Emphasis is again on the materials and its organization--not on the system. Noteworthy are:

- With supplementary material correlated to each lesson. . . valuable time is saved in locating and/or preparing new dictation material (3:2).

Extremely helpful in the beginning semester text was the written-out-in-shorthand supplementary material, helping the still-hesitant theory-wise teacher.

- Often students who have learned other systems reject the option to continue with their system in favor of learning Century 21 Shorthand (3:5).

Unless the shorthand student has been extremely weak in theory and comprehension, the majority of other-system students will be held back by learning a new system. The changes are too dramatic.

- Video tape has advantages over the use of printed program packages or audio programs in a totally individualized program (3:10).

This writer has personally observed the collegiate tapes prepared at Miami Dade Community College and has met with its authors. The video tapes would be excellent, especially in an open-entry or an individualized program. Equipment is costly; so are the tapes (over \$3,000 at the last inquiry).

The South-Western pamphlet contains helpful information to the teacher preparing to teach Century 21 for the first time and/or to teach mixed classes.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

After a summer's independent study of theory, this instructor began teaching Century 21 shorthand to a small, but well-qualified class. Because of the elite makeup of this class, self-discipline, enthusiasm, and the thrill of challenge was demonstrated by the students during the first semester. Some continued on to the second-semester class, a combination Century 21 and Gregg shorthand.

During the first semester, one former Gregg student experienced no difficulty in reading or taking dictation in Century or a combination of Century and Gregg; two other former Gregg students did and continue to stumble in taking dictation, being concerned about formation of outlines.

All students had mastered theory well by the end of the first semester; and in theory tests, they could easily form unfamiliar outlines. The reading speed from practiced material from the shorthand plates was far lower than the instructor anticipated. Taking dictation from this practiced material was also lower than the instructor expected. Grading was finally based on grasp of theory.

By the middle of the second semester of shorthand, students were taking unfamiliar material (three minutes) at rates ranging from 60 to 90 words per minute. Because of the difficulty in vocabulary in the homework assignment practice, in the related dictation material, and in the test material, little dictation material was used from the Century 21 teacher's manual; most dictation was taken from Gregg materials. As the students already had competent English and typing skills, little time was needed to improvement in this area.

II. CONCLUSIONS

First-semester text (5,6). The theory is intensely covered in the first 33 lessons; all speed forms within the first 18. For motivated students, a slowdown is suggested (see pp 10, 11); for weaker students, a large dropout rate can be expected if an instructor attempts to cover a lesson a day.

The theory is presented well with ample repetition to gain recognition and mastery of the principle. Principles are introduced in small segments giving students an opportunity to master one principle before continuing on to the next.

The teacher's manual gives adequate help to the teacher, providing supplementary material and, in many cases, the shorthand outlines for this material, which aids the rather shakey-in-theory teacher.

The vocabulary builder for the next 10 lessons after the theory is good for its purpose, but rather impossible to use for dictation material--it's too difficult for the students to obtain any speed, causing student discouragement.

Helpful aids in the text include a listing of theory principles on the inside cover, alphabetical listing of speedforms on the inside back cover, a theory index showing the lesson and section where each principle is introduced, and an alphabetic index of the 1500 most-used words showing the lesson and section where each word is used. Use of a second color emphasized a newly introduced principle in the introductory section and in the shorthand plates that followed, helping students assimilate the principle.

Second-semester text (7,8). Theory practice and vocabulary expansion is extensive; material for speed building, limited. For students less competent in English principles, spelling rules, word comprehension, and transcription pointers are included. Trade terminology is included for a large number of fields (data processing, marketing, etc.), which makes the study more interesting, provoking class discussion. Some lessons are long; others, short. Little of the supplementary and testing material in the teacher's manual is helpful for speed building as the vocabulary is difficult. ~~Students can readily take dictation on practiced homework,~~ but stumble on Century's supplementary and testing dictation.

If proper names were either introduced at the beginning of the plate or written in longhand at the first encounter, students would hesitate less. Students and the instructor would have to refer to the transcript to interpret the name. Since compound adjectives are used frequently, it would have been helpful to have the hyphen inserted in the shorthand plates.

The system. Century authors (3,4) emphasized that a school only has limited control over the student and the shorthand system so these contributors are relatively fixed for successful performance in learning shorthand. But the teacher through improved methodology and the materials through improved implementation and supplementation are more flexible. It seems evident that the emphasis was on building better texts and materials to work with than on the symbol system itself. Problems encountered included the angularity, the vertical length, and the omission of vowels. With the latter problem, the students and instructor have difficulty recognizing isolated outlines quickly, particularly in reading and transcribing dictated material.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The teacher. Study the system (theory principles) thoroughly before beginning the class, using the guidelines as suggested (pp 10-14). When beginning dictation in the first semester, either eliminate the hard vocabulary from the transcript and teacher's manual or prepare some light matter. It is essential to keep the students encouraged by small successes. Expect students to thoroughly master theory in the first semester, grading basically upon their mastery of theory; reading plates from the text will be less rapid than Gregg (130 words per minute upward would be considered good because of the difficulty in vocabulary).

In the second semester, have students write only from the transcript, eliminating the sections on "Pointers for Professionals" and the "Shorthand Speed Building" at the end of each lesson. Have students read from the text on the Pointers section should the instructor wish to discuss the material. Since the students would be writing from the transcript, the "Related Skills Reinforcement" is meaningless except for class discussion.

The related tapes are helpful in the first semester (although almost too rapid for even the best students); of relatively little value in the second semester. Speed-building tapes are likely of more help.

The authors. The first-semester text is well organized; however, it would take a very competent student to handle a lesson a day as so much theory is crammed into each lesson. More easy material should be included in the lessons (after Lesson 33) and in the supplementary and testing material for building students' confidence and ability in taking dictation. This latter recommendation also includes the second-semester text.

Proper names should be written in longhand at the first encounter or introduced at the beginning of the section. Vertical spacing on all short-

hand plates should be extended to allow for the vertical length of the outlines; too many of the characters extend into subsequent lines causing reading hesitations. More vowels should be included for easier flow and recognition. When transcribing from high-speed dictation or cold notes, neither the students nor the instructor can interpret some of the outlines.

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