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Interviewing Process Handbook for Library Media Specialists

Vicki H. Stegall

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Interviewing Process Handbook

for

Library Media Specialists

A Graduate Research Project

Submitted to the

Division of School Library Media Studies

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Art

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Vicki H. Stegall

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the job application procedure specifically for the school library media specialist, with an emphasis on interview questions. As a result of this research project, Employment Handbook for School Library Media Specialists was written. Research showed the majority of interview questions presented to the school library media specialist were classified in the Professional - Media Specialist category.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The job application process, including obtaining listings of openings, writing cover letters and resumes, and interviewing is a concern for those who are seeking employment. "An effective cover letter and resume can greatly increase your chances of getting a better position sooner, and can even result in higher pay and better working conditions." "An interview is not a life or death situation" (Provenzano, 1995, p.viii, 82).

The world of business has published numerous articles, reports, and documents regarding the professional business job application procedure. Books In Print 1997-98 lists 178 books under the subject heading of resumes and 147 under the subject heading of employment interviewing (Books In Print 1997-98, 1997). Books, magazine and newspaper articles, and research papers have addressed the issues of cover letter and resume content and the interview process from the business world perspective. Specific tips and guidelines have been studied, analyzed, and reported to those individuals who seek employment in the business world. Samples of cover letters and resumes for specific business related professions have been published in abundant sources as well as interviewing advice from personnel directors or corporation directors. Magee (1962) discussed common errors in questioning, questions that avoid pitfalls and elicit honest answers, how the applicant feels about his present job, how the applicant feels about people, the applicant's job objectives, how the applicant regards himself, the technique of implication, repeating, the pause or implied question, and summarizing. Within each of these subtopics sample

interviewing questions were included (pp.241-245). National Business Employment Weekly publishes concise articles concerning work obtainment on a regular basis (Besson, 1996; Besson 1994; Hirsch 1997; Phillips 1998). This company has also published books on cover letters, resumes, and interviewing (Besson, 1996; Besson, 1994; Hirsch, 1996).

Much research on the job application process has been general in scope. Thus, this research was not conducted specifically for employment areas such as business, education, or librarianship. Psychologists have completed studies concerning interview and hiring practices from the employer's point of view. Journals such as Canadian Journal of Psychology, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Occupational Psychology, Psychological Reports, and Personnel Psychology have published research papers on previewing job applications, selection interviewing, interviewers' personal feelings, applicant stereotyping, simulated employment interviews, and factors affecting the final decision (Dewey, 1987). Dipboye, Fontenelle, and Garner (1984) examined the effects of paper application materials with the accuracy of interview assessments (pp. 118-128). Springbett (1958) studied some of the factors that affect how the interview process serves as the final determinant in the selection of employees.

Information regarding job attainment for librarians, those who wish to work in public, academic, and special library situations, has also been published in various print formats. Such periodicals as Library Journal and The Journal of Academic Librarianship have printed articles on the application process for public and academic librarians. Collins (1995) wrote an article regarding the interview process for these

librarians (pp. 34-35). Creth (1978) did a research study on academic librarian job interviewing (pp.356-360). Examples of books on job seeking for such librarians are Library Jobs: How to Fill Them, How to Find Them by Barbara I. Dewey and Writing Resumes That Work: A How-To-Do-It Manual For Librarians by Robert R. Newlen. Information has also been published for personnel directors or those conducting the hiring and interview processes, such as Hiring Library Employees: A How-To-Do-It Manual (Rubin, 1993). This manual, however, is also directed toward librarianship employment issues.

Three successive research studies have addressed the issue of resume content. Feild and Holley (1976) discovered that some content areas on the resume were more important than others (pp.229-237). Gaughan's study (1980) referred to the previous one performed by Feild and Holley as a basis for his research which identified the most essential items to include in a resume for the position of academic librarian (pp.122-127). Womack and Goldberg (1997) published a research report on resume content which cited the second article by Gaughan as a basis for their study. They examined the resume items which academic librarians judged to be the most important. Womack and Goldberg then compared their results to Gaughan's findings (pp.540-549). There appears to be no similar research regarding employment for school librarians.

