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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals and their contents were being read by elementary school library media specialists. The relationship of professional status to the number of professional periodicals read was also examined. Of 140 school library media specialists surveyed, 111 responded to the questionnaire. It was found that "School Library Journal," "Media & Methods," "Instructor," and "Mailbox (Primary)" were read (either cover to cover, in specific sections, or browsed) by over 57% of respondents. More than 70% of the respondents have never read seven of the nine professional technology-related periodicals listed on the questionnaire. Reviews and the table of contents were sections of journals read by over 90% of the respondents while job classifications were read by only 40.5%. Using analysis of variance, no significance was found between the number of professional periodicals read and professional status. It is concluded that periodicals offering reviews for selection and articles concerning curriculum were read most often by elementary school library media specialists. Technology-related journals were read the least. Monthly activity articles, personal sharing articles, reviews and table of contents were the most favored sections of professional periodicals. Professional status and/or years of experience made no apparent difference in the number of professional periodicals read. Five appendixes provide: (1) a metropolitan statistical area map of Atlanta; (2) the survey instrument; (3) the field test letter; (4) a cover letter; and (5) survey data. (26 references) (Author/MAB)

PROFESSIONAL PERIODICALS READ BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

BY

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
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ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals and their contents were being read by elementary school library media specialists. The relationship of professional status to the number of professional periodicals read was also questioned.

Methods and Procedures

The population surveyed in this descriptive study was randomly selected from the metropolitan statistical area of Atlanta which is made up of public and private schools in eighteen counties. An original questionnaire was designed to collect the data. Items on the questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programs.

Results

One hundred eleven of 140 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 79%. School Library Journal, Media & Methods, Instructor and Mailbox(Primary) were read cover to cover, specific sections or browsed by over 57% of the respondents. More than 70% of the respondents have never read seven of the nine professional technology related periodicals listed on the questionnaire. Reviews and table of contents were sections of journals read by over 90.2% of the respondents where job classifications were read by only 40.5%. Using analysis of variance, no significance was found between the number of professional periodicals read and professional status.

Conclusions

Periodicals offering reviews for selection and articles concerning curriculum were read most often by elementary school library media specialists. Technology related journals were read the least. Monthly activity articles, personal sharing articles, reviews and table of contents were the most favored sections of professional periodicals. Professional status and/or years of experience made no apparent difference in the number of professional periodicals read.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Edwards and Schon (1986) stated school library media specialists must cope with demands of mastering new technologies, taking on new roles in instructional development, meeting students' and teachers' needs with constantly decreasing budgets, and keeping abreast of both current developments in the field and ever increasing profusion of knowledge in general. Several librarians in their study affirmed the only way this can be done is for the school library media specialist to assume the responsibility of his/her own professional expertise through professional development and reading professional literature. Successful school library media specialists advance professionally by deliberate design. They join organizations, take staff development courses and read professional journals (Robinson, 1988).

Buttlar (1991) who analyzed library periodical literature content and authorship in a study stated:

> Sharing information in the library profession is largely dependent on the library periodical literature. The advantages of the journal include its currency, its capability of addressing many and varied topics, and its ability to disseminate widely the findings of investigations of major problems or specific aspects of them. It is also an important means of helping to close the gap between researchers and practitioners.

The profession of librarianship has undergone many changes in the past twenty years. Publications have responded quickly to the need for change (Craver, 1986). The increasing amount of library literature is evidence of the growing maturity of the field of librarianship. Buttlar (1991) stated that Stevens pointed out library publishing has evolved in quantity and quality from emphasis on bibliographies to materials of a more scholarly nature designed for use by librarians and information scientists in the performance of their professional duties and in their professional education and development.

Schiffman (1987) maintained the school library media center is the

> only part of a school that cuts across all discipline areas. School library media specialists have contact with all teachers and administrators, unlike most others in instructional roles. The school library media center is the repository and distributor of instructional media for the schools.

The school library media specialist has a responsibility to ensure that the library media program is an integral part of the instructional program of the school. Professional periodicals are a means of keeping school library media specialists current in the areas of educational trends, technology and new media available for selection and purchase. These tools of the trade offer research articles sharing new techniques, and communicating new ideas to be used in the performance of professional duties. Professional periodicals also provide a vehicle for professional development in the field of librarianship and education for self-initiated learning.

Statement of the Problem

Involvement in continuing education/inservices, membership in professional organizations and reading professional periodicals are ways to stay up-to-date with emergent technologies and advances within the profession. As a tool of the trade, professional periodicals offer a means of selection, acquisition, evaluation and use of media and media services.

The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals are being read by elementary school library media specialists.

The research questions to be considered were:

1. What professional periodicals are elementary school library media specialists reading?
2. Is the professional status of the elementary school library media specialist related to the number of professional periodicals read?
3. What contents of professional periodicals are more frequently read by elementary school library media specialists?

Significance of the Study

Information Power related the fundamental responsibility of the school library media specialist is to provide the leadership and expertise necessary to ensure that the library media program is an integral part of the instructional program of the school. The findings from this study will show what professional periodicals and the types of articles elementary school library media specialists of the 1990's are reading to help maintain the needed expertise as a leader.

Media center collections that were originally print are now in a state of transition. With rapid advances in technology, the library media collection includes new formats and delivery systems. This study could reveal the extent to which elementary school library media specialists are reading professional periodicals in technology.

The school library media specialist must take responsibility for his or her own professional development (Hug, 1988), (Edwards and Schon, 1986), (Smith, 1987) and (Robinson, 1988). This study will determine if there is a relationship between school

library media specialists' professional status and the number of professional periodicals read.

Assumptions and Delimitations

The researcher assumed the school library media specialist had access to professional periodicals in the local school or that there were other locations to obtain professional periodicals for reading such as a centralized learning resource center, public or academic library.

The study was delimited to these professional periodicals deemed relevant to the professional growth of elementary school library media specialists.

Definition of Terms

Professional development involves the expectations of other members of the school and community, personal aspirations of the school library media specialist, directions established during professional education, and perceptions of the future held by professional

organizations, governmental agencies and even private foundations (Hug, 1988).

Professional periodicals are publications produced at regular intervals to share information in a specific profession. For the purpose of this study, the profession is librarianship and education. These publications are advantageous for their currency and capability of addressing many and varied topics (Buttlar, 1991).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Today's educators are confronted with many demands to instruct students who will be living, working and leading in the twenty-first century. Therefore, sound educational programs must be developed to provide students the best opportunity for an effective learning environment. The school library media specialist contributes to this process since the services and resources of the media center program enhance a teacher's ability to meet students' needs and promote lifelong learning. Eisenberg and Berkowitz (1988) stated that

> in an educational climate calling for excellence and based on the use of information and developing critical thinking skills, library media specialists have both the opportunity and the responsibility to make a positive impact on the quality of learning, school-wide.

The review of literature is related to professional periodicals read by elementary school library media specialists to provide services and resources for

students and teachers. As an instructional consultant, the school library media specialist can provide a media program that is an integral part of the instructional program of the school. Taking a proactive role in the advancing fields of technology, networking and resource sharing, the school library media specialist can increase the access to information for students and teachers. Selection of media, an important duty of a school library media specialist, provides pertinent resources for students and teachers.

Buttlar (1991) stated library periodical literature is a means of sharing information in the library profession. Its advantages are currency and capability to address many and varied topics. Professional periodicals provide current information to function as a instructional consultant, learn advances in technology, review and select new media. Through professional periodicals, school library media specialists can also obtain personal professional development.

Instructional Consultant

School librarians have been characterized as "instructional leaders, curriculum developers and resource consultants par excellence" (Craver, 1990). Instructional design models were introduced in the early 1980's by Turner and Loertscher. Each author developed a taxonomy that presented graduated levels of involvement in instructional development. Both taxonomies encouraged school library media specialists to become involved in instructional development at the level comfortable to them and strive for higher levels. A "reactive" level according to Turner and Loertscher would be to make curriculum-support materials available to teachers, or involve teachers formally in the collection development process. A "proactive" level would be to plan a unit of instruction with a teacher, teach part of the unit or help decide what is to be taught.

The American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology developed new national guidelines in 1988 which further defined the instructional consultant role

of the school library media specialist. Their publication delineated instructional consultant from librarian-teacher and instructional designer. Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs defined the instructional role as consultants to teachers to facilitate their utilization of a wide range of resources and teaching methodologies to meet the intellectual and developmental needs of students. The library media specialist has the following responsibilities:

1. participating in school, district, departmental, and grade-level curriculum design and assessment projects
2. helping teachers develop instructional activities
3. providing expertise in the selection, evaluation and use of materials and emerging technologies for the delivery of information and instruction
4. translating curriculum needs into library media program goals and objectives

The school library media specialist functioning as an instructional consultant is on equal footing with

teachers, being an integral member of the instructional team. The school library media specialist assists teachers in determining instructional strategies and in identifying appropriate resources, paying special attention to information skills.

Many school library media specialists may not feel comfortable or knowledgeable about their input as an instructional consultant defined in Information Power. To gain additional information and skills in instructional design and development, professional periodicals offer articles about proactive involvement and activities to promote a positive impact on instruction and student learning.

Sharp (1987) stated it is necessary that the teachers and school district personnel see the library media specialist as a curriculum team member - one who is interested in all aspects of the school. It is necessary that the school library media specialist know and understand the curriculum in order to suggest and provide materials that are relevant to the teaching moment.

As an instructional consultant, it is the responsibility of the school library media specialist to

read current literature to be proactive in curriculum development. O'Brien (1991) provided a core list of journals in the field of education. Arranged alphabetically by eighteen categories, the list offered periodicals in content areas such as Science and Children or elementary education such as Early Years/K-8: A Magazine for Teachers of Preschool Through Grade 8. The core list was published for school library media specialists, teachers and researchers to identify resources critical to undertaking research and locating information relevant to education.

Selection of Media

A school library media center collection is to be administered by the school library media specialist bringing together materials and equipment to meet the users' needs (Information Power, 1988). A collection development plan will enable acquisition of media to support the curriculum of the school. Loertscher (1988) stated collections in single schools are constantly changing to meet the current needs. The curriculum of the school, the needs of teachers, and the needs of

students are moving targets, not stationary ones. This means that a school cannot invest once in a group of materials and expect them to last indefinitely. No school can own everything it needs. Therefore, school library media specialists need to be aware of new books and media available for purchase.

Professional duties inherent to the role of the school library media specialist are: evaluating, previewing, and selecting materials from professional sources for purchase for the school and continuing to evaluate, alter, update, and expand the media program including print materials, software, and hardware (Callison, 1989). It is difficult to recommend materials effectively unless the time has been taken to read about or view new items for possible purchase.

Direct examination of potential materials is invaluable in the selection process. Callison (1990) reported that Billeter's (1979) study found that a larger percentage of books on a recommended checklist were selected when the books were available for "hands-on" examination rather than simply described in a

review. Unfortunately, the majority of the time "hands-on" evaluation is impossible, then published reviews and other quality selection tools must be used. Katz (1987) in Magazines for School Libraries provided a list of basic professional periodicals for reviews. Examples are: books - New York Times Book Review, or Horn Book, media - Media & Methods and computer technology - Classroom Computer Learning. He stated magazines that provide current information about media, or reviews of their contents, are essential purchases for all libraries.

Ho and Loertscher (1986) documented the need for school library media specialists to search a wider spectrum of selection guides. They also offered advice to school library media specialists:

> to build collections in topical segments rather than just buying things. Nationally published core lists may be useful in building a few basic materials in a topical area, but building strength and depth into a collection requires a different approach.

Professional periodicals provide a current source of reviews available to school library media specialists. As tools of the trade, they are an avenue for recognizing new materials to support the school's curriculum and student/teacher needs.

Advances in Technology

All over the country, parents and educators are calling for educational renewal because graduates from high schools are not prepared to contribute to society. Changing societal and workplace needs are affecting goals of education (Stripling, 1988). Dede (1990) stated that only a new paradigm for teaching/learning can accomplish a shift in educational attainment. Advanced instructional technology is a necessity. Unfortunately, the public blames our system of education for the high drop-out rate and low achievement scores. Teachers feel pressure to change and meet the challenge to do a better job of educating our students. School library media specialists feel an additional pressure to change. When today's students enter the work force,

they will need more sophisticated information skills than those required twenty years ago. Teachers and school library media specialists can work cooperatively to prepare students for a future that we cannot even foresee in terms of available technology and information (Stripling, 1988).

Advances in technology have presented many opportunities for school library media specialists to increase access to information both within and outside the school. Information Power stated:

> Library media specialists must be responsible for assessing and promoting effective use of instructional technologies. They must play a leading role on the school's technology planning team because they are educated to evaluate, select, and manage the technologies that make information and ideas available in a wide variety of formats. As a member of the team, the library media specialist provides an assessment of the potential impact of specific technologies.