Articles that focus specifically on the interview process from the educational administrator's perspective have been published in periodicals such as NASSP Bulletin, The School Administrator, American Secondary Education, and Principal. Martin presented tips for a successfully conducted interview for the position of a

school principal. She discussed the three steps administrators should follow during this particular interview process; the role of the interviewer, how to interview, and techniques and questions. Six examples of interview questions for a principal candidate were listed under the techniques and questions section. Martin stated, "The questions that follow were deemed 'most difficult' by the interviewees, but were very revealing to the interviewers" (Martin, 1993, pp. 79-83). Virelli proposed a set of 13 sample interview questions for school administrators to use when conducting teacher interviews and suggests that questions should be arranged in order and complexity of importance (Virelli, 1986, pp.20-21). These suggestions included: what was your first job; what do you see as your greatest asset in teaching; and what are your goals for the next three to five years. Vann contended that a school principal could obtain extremely valuable selection information in a half-hour interview. He suggests 21 key questions to ask the prospective classroom teacher. Vann also briefly describes the type of responses he is hoping to ascertain. However he states, "For some questions, there are no right or wrong answers; I simply want to measure the candidate's feelings." His current questions from 1994 included; tell me about yourself, personally and professionally, walk me through a lesson or unit in grade _, and what are two or three of your greatest personal or professional strengths and weaknesses. After the interview Vann rates the candidates excellent, good, marginal, or unsatisfactory (Vann, 1994, pp.38-41).

George E. Pawlas discussed the four areas of structured questions he used when interviewing prospective teacher candidates. He lists 36 questions divided into five categories. The five categories, which Pawlas uses, are teacher relationships

with students, teacher relationships with colleagues, teacher relationships with parents, instructional techniques, and a potpourri of topics and background information. Samples of his questions include: what kind of students do you like to work with; what kind of teachers would you prefer to work with; what do you feel is the most effective way to communicate with parents; what rules do you have for your classroom; and what are your hobbies and interests (Pawlas, 1995, pp.62-65).

A very concise article by Stuart D. Salkin described how the author picks winning teacher hirees. He stated, "When it comes to hiring in K-12 education, picking a winner is accomplished by the astute and well-trained professional. Ten years of hiring have helped me develop questions that reveal a great deal about potential staff members." Salkin included some of his interview questions and his interpretations of responses in this piece. Examples are; tell me about your professional self, tell me how children learn, and tell me about the types of questions you ask your students (Salkin, 1996, pp.38-39).

Books, which could be used as texts for school administration studies, have also included articles and chapters on the selection process for educational instructors. The Principal: Creative Leadership For Effective Schools contains a six step interview agenda (Ubben and Hughes, 1997, p. 275). Setting the tone and stage for an interview was included in Maximizing People Power In Schools: Motivating and Managing Teachers and Staff (Frase, 1992). Information in this text suggests that administrators use critical incidents and problem-solving questions for interviewing. A list of personal qualities school administrators are seeking in teachers can be found in the book, Human Resource Management In Education. "Administrators still search

for teachers who are enthusiastic, positive, upbeat; have high expectations for
students; believe all students can learn; are good role models..." (Jones and Walters,
1994, p.101). Seyfarth (1996) suggested interviewing questions for teacher
candidates (pp.57, 60). An appendix in Personnel Administration In Education: A
Management Approach (Rebore, Sr., 1998, p.124) lists 41 interviewing questions and
discussion statements. Inclusive in this extended list are the following questions:
what unique qualities do you possess that we should consider; how do you feel about
thematic (unit) planning; what are your thoughts about PTA and other community
organizations; what is your philosophy of life; and what constitutes an effective
classroom. Although not specifically directed toward media specialist candidates,
one of the listed questions for classroom teachers pertains to school libraries. This
question is as follows: what is your conception of the way an instructional materials
center should function in a school?

Although there is information for other librarians and other educators, there
appears to be little information specifically regarding the job application procedures
for the library media specialist. Two brief articles were located in the periodical,
Emergency Librarian (Greene, 1990, pp.13-16 and Haycock, 1990, pp. 9-12). A
resume sample was discovered in the book, Writing Resumes That Work: A How-To-
Do-It Manual For Librarians (Newlen, 1998), although this sample resume is for the
position of Media Services Director at the administrative school district level and not
for the entry-level position of school library media specialist. Daniel D. Barron
condensed information from a panel discussion that was conducted at the 1998
Association for Library and Information Science Education Conference in New

Orleans about what employers look for in applicants. Barron states, "Each panel member was to deliver her or his view as to what they, as employers, look for in an applicant. While none relate specifically to school library media specialists, Dean Carbo [ALISE President and Dean at Pittsburgh] indicated that she believed the same personal characteristics presented by the panelists were essential for those professionals as well." Suggestions were compiled from comments of five school library directors at the 1989 Texas Library Association Conference (White and White, 1990, pp. 3-4). An article (Weisburg and Toor, 1992, pp.1-2) written for school librarians briefly covers resume writing, cover letters, and preparing for the interview. David V. Loertscher wrote sample interview questions for a library media specialist for the intended audience of school administrators (Loertscher, 1998, p. 56).