The new technology of CD-ROM products can help school library media specialists meet the many challenges presented in Information Power. CD-ROM products offer access to a massive amount of information contained in a small space and are easily and quickly retrieved. Professional periodicals provide the school library media specialist reviews of the most appropriate products to meet the curriculum needs of the local school. Research and data about services, hardware and performance of users would be beneficial for a school library media specialist who is part of a technological planning team. Baumbach (1990) stated the presence of CD-ROM products in the library media center provide a positive perception of the school library media specialist as an innovator, as a leader in the area of new and emerging technologies and as an educator interested in meeting the needs of the school's students and faculty.

Automation has become a major topic of conversation at workshops, in professional journals, and at conferences, wherever school library media specialists are meeting. Buttlar (1991) studied the subject

coverage of 13 professional periodicals used by academic, public, school and special librarians. Automation was second on the list of the most popular subjects covered. While automation technology changes daily and periodical publishers have a hard time keeping up, the process of planning for automation remains stable. The literature, including Information Power, encourages librarians to plan for automation even if it remains financially and administratively impossible today (Hooten Ed., 1990). In planning for automation, most publications offer steps to take in preparing for automation. The first step is to select an advisory committee to assess, explore and plan for automation. The second step is to read and study current and projected applications of automation in the literature (Woolls, 1988).

Library networks, resource-sharing or interlibrary loans allow students and teachers the opportunity to access information beyond the school walls. Many school libraries throughout the country share a common situation: with the quality and cost of materials increasing every year, budgets are shrinking. When this happens year after year, a library's collection may age

and not stay relevant to the curriculum. The collections may not be broad enough to satisfy the expanding needs of both educators and students (Tregloan, 1989). Some schools have opted to use book funds to purchase equipment for new technologies at the expense of their collections. Tregloan was part of a school system that established networks for resource sharing in four elementary schools in Okemos, Michigan. They developed the philosophy that any child or teacher should have equal and efficient access to all printed and nonprinted materials in the district regardless of their geographical residence within the district.

Doll (1983) presented at an AASL conference that Barron (1981) completed a study in South Carolina questioning administrators and school library media specialists about library functions. Purchasing materials for the library media center requested by users for specific purposes was ranked first. Each library's own collection was the most important to the respondents. Networking and interlibrary loans were ranked number two in the survey question. This question seemed to indicate that school administrators were not

opposed to the idea of networking but were not likely to take the initiative in establishing networks in which school libraries could participate. Doll (1983) stated it is up to librarians to show that libraries are a necessary, integral part of the American education system - that students and teachers need an active school library media program and that networking can help school media centers meet the needs of the users. We as librarians can make sure the school has a quality library collection and that the school is ready to participate in networks with other school libraries and public, academic and special libraries. Research through professional periodicals can help obtain information allowing school libraries get the maximum benefits possible from networking. Woolls (1988) stated it is up to the school library media specialists to meet this challenge today. Horizons must be widened for all children. Sharing allows all children to have equal access to the world's knowledge and it is the responsibility of each individual school library media specialist to help this happen.

Current knowledge of the latest technological advancements can be obtained from professional periodicals to aid school library media specialists in pursuing new products for their school media programs. Katz (1987) in Magazines for School Libraries provided a list of periodicals on computer technology for the professional. The basic periodicals listed were Computers and Education and Teaching and Computers. Other titles dealt with all aspects of computers: their hardware, software, applications, design, management, history, and impact on society. Through these basic listings, the school library media specialist may stay informed of the latest advancements but also acquire knowledge useful for facilitating the integration of technology into the curriculum.

Professional Development and Professional Associations

Professional development involves more than just planned learning experiences associated with continuing education, inservice programs, or staff development. It involves the expectations of other members of the school

and community, personal aspirations of the school library media specialist, directions established during professional education, and perceptions of the future held by professional organizations, governmental agencies and even private foundations (Hug, 1988). There is an ever increasing profusion of general knowledge and school library media specialists must keep abreast of it and current developments in librarianship. Edwards and Schon (1986) stated the only way this can be done is for the individual to assume responsibility for his or her own professional development.

Edwards and Schon (1986) stated that Stone urged library schools and professional organizations to provide more leadership to librarians in this area but emphasized that the responsibility for self-education clearly rests with the individual librarian. Cain also agreed with Stone. Cain discussed the isolation of school librarians, strategies for identifying individual needs, and methods of meeting these needs, but strongly stressed the fact that school librarians must take personal responsibility for continued learning.

Edwards and Schon conducted a study about professional activities as viewed by school library media specialists. A randomly selected group of 133 elementary and secondary school library media specialists in Phoenix, Arizona, were sent a survey to indicate which types of professional development activities were most helpful in improving their job performance. Ninety-two school library media specialists returned completed surveys. 92% stated they participated in professional development activities by reading journals and 25% by taking part in professional associations. Respondents with a master's degree tended to read more journals, but fewer books and to be more actively involved in professional associations than those with a bachelor's degree. School library media specialists with six or more years' experience read more journals than those with fewer years experience. They concluded in their study that there are no simple solutions regarding the professional development of school library media specialists. Individuals must take the responsibility for planning, locating, and participating in professional development activities

that satisfy their self-identified needs.

Smith (1987) disagreed and stated in the past it was possible to stay abreast of professional developments by attending annual conferences and reading the professional literature. Today that approach is not adequate. Change has been constant in our history, but the pace of change has quickened dramatically and has increased the need for additional training. New technology not only requires consideration of a different viewpoint or understanding of a new technique - points that can be gathered from a journal article or a conference presentation - but it often requires basic instruction, the type of instruction characteristically associated with normal schooling. Yet many of the things school library media specialists must know today were not available when individuals who are now working in library media programs were being educated. Therefore, continuing education opportunities must be provided for library media professionals so they can acquire the skills and knowledge needed to use new technologies effectively. The continuing education opportunities she referred to were, unlike staff

development or inservices focusing on the organization, but programming intended to provide opportunities for upgrading, updating, diversifying and broadening skills and knowledge focusing on the individual. Continuing education programming depends on individuals choosing to participate. A careful analysis of the marketplace determines what is needed and what will motivate people to participate. Smith (1987) also agreed with Hug, Edwards and Schon. The individual must be responsible for his or her own professional development.

Professional associations play an active role in improving the standard of services of school media programs. They provide a unified voice for school library media specialists to develop standards, certification requirements, handbooks and other publications from departments of education.

Woolls (1988) remarked the perception of the school library media specialist was one of a quiet, retiring person rather than a dynamic, aggressive program advocate. Many professions, librarians included,

consider members who work with youth rather than adults as somehow less likely to lead. School library media specialists are working to change these perceptions of their fellow educators and library professionals by joining professional associations in both education and librarianship and working within them as capable, creative, confident members and leaders.

The associations provide successful programs, such as public relations, awards, conferences and publications for members. One such publication provides current information in the areas of education, research, cultural development, recreation and public service. It is American Libraries, a publication of American Library Association, which is an umbrella organization for more than eighty library-related groups. The American Association of School Librarians publishes School Library Media Quarterly, an organization which works for the improvement of library media centers in elementary and secondary schools and defines the role of the library media specialist to the education community.

Sharp (1987) offered a resolution: Become actively involved in professional organizations.

> Sometimes it seems that library media specialists are all alone. In many cases, we are the only one of "our kind" in a building and it seems that no one else "understands." Professional organizations can provide the support necessary in times when the commitment to our profession needs to be reinforced. These organizations provide an opportunity to get to know and work with other committed library media specialists.

Summary

Professional periodicals are a means of keeping school library media specialists current in the areas of educational trends, technology and new media available for selection and purchase. These tools of the trade offer research articles sharing new techniques, and communicating new ideas to be used in the performance of professional duties. Professional periodicals also provide a vehicle for professional development in the

field of librarianship and education for self-initiated learning.

Most current literature revealed the need for school library media specialists to stay abreast of new ideas. Through professional literature, media specialists can prepare for automation, take a leadership role in curriculum planning with teachers and maintain a quality library collection to meet the demands of future advances in technology and education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This descriptive research study was designed using a survey methodology. The methodology and procedures used to gather and analyze the data were (a). the random selection of the population to be surveyed, (b). the development of a questionnaire to be used to gather data, (c). the collection of the data using the survey instrument, and (d). the analysis of the data using descriptive statistics. This study focused on the professional periodicals read by elementary school library media specialists in the metropolitan area of Atlanta and the type of articles they preferred reading.

Population

The population surveyed in this study was randomly selected from the public school systems in the metropolitan statistical area of Atlanta. This area included eighteen county and 4 city school systems which surround the city of Atlanta (see Appendix A). Due to limited time and budget, a base size of approximately

600 schools was considered sufficient to get an indication of the professional periodicals read statewide.

Using the 1991 Georgia Public School Directory, every ninth school was selected to receive a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to one media specialist in each of the elementary schools selected. It should be noted that calling itself an elementary school was the only criterion used to include the school in this group. The schools reflected various grade level combinations and no attempt was made to control the number of questionnaires sent to the various combinations. No attempt was made to control in any way the geographical location of these schools within the metropolitan statistical area. The possibility exists that there may or may not have been more urban than suburban or rural schools.

Using a sample size of 600 schools, assuming the standard deviation of 2, working with a confidence interval level of 95% - 5% error, and a hopeful response rate of 40%, it was determined that 140 surveys would be sent out. This would provide responses from at least 56

media specialists to accumulate the data necessary for statistical analysis.

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was designed to determine what professional periodicals elementary school library media specialists read, and what type articles they read more frequently. The instrument consisted of two parts (see Appendix B). Part I (questions 1,2,3,4) included a list of periodicals arranged by subject. The media specialist was to check the ones read cover to cover, just specific sections, browsed or never read. These questions related to the research question - What do elementary school library media specialists read? Question 5 referred to the sections of periodicals elementary school library media specialists read. This related to specific contents of journals read, the third research question.

Part II (questions 6,7,8,9) included questions of demographic information. The questions provided information on the current educational status of the

elementary school library media specialists and years of experience. This provided data for the research question - Does professional status determine the number of professional periodicals read?

Classmates at Georgia State University helped in the design of the survey instrument by critiquing and offering feedback. Suggestions were accepted and revisions made to make the instrument more understandable and relevant to the research questions. The questionnaire was field tested by elementary school library media specialists in Gwinnett County, Georgia, who were not of the random sample. The field test respondents were told the questionnaire was being developed
for a research study. They were asked in a letter (see Appendix C) to specify any problems they had with the instrument and to suggest improvements that could make the questionnaire more useful. Their recommendations were considered and changes in wording and format were made accordingly. The research center at Georgia State University gave input and a final questionnaire was revised for use.

Data Collection

A survey packet was mailed to one elementary school library media specialist at each of the selected schools. The packet consisted of a cover letter (see Appendix D) explaining the study and its purpose, the survey instrument, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for returning the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to return the questionaire within 7 days. This allowed time for follow-up, if needed. After 7 days, a postcard was sent to remind those who had not responded to do so.

Schools were asked not to identify themselves by name so that confidentiality could be maintained. However, each school was assigned a number code for the purpose of follow-up, if needed.

Analysis of the Data

Using descriptive statistics, data relating to the research questions in Chapter I were tabulated by frequency of response and percent of total responses.

Analysis of variance and percentages were used to report results of the survey. The data collected for all items on the survey were tabulated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals elementary school library media specialists read and the types of articles they prefer to read. The professional status of the elementary school library media specialist in relation to the number of professional periodicals read was also a question to be answered.

One hundred forty questionnaires were mailed to elementary library media specialists in the metropolitan statistical area of Atlanta, Georgia. This area included eighteen county and four city school systems surrounding the city of Atlanta.

Of the 140 questionnaires mailed, 87 completed surveys were returned. After a reminder postcard was sent, an additional 24 surveys were returned bringing the total to 111 surveys (79%) returned. All questionnaires returned were useable to calculate results.

Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the survey instrument included a list of periodicals arranged by broad subjects - selection tools, technology related periodicals, curriculum related periodicals and educational periodicals. At the end of each list a space was provided for respondents to write in periodicals that were read and not on the list. Seventeen professional periodicals given were not on the list (see Appendix E). A list of these titles and the number of respondents who read them are provided. This information answered the research question - what professional periodicals do elementary school library media specialists read?

Professional Periodicals as Selection Tools

Sixty respondents (54.1%) to survey question one indicated they read School Library Journal cover to cover (see Table 1). Thirty-four (30.6%) indicated they read specific sections of School Library Journal. This periodical was read in some way by 102 of the 111 elementary school library media specialists who

responded. Booklist was the second choice periodical that 61 (54.9%) respondents read in some way.

One hundred of the 111 respondents indicated they never read Bookbird. Ninety-nine (89.2%) indicated they never read Choice. Table 1 shows that many more respondents have never read the selection tool periodicals than those that have browsed, read specific sections or read professional periodicals cover to cover.