<u>Research Purpose</u>

A handbook for the school library media specialist applicant will be composed for this project and will include information on job obtainment. Chapters for this handbook will include:

A. Job Location Resources

B. Cover Letters and Resumes

C. Interview Preparation

D. Interview Questions

E. Follow-up Procedures

A problem is perceived in the literature, written either as handbooks or manuals for the job seeker, in that very little has been written specifically for the school librarian. The interview process is of major concern to applicants in any area or field who are

seeking an employment position. Apprehension, nervousness, and anxiety are points

of stress for the job applicant whether they be business majors, librarians, or

specifically school library media specialists. "Finding a job is a lot like auditioning

for a part in a Broadway play. It takes practice, poise, and confidence to get the part"

(Mulling, 1995, p. E6). "Any decent interviewer understands that you may be

nervous, especially if it's one of your very first interviews" (Provenzano, 1995, p.

82). Questions from listserv subscribers of LM_NET to other members of this

discussion group have included ones regarding what a school librarian can expect to

be asked during an interview. Frank Moore wrote a request for sample interview

questions on the listserv, LM_NET, on June 18, 1996. He expressed his desire and

appreciation for any help the listserv discussion group members could volunteer.

Moore received responses from three members. Penelope S. Cunningham responded

with one scenario type of interview question that she was once asked, while Doug

Johnson posted 12 interview questions that he uses with candidates in his position of

District Media Supervisor for the Mankato Public Schools. Haycock (1990)

responded to Moore by suggesting to him that he read his published article in

Emergency Librarian (pp.9-12). Upon researching a more extensive LM_NET

Archive during June of 1999, more postings regarding interview questions for media

specialists were obtained. On Monday, May 26, 1997 Erik Johnson posted a list of 16

interview questions which a friend of his used while being involved in interviewing

applicants for a librarian's position. Sandra Norfolk posted a list of compiled

questions, which she received from other listserv members that a candidate might ask

the interviewers. This posting was dated Monday, May 11, 1998. The author of Flip-

IT, Alice H. Yucht, expressed her concerns and some of her experiences regarding job interviewing on LM_NET on Monday, May 13, 1996. In a series of five postings Phyllis Humphrey compiled the responses from members of this listserv which she received after posting a request for interview questions on Wednesday, July 15, 1998.

Research Project Proposal

This research will supply general types of interviewing information for the school librarian such as proper dress, interview arrival time, and eye contact issues. The research project will suggest a useful series of job availability sources, sample cover letters and resumes, interview question examples, and follow-up procedures to make the process more productive for both the school library media specialist interviewee and the school administrator. Partial goals for this project are to cover interviewing techniques such as what questions the school library media specialist interviewee should expect and what that particular candidate could ask the interviewer. Questions that should not legally be asked will also be included. Interviews for school librarian positions are unique in that usually the interviewer is not a fellow librarian, but instead is a school administrator who most probably was a former classroom teacher. Often these individuals do not understand the many roles of the school librarian, as explained in Information Power (AASL and AECT, 1998), and therefore do not know what questions to ask this specific job candidate. Job perceptions of school library media specialists can vary greatly between the candidate and the employer. Examples of authentic interview questions for school library media positions will be included in this research project.

Significance

This project appears to be unique and significant because information has not been uncovered in any literature including books, periodical articles, or research papers specifically written and published on the application process for the library media specialist.

Definitions

AASL – American Association of School Librarians

AECT – Association for Educational Communications and Technology

business world - those people who are employed or involved in a profession related to

business and commerce. They may or may not have majored in business

fields at the academic level.

cover letter - an introductory letter accompanying a resume which presents further

information about the applicant

library media specialist – (term used in Information Power) <u>see</u> media specialist

listserv - an Internet discussion group on a specific area of expertise. ex. LM_NET is

a listserv for school librarians.

media specialist – a person with appropriate certification and broad professional

preparation, both in education and media, with competencies to carry out a

media program. The media specialist is the basic media professional in the

school program. (Prostano and Prostano, 1982)

psychologist - a person who specializes in the science of mind and behavior

resume - a short document of a person's education and work experience

school administrator - an individual who manages and supervises an individual

school such as a principal; or a school district such as a superintendent

teacher-librarian – Canadian term for library media specialist

Chapter 2

Methodology

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature on the interview process from two research papers, which were published in psychology journals, will be discussed in this chapter. One research study concerns application forms, applicant appearance, and what transpires when these two items are assessed independently. The second research paper deals with previewing the application form prior to interviewing candidates. Also included in this chapter will be a review of three research papers on resume content that were located in a library journal for colleges and in a journal about vocational guidance. The three research papers were done in succession and therefore, an historical chronology was established. These three research papers all did similar studies about what items business professionals and academic librarian applicants should consider essential for inclusion in their resumes.

Reports from Psychology Sources

B. M. Springbett's research (1958) regarding the identification of factors that affect the job interview as a selection tool reported five results. In this study Springbett conducted experiments with two different population groups. The first group was from an industrial setting and the second was from a military setting. Job interviewers rated applicants on their application forms and their appearance. Applicants were rated in two orders, half by application form–appearance–final and the other half by appearance–application form-final. Appearance and application forms were rated as very good, average, or dubious. Springbett concluded the

following in his study: the final outcome of the interview in 85% of the cases was decisively affected in the first two or three minutes by the application form information and the applicant's appearance; application form information is the greatest contribution factor for the final decision; during the interview the interviewer's search is primarily for negative evidence; final acceptance is low unless the applicant is assessed well on both the application form and appearance; and the chances of acceptance are greater when both the application form and appearance are rated favorably but the application form is rated before appearance. "An experimental investigation of the employment interview assesses the influence of the following factors on the final decision: (a) information received from the application form and from the appearance of the applicant; (b) the evaluation placed on this information; (c) the order in which the information is received" (p.22).

In their research of previewing applications and the effects of that upon the process and outcome, Dipboye, Fontenelle, and Garner (1984) found that when applications were previewed prior to an interview the interviewers gathered more nonapplication information. They also found that application previews made little difference in the assessment of the interviews. Forty undergraduates at Rice University who were enrolled in psychology classes composed the population for this research study. Each member of the population assumed the role of a job interviewer. They were given six questions to ask each supposed candidate, and they were asked to devise questions of their own to determine the personality traits of each applicant. Some interviewers previewed the applications before the interview while some did not. The length of the interviews was 20 minutes and they were videotaped. Two

undergraduate women were utilized as the interviewees. The videotapes were then scored by using ten criteria. "Previewing the application was found to increase the amount of correct nonapplication information gathered. Interviewers who did not preview the applications, however, made more reliable evaluations of the applicants' fit to the job and performance in the interview" (p. 118).

Research on Resume Content

Research performed by Feild and Holley (1976) concerning the preparation of cover letters and resumes found that certain resume items received high ratings of inclusion importance. A questionnaire on job resumes was sent to 475 United States personnel directors who were chosen at random. There was a return rate of 43% from eight major industry classifications. While keeping in mind that this research is older, comments from the personnel directors regarding cover letter preparation were that they should be typed rather than handwritten. The majority of the respondents expressed their opinion that the cover letter should be kept to one page. They also judged eight possible cover letter items. Five of these items were rated as being important ones to be included in a cover letter while the remaining three were believed to be unimportant. Resume content was also examined with the personnel managers being asked to rank 50 items. Twenty-nine of the 50 items were ranked with a score considered to be of importance for resume content inclusion. The top five items that were considered to be of greatest inclusion importance were current address, past work experience, college major, job objectives and goals, and date of availability for employment.