Table 1

Frequency of Professional Periodicals Read as Selection Tools

Periodicals	Cover to Cover	(%)	Specific Sections	(%)	Browse	(%)	Never	(%)
School Library Journal	60	(54.1)	34	(30.6)	8	(7.2)	9	(8.1)
Horn Book	14	(12.6)	14	(12.6)	17	(15.3)	66	(59.5)
Library Journal	9	(8.1)	7	(6.3)	19	(17.1)	76	(68.5)
Cr.for Child.Bks. Bul.	9	(8.1)	16	(14.4)	14	(12.6)	72	(64.9)
Booklist	8	(7.2)	36	(32.4)	17	(15.3)	50	(45.0)
Wilson Library Bul.	4	(3.6)	6	(5.4)	21	(18.9)	80	(72.1)
Book Report	4	(3.6)	3	(2.7)	10	(9.0)	94	(84.7)
New York Times Bk. Rev	1	(.9)	4	(3.5)	15	(13.5)	91	(82.0)
Choice	1	(.9)	4	(3.6)	7	(6.3)	99	(89.2)
Bookbird	0	(0.0)	4	(3.6)	7	(6.3)	100	(90.1)

Technology Related Periodicals

Survey question 2 requested responses pertaining to technology related periodicals. Twelve respondents (10.8%) read Media & Methods cover to cover, 21 (18.9%) read specific sections and 31 (27.9%) browsed the periodical. This is the only periodical read in some way by more than 50% of the respondents. The other periodicals listed in Table 2 were read cover to cover by less than 3.6% of the respondents.

Of the 111 returned questionnaires, twenty (18.0%) respondents read specific sections of Classroom Computer Learning and 22 (19.8%) browsed it.

Media & Methods, Classroom Computer Learning and Computing Teacher were read most by elementary school library media specialists in some way. Computing Teacher was read in some way by 32 respondents.

Of the 111 respondents, 107 have never read Tech Trend. Library Hi Tech, T.H.E. Journal, and CD ROM Professional have also never been read by 102 respondents or more.

Table 2

Frequency of Technology Related Periodicals Read

Periodicals	Cover to Cover	(%)	Specific Sections	(%)	Browse	(%)	Never	(%)
Media & Methods	12	(10.8)	21	(18.9)	31	(27.9)	47	(42.3)
Electronic Learning	4	(3.6)	12	(10.8)	14	(12.6	81	(73.0)
Technology and Learn.	2	(1.8)	3	(2.7)	8	(7.2)	98	(88.3)
Computing Teacher	2	(1.8)	13	(11.7)	17	(15.3)	79	(71.2)
Classrm. Comp. Learn.	2	(1.8)	20	(18.0)	22	(19.8)	67	(60.4)
Tech Trend	1	(.9)	1	(.9)	2	(1.8)	107	(96.4)
T.H.E. Journal	1	(.9)	0	(0.0)	6	(5.4)	104	(93.7)
Library Hi Tech	0	(0.0)	2	(1.8)	4	(3.6)	105	(94.6)
CD ROM Professional	0	(0.0)	1	(.9)	8	(7.2)	102	(91.9)

Educational Professional Periodicals

Ten professional periodicals of educational format were listed in question 3 of the survey questionnaire. Table 3 shows that Instructor was read cover to cover by 30 (27.0%) of the 111 respondents. Twenty-six (23.4%) read specific sections of Instructor and 38 (34.2%) browsed the periodical. Learning was read in some way by 73 of the respondents. Fewer than 5% of the respondents read any of the other titles cover to cover.

Education Digest and Early Years were browsed by 25 (22.5%) of the respondents (see Table 3). More educational periodicals were browsed than read cover to cover or by specific sections.

Of the 10 educational periodicals in survey question 3, nine of the titles were never read by 50% or more respondents.

Table 3

Frequency of Educational Periodicals Read

Periodicals	Cover to Cover	(%)	Specific Sections	(%)	Browse	(%)	Never	(%)
Instructor	30	(27.0)	26	(23.4)	38	(34.2)	17	(15.3)
Learning	19	(17.1)	23	(20.7)	31	(27.9)	38	(34.2)
Early Years	5	(4.5)	10	(9.0)	25	(22.5)	71	(64.0)
Education Week	4	(3.6)	2	(1.8)	4	(3.6)	101	(91.0)
Media Educator	4	(3.6)	6	(5.4)	7	(6.3)	94	(84.7)
Elem. School Jour.	3	(2.7)	13	(11.7)	12	(10.8)	83	(74.8)
Phi Delta Kappan	3	(2.7)	13	(11.7)	14	(12.6)	81	(73.0)
Education Digest	2	(1.8)	10	(9.0)	25	(22.5)	74	(66.7)
American Education	1	(.9)	4	(3.6)	5	(4.5)	101	(91.0)
Childhood Education	1	(.9)	6	(5.4)	9	(8.1)	95	(85.6)

Curriculum Related Periodicals

Question 4 of the survey questionnaire requested responses of curriculum related periodicals. Eight of the eleven titles listed were read cover to cover by 11 or more of the respondents (see Table 4). The periodical read most cover to cover was School Library Media Activities Monthly with 35.1% of the respondents reading it. But the periodical read in some way by the most respondents was Mailbox (Primary), by 98 (88.2%) respondents. Only 13 (11.7%) never read Mailbox (Primary).

Specific sections of Reading Teacher were read by 24 (21.6%) of the respondents. Ten respondents or more read specific sections of the nine titles listed in Table 4.

Science Teacher was the curriculum related periodical never read by most school library media specialists. Ninety-two (82.9%) never read this title. Arithmetic Teacher, another specific curriculum periodical was never read by 80 (72.1%) elementary school library media specialists.

Table 4

Frequency of Curriculum Related Periodicals Read

Periodicals	Cover to Cover	(%)	Specific Sections	(%)	Browse	(%)	Never	(%)
School Lib. Media Act.	39	(35.1)	11	(9.9)	18	(16.2)	43	(38.7)
Mailbox (Primary)	38	(34.2)	21	(18.9)	39	(35.1)	13	(11.7)
Mailbox (Intermediate)	35	(31.5)	19	(17.1)	39	(35.1)	18	(16.2)
Mailbox (Kindergarten)	33	(29.7)	20	(18.0)	32	(28.8)	26	(23.4)
School Days	28	(25.2)	17	(15.3)	26	(23.4)	40	(36.0)
Good Apple Newspaper	23	(20.7)	19	(17.1)	36	(32.4)	33	(29.7)
Emergency Librarian	12	(10.8)	15	(13.5)	8	(7.2)	76	(68.5)
School Lib. Media Quar.	11	(9.9)	10	(9.0)	13	(11.7)	77	(69.4)
Reading Teacher	10	(9.0)	24	(21.6)	27	(24.3)	50	(45.0)
Arithmetic Teacher	4	(3.6)	8	(7.2)	19	(17.1)	80	(72.1)
Science Teacher	2	(1.8)	3	(2.7)	14	(12.6)	92	(82.9)

Demographics

Is the professional status of the elementary school library media specialist related to the number of professional periodicals read?

Of the 111 respondents, 11 (9.9%) have a bachelor's degree, 67 (60.4%) have a master's degree and 31 (27.9%) have a specialist's degree. Two media specialists did not respond to this question.

Thirty (27.0%) respondents have between 16-20 years of experience (see Table 5). Two media specialists did not respond to this question.

Table 5

Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Number of Media Specialists	Percent
1-5	15	(13.5)
6-10	22	(19.8)
11-15	21	(18.9)
16-20	30	(27.0)
21+	21	(18.9)
No response	2	(1.8)

Ninety-six (86.5%) of the 111 respondents indicated they attended local staff development. Eighty-nine (80.2%) indicated they attended local inservices. Professional conferences were attended by 69 (62.2%). Ninety-five (85.6%) are not attending a college or university at this time. Fourteen (12.6%) respondents are attending a college or university. Of these fourteen, ten (9.0%) are preparing for a specialists degree, 1 (.9%) for a masters degree and 2 (1.8%) for

state requirements for certification. Ninety-eight (88.3%) did not respond to this question.

Research question 3 dealing with the professional status versus number of periodicals read was tested using a one-way analysis of variance. The analysis of variance showed no statistical significance (F (4,104) = 1.8970, P = .1165) between the years of experience of the elementary school library media specialist and the number of periodicals read (see Table 6).

Table 6

Years of Experience Versus Number of Professional Periodicals Read

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	4	292.3038	73.0759	1.8970	.1165
Within Groups	104	4006.3017	38.5221		
Total	108	4298.6055			

A second analysis of variance was tested showing no significance (F (2,106) = 1.6265, P = .2015) between the educational level and the number of periodicals read. Table 7 illustrates this point.

Table 7

Professional Status Versus Number of Professional Periodicals Read

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	2	127.9889	63.9944	1.6265	.2015
Within Groups	106	4170.6166	39.3454		
Total	108	4298.6055			

Sections of Professional Periodicals Read

Question 5 of the survey questionnaire indicated responses to the research question - what contents of professional periodicals are more frequently read by elementary school library media specialists? Respondents were to mark always, sometimes or never beside each journal section listed. Table 8 shows reviews always read by (60.4%) 67 of the respondents and

table of contents always read by 66 (59.5%) of the respondents. Ideas to be shared with faculty such as monthly activity articles, personal sharing articles and curriculum related articles were the next sections always read by 36 or more of the respondents. Sixty-six respondents indicated they never read job classifications and 33 (29.7%) indicated they never read letters to the editor or editorials. Feature articles and new products were read sometimes by 74 (66.7%) of the respondents.

Table 8

Frequency of Sections in Professional Periodicals Read

Sections	Always (%)		Sometimes (%)		Never (%)	
Reviews	67	(60.4)	35	(31.5)	9	(8.1)
Table of Contents	66	(59.5)	33	(29.7)	12	(10.8)
Monthly Activity Articles	53	(47.7)	44	(39.6)	14	(12.6)
Personal Sharing Articles	48	(43.2)	44	(39.6)	19	(17.1)
Curriculum Related Articles	36	(32.4)	63	(56.8)	12	(10.8)
Calendar of Events	24	(21.6)	67	(60.4)	20	(18.0)
Feature Articles	23	(20.7)	74	(66.7)	14	(12.6)
New Products	22	(19.8)	74	(66.7)	15	(13.5)
News	19	(17.1)	64	(57.7)	28	(25.2)
Columns	9	(8.1)	73	(65.8)	29	(26.1)
Letters to the Editor	6	(5.4)	72	(64.9)	33	(29.7)
Editorials	5	(4.5)	73	(65.8)	33	(29.7)
Advertisements	4	(3.6)	78	(70.3)	29	(26.1)
Job Classifications	3	(2.7)	42	(37.8)	66	(59.5)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings

Elementary school library media specialists read professional periodicals for various reasons. They may be read as a tool for selection of media, for curriculum input, to stay current in technology or awareness of the field of education. As a selection tool, School Library Journal was read in some way by nearly all elementary school library media specialists and Booklist was read in some way by slightly more than half. Horn Book was their third choice.

Technology related periodicals were not being read by a large percentage of elementary school library media specialists. Media & Methods was the only journal read in some way by over half. The second most read was Classroom Computer Learning.

Instructor was the favored educational periodical read in some way by more than three-fourths of the media specialists. Learning was read by over half.

Curriculum related periodicals read the most in some way were Mailbox (Primary), Mailbox (Intermediate), and Mailbox (Kindergarten). Good Apple Newsletter was also a top choice read by almost three-fourths of the media specialists.

Of the 111 elementary school library media specialists, over half have a master's degree and approximately one-fourth have a bachelor's degree or specialist's degree. More than half have 14 years or less experience. Slightly more than one-fourth have 16-20 years experience. The professional status of elementary school library media specialists was not related to the number of professional periodicals read. Professional degree and/or years of experience made no apparent difference in the number of periodicals read.

Within each professional periodical, specific sections were read more frequently than others. Nearly all elementary school library media specialists read reviews more frequently than other sections. Table of contents, curriculum related articles, monthly activity articles and feature articles were read by most of the media specialists. Editorials, letters to the editor and job classifications were read the least.

Discussion

Successful school library media specialists advance professionally by deliberate design. They join organizations, take staff development courses and read professional periodicals (Robinson, 1988). Reading professional periodicals is a way to stay up-to-date with current developments in the field. Robinson (1988) found School Library Journal to be the most frequently cited periodical in her study. Consistent with the findings of Robinson, this study also found School Library Journal to be the most read professional periodical.

Information Power stated library media specialists must be responsible for assessing and promoting effective use of instructional technologies. Professional periodicals are a means of acquiring knowledge about the latest advances in technology thereby giving input to a school's technology planning team. This study revealed elementary school library media specialists do not read a large number of technology related periodicals. Of the nine technology related periodicals listed on the questionnaire, seven of them had never been read by more than two-thirds of

the media specialists. Only Media & Methods was read in some way by more than half of the media specialists. Stripling (1988) and Dede (1990) stated advanced instructional technology is a necessity. Media center collections that were originally print are now in a state of transition. Woolls (1988) and Hooten (1990) stated school library media specialists should prepare for automation even if it remains financially and administratively impossible today by reading and studying current applications of automation in current literature. One assumption of this study was that school library media specialists had access to professional periodicals in the local school or that there were other locations to obtain periodicals for reading such as a centralized learning resource center, public or academic library. Perhaps school library media specialists are receiving knowledge of technological advances from other professional sources such as inservices and conferences, but it does not appear they are reading extensively in the area of technology.