A second research study on resume content was conducted by Thomas M. Gaughan (1980). Gaughan's study was conducted toward the job application procedure for academic librarians. Questionnaires were sent to 54 members of the ACRL Discussion Group of Personnel Officers of Research Libraries. From 100 resumes received at the personnel office Gaughan created a compilation list of 43 items to include on the questionnaire. Two other sections on resume length and reproduction methods and questions concerning experience and activities in personnel librarianship were included in the questionnaire and the respondents were asked for any comments they had on all parts of the survey. The response rate from the questionnaire was 70.4% with a total of 38 respondents. The top five resume items in order of importance were: previous experience in librarianship; current address; telephone number; dates of employment in previous positions; and brief description of duties in previous positions. Invited comments from respondents included concerns about resume construction uncertainties. Respondents emphasized that these uncertainties caused difficulties for them and also for job applicants. However, the greatest area of concern for the personnel directors was the one of federal regulations. Their concern centered on areas of possible employment questions or information that could be deemed discriminatory. "Several respondents made it clear that although the intent of the regulations is laudable they cause difficulties for personnel officers" (p. 125). Gaughan concludes, "No single resume will be found to be ideal by everyone who reads it. It should be useful and possible, however, to use the data gathered in this survey to construct a model resume that will satisfy the needs of many academic libraries involved in filling professional vacancies" (p. 126).

Resume content was again examined in a research report by Womack and Goldberg (1997). Womack and Goldberg decided to conduct their research on resume content because they were the recipients of ones that had not been well written and prepared. The researchers sent a survey to 100 recently employed academic librarians who had five years or less work experience. This survey contained four sections: the first part was a rating of resume content items; the second part was an invitation to suggest other resume items that they believed to be of importance; and parts three and four were directed toward the constituency of the survey population and where applicants sought help for job application procedures. Gaughan's original list of 43 items with amendments and additions by Womack and Goldberg was utilized as the basis for the rating section. The response rate from this survey was 62% with 64 respondents returning the survey. The authors list resume content items in order of the importance of their rankings. Previous experience in librarianship; telephone number; brief description of duties in previous positions; colleges and universities attended; and current address were ranked as the top five most important resume items in order. Womack and Goldberg compared their results with Gaughan. "It denotes considerable agreement between academic library applicants and the personnel directors Gaughan surveyed regarding those items that are important to include in a resume and those that are not" (Womack and Goldberg, 1997, p. 544). Both survey populations ranked the following resume content items within the top ten: previous experience in librarianship; telephone number; brief description of duties in previous positions; colleges and universities attended; current address; list of references; and dates of employment in previous positions.

"The most important item identified by both applicants and personnel directors is previous experience in librarianship" (p. 545). This research paper shows the results of the survey question regarding where applicants obtain their information for resume preparation. Seventy-three of the survey respondents reported that they contacted other librarians as a source for assistance in preparing their resumes. "The majority of applicants consult other librarians about proper resume construction and content" (p. 447). "Although Gaughan concluded that 'no single resume will be found to be ideal by everyone who reads it,' the authors conclude that comparing the results of Gaughan's research with the applicants' responses suggest that there are common elements that both populations consider important to include in a resume" (p. 547).

Review of this literature reveals that specific resume content items are considered to be essential. Three research articles on resume content located for the project studied this topic. All three ascertained that certain items were ranked very high in importance for inclusion. While the first study (Feild and Holley, 1976) contains some items not on the ranking lists of the second and third study, a few of the items correspond to those found in the later two research papers. Some results of the items from all three studies were in correlation. Resume items of importance considered essential in all three studies included: current address; past work experience (previous experience in librarianship); colleges and universities attended; and current or permanent address.

<u>Procedure</u>

A handbook on the job application process for school library media specialists will be written for this research project. Katz (1997) describes a handbook or manual as a ready reference source in a given field of knowledge.

"The primary purpose of handbooks and manuals is as ready-reference sources for given fields of knowledge. Emphasis normally is on established knowledge rather than on recent advances, although in the field of science, handbooks that are more than a few years old may be almost totally useless. With some exceptions, most handbooks and manuals have one thing in common – a limited scope. They zero in on a specific area of interest. In fact, their particular value is their depth of information in a narrow field" (p. 265).

The handbook will include chapters on job location resources, cover letters and resumes, interview preparation, interview questions, and follow-up procedures. Information for these chapters will be obtained from print, electronic, and human resources. Print and electronic resources will be searched, scanned, and read while human resources will be contacted and personally interviewed. These ideas, samples, and examples will be rewritten and adapted for the specifications of this handbook. Data used for Chapter 1, Job Location Resources, will be: the college placement office address and location information; newspaper titles; Internet websites; and professional library journals. Chapter 2, Cover Letters and Resumes, will include sample items from students in the School Library Media Studies Department at the University of Northern Iowa. Information for Interview Preparation, Chapter 3, and

Follow-up Procedures, Chapter 5, will be obtained from books, periodicals, and Internet websites.

A central portion of the handbook, Chapter 4, will be devoted to sample authentic types of interview questions that will be asked of school library media specialists. These samples will be obtained from University of Northern Iowa students who will be currently enrolled (1999) or who have graduated within the past three years from the School Library Media Studies Program and who have gone through the interview process with Iowa, Illinois, or Wisconsin school districts.

Fieldnotes will be taken by interviewing the School Library Media Studies students in the prescribed method by L. R. Gay (1996) (see Appendix for fieldnote questions). Students and/or graduates will specifically be asked to relate and recall interview questions. It is expected that the interviewees will paraphrase interview questions in their own words and from their own recollections. Gay states, "Use quotations; represent people in their own terms. Capture their experiences in their own words" (p. 226). Interviewees will be located by asking for volunteers from the 1999 School Library Media Studies summer school session of students. Upon identifying these individuals they will be questioned about the following: media specialist training; the number of interviews they have had in recent months; the town or city where they were interviewed; the approximate size of the school district; whether the school was public or private; the grade levels of the position; the length of the interview; how many people were present at the interview; the overall atmosphere during the interview; the types of questions that were asked during the interview time; and specific questions that were asked during the interview.

Comments from the sessions will be recorded with the permission of the student interviewee. Confidentiality of the names of student volunteers, school districts, and towns will be maintained. Towns and states will be categorized by general area and size for the handbook (e.g. northwestern Iowa). The fieldnotes will then be used for the composition process of the handbook in the sample interview question chapter.

An additional component of interviews is the opportunity for the candidate to ask questions. A brief section of professionally-centered inquiries will be included.

Chapter 4

Summary

The interview process is the most important concern for all who enter the job market including school library media specialists. Very little information, written specifically on job obtainment for the school library media specialist, was found in the literature. Manuals or handbooks on the subject of employment for school library media specialists were non-existent.

Information regarding job location resources; cover letters and resumes; interview preparation; interview questions; and follow-up procedures was gathered, compiled, and adapted for the researcher's project. Specifically, the researcher gathered data regarding interview questions from students in the School Library Media Studies Program at the University of Northern Iowa. These data, obtained through fieldnotes, along with the other information gathered from the research, were included in the researcher's handbook, Employment Handbook for School Librarian Media Specialists.

Job location resources for the school library media specialist were found in newspapers, professional journals, on the Internet, and at college placement offices. Cover letters should always be included with the applicant's resume, should be no longer than one page in length, and should include approximately three paragraphs. Although resumes are a matter of personal style, some general guidelines should be followed such as limiting them to 1-2 pages with one page front and back being acceptable. Interview preparation includes physical appearance and mental/ emotional preparation. It is important to look your best physically and to be well-

prepared mentally for the interview. A thank you note is recommended for the follow-up procedure. Questions which were included in the project handbook are summarized in the next section of this chapter.

Conclusions

The following questions and responses were obtained from discussions with students in the School Library Media Studies Program at the University of Northern Iowa:

1. Do you hold a media specialist endorsement?

   No = 10   Yes = 1

1.a. If yes, do you have a master's degree in the field?

   Yes = 1

1.b. If not, how many hours have you completed in the S.L.M.S. program?

   15 semester hours = 4   18 = 1   33 = 1   36 = 3

2. How many interviews have you had in the past six months for media specialist positions?

   One interview = 5   Two = 1   Three = 3   Six = 2

3. Where were you interviewed? (name of town and/or city and state)

   This information was kept confidential.

4. Was the school district public or private?

   Public = 27   Private = 1

5. What is the approximate size of the school enrollment?

   150-499 = 4   500-999 = 7   1000-1300 = 5

   *This information was not known at a number of interview locations.

6. What were the grade levels of this position?

    Elementary = 10   Middle = 5   High School = 6

    K-8 = 1   K-12 = 5

7. What was the length of the interview?

    ½ hour = 2   1 hour = 7   1 ½ hour = 10   2 hours = 6

    2 ½ hours = 2   3 hours = 1

8. How many interviewers were present?

    One = 3   Two = 4   Three = 