Sharp (1987) stated it is necessary for the school library media specialist to know and understand the

curriculum in order to suggest and provide materials that are relevant to the teaching moment. This study revealed elementary school library media specialists seem to be reading curriculum related and general educational periodicals to help teachers develop instructional activities. Mailbox (Primary), Mailbox (Intermediate), Mailbox (Kindergarten), Good Apple Newsletter, Instructor, and Learning were read in some way by two-thirds of the media specialists.

Edwards and Schon (1986) conducted a study about professional activities with school library media specialists. Their survey was intended to determine which types of professional development activities were most helpful in improving job performance. Respondents with a master's degree tended to read more journals, and school library media specialists with six or more years experience read more journals. This study indicated that professional degree and/or years of experience made no difference in the number of professional periodical read. Elementary school library media specialists of the metropolitan statistical area of Atlanta were reading the same number of professional periodicals regardless of their degree or years of experience.

Smith (1987), Hug (1988), and Edwards and Schon (1986) all agreed that school library media specialists must be responsible for his or her own professional development and reading professional journals is one way of achieving this.

Information Power listed the responsibilities of the school library media specialist. Providing expertise in selection, evaluation and use of materials and emerging technologies and helping teachers develop instructional activities were two on the list. This study revealed that elementary school library media specialists are apparently reading sections of professional periodicals which help fulfill these responsibilities. Reviews were read always or sometimes by nearly all elementary school library media specialists. Monthly activity articles, curriculum related articles, feature articles and sections related to instructional needs of teachers were read more frequently than those of general interest such as letters to the editor or editorials.

This study revealed professional periodicals are a means of individual professional development. Further study might seek to determine other ways elementary

school library media specialists pursue professional development.

The professional periodicals in this study's questionnaire were listed by the broad subjects - selection tools, technology related, educational, and curriculum related. Further study of the same journals could be analyzed in a different order to determine if the results were genuine or skewed due to the categories employed in this study.

With decreases in funding, elementary school library media specialists might have difficulty obtaining the professional periodicals needed to fulfill their responsibilities. Further study might seek to determine if media specialists have access to professional periodicals.

Applications

School Library Journal was one periodical read cover to cover by a majority of the media specialists in this study. The only other periodicals read as much were curriculum related such as Mailbox (Primary) and Instructor. Technology related were read by the fewest

elementary school library media specialists. Reviews and table of contents were the sections of professional periodicals read most. Hug (1988), Edwards and Schon (1986), Smith (1987) and Robinson (1988) agreed the school media specialist must take responsibility for his or her own professional development. Reading professional periodicals is a means of achieving this development. School systems might analyze the periodical titles and sections read and determine whether these are adequate to meet the range of needs of elementary school library media specialists. They also might promote other professional periodicals and their contents to encourage media specialists to read current literature which will keep them informed of new developments in the field.

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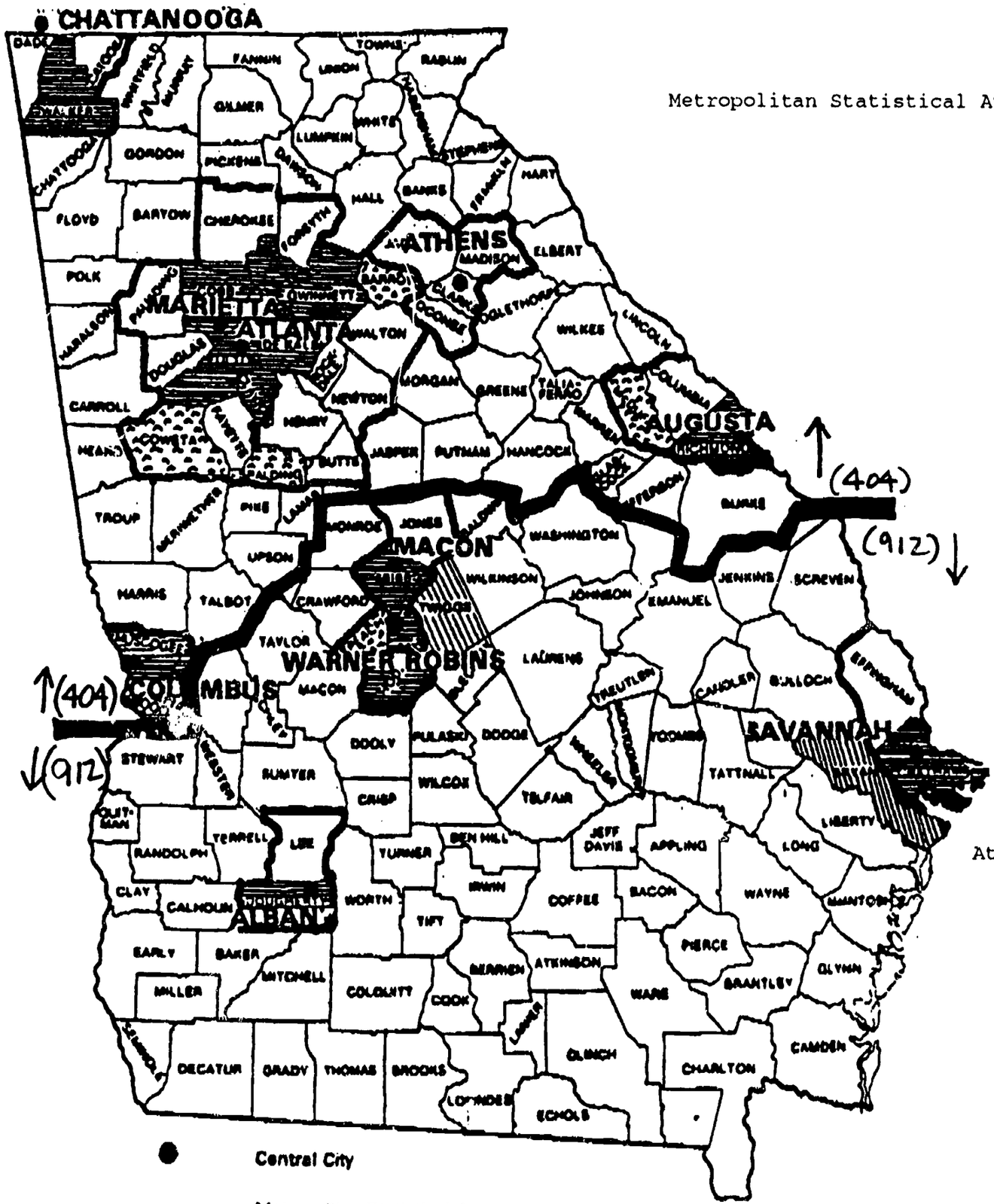
APPENDIXES

Metropolitan Statistical Areas



Atlanta MSA:
Barrow
Butts
Cherokee
Clayton
Cobb
Coweta
DeKalb
Douglas
Fayette
Forsyth
Fulton
Gwinnett
Henry
Newton
Paulding
Rockdale
Spalding
Walton

APPENDIX B

Professional Periodical Questionnaire

The purpose of this study was to determine what professional periodicals elementary media specialists read and the sections of journals they prefer.

CHECK ALL PERIODICAL TITLES THAT APPLY

	Cover to Cover	Just Specific Sections	Browse	Never
1. Which of the following selection tools do you read?				
Book Report	_____	_____	_____	_____
Booklist	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bookbird	_____	_____	_____	_____
Center for Children's Books Bulletin	_____	_____	_____	_____
Choice	_____	_____	_____	_____
Horn Book	_____	_____	_____	_____
Library Journal	_____	_____	_____	_____
New York Times Book Review	_____	_____	_____	_____
School Library Journal	_____	_____	_____	_____
Wilson Library Bulletin	_____	_____	_____	_____
Others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Cover to Cover	Just Specific Sections	Browse	Never
2. Which of the following technology related periodicals do you read?				
CD ROM Professional	_____	_____	_____	_____
Classroom Computer Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Computing Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
Electronic Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Library Hi Tech	_____	_____	_____	_____
Media & Methods	_____	_____	_____	_____
Technology and Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tech Trend	_____	_____	_____	_____
T.H.E. Journal	_____	_____	_____	_____
Others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Which of the following educational periodicals do you read?				
American Education	_____	_____	_____	_____
Childhood Education	_____	_____	_____	_____
Early Years	_____	_____	_____	_____
Education Digest	_____	_____	_____	_____
Education Week	_____	_____	_____	_____
Elementary School Journal	_____	_____	_____	_____
Instructor	_____	_____	_____	_____
Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Media Educator	_____	_____	_____	_____
Phi Delta Kappan	_____	_____	_____	_____
Others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Cover to Cover	Just Specific Sections	Browse	Never
4. Which of the following curriculum related periodicals do you read?				
Arithmetic Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
Emergency Librarian	_____	_____	_____	_____
Good Apple Newspaper	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mailbox (kindergarten)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mailbox (primary)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mailbox (intermediate)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reading Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
School Days	_____	_____	_____	_____
School Lib. Media Activities Monthly	_____	_____	_____	_____
School Lib. Media Quarterly	_____	_____	_____	_____
Science Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
Others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. In general, of the professional periodicals you read, which sections of the journal contents do you tend to read. (CHECK THE SECTIONS THAT APPLY.)

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Table of contents	_____	_____	_____
Reviews	_____	_____	_____
Feature articles	_____	_____	_____
Editorials	_____	_____	_____
Letters to the editor	_____	_____	_____
Curriculum related articles	_____	_____	_____
Monthly activity articles	_____	_____	_____
Personal sharing articles	_____	_____	_____
Columns	_____	_____	_____
Advertisements	_____	_____	_____
New Products	_____	_____	_____
Calendar of events	_____	_____	_____
Job classifications	_____	_____	_____
News	_____	_____	_____

6. What is your current educational status?
Bachelors degree ____ Masters degree ____ Specialists degree ____
Doctors degree ____

7. How many years of experience do you have as a media specialist?
1-5 years ____ 6-10 years ____ 11-15 years ____ 16-20 years ____ 21+ years _____

8. Have you attended any of the following within the last eighteen months:
local staff development ____ local inservices ____
professional conferences ____

9. Are you attending a college or university at this time?
Yes ____ No ____
10. If so, for what reason?
Masters degree ____ Specialists degree ____ state requirements for certification ____ Other _____

APPENDIX C

FIELD TEST LETTER

December 2, 1991

Dear (Media specialist),

As a student at Georgia State University in the sixth year program in Library Media Technology, I am conducting a study to determine the professional periodicals elementary school library media specialists read and what type of articles they prefer.

Not everyone could be included in this study, so a random sample of public schools in the metropolitan area of Atlanta will be selected to participate. I would like to ask you to be a field test respondent for this questionnaire. Your direct response to the survey is very important in order to obtain input on the effectiveness of this survey. Please answer the questions but also write comments beside the ones that are not clear. Specify any problems you had with the instrument and suggest any improvements that could make this survey more useful. Please put the amount of time it took you to complete the survey at the end.

Thank you for your time and cooperation in completing the attached survey. Please return it within 5 days in the courier envelope also attached.

Sincerely,

Faye S. Curlee
Media Specialist
Norton Elementary

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER

Faye S. Curlee
Elementary Media Specialist
3708 Kelin Court
Lilburn, Georgia 30247

January 7, 1992

Dear Media Specialist,

As a student at Georgia State University in the sixth year program in Library Media Technology, I am conducting a study to determine the professional periodicals elementary school library media specialists read and what type of articles they prefer.

Not everyone could be included in this study, so a random sample of public schools in an eighteen county area of metropolitan Atlanta was selected to participate. Your direct response to the survey represents the responses of many people like you and is very important in order to obtain a representative sampling of information about the topic. Each questionnaire is coded for tabulation purposes only. Your responses will remain confidential.

The survey should take only 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your cooperation. Please return it within SEVEN days in the enclosed, self -addressed, stamped envelope.

Sincerely,

Faye S. Curlee,
Media Specialist

APPENDIX E

PROFESSIONAL PERIODICALS READ BY RESPONDENTS

Below is a list of periodicals not on the survey questionnaire. This list shows the broad subject they were written under and the number of media specialists who added them to the survey questionnaire.

	# of Media Specialists
Professional Periodicals as Selection Tools	
Library Talk	7
Atlanta Journal Book Reviews	3
Book Links	9
American Libraries	1
The Advocate	5
Kobrin Letter	3
Technology Related Periodicals	
Apple Library Users Group	2
Incider A+	1

	# of Media Specialists
Educational Periodicals	
Exceptional Child	2
Education Leadership	1
Curriculum Related Periodicals	
School Library Workshop	5
Science and Children	6
Social Studies and Young Learners	3
C.A.R.E. Magazine	1
Worksheet Magazine (all levels)	2
Creative Classroom	1
Lollipops	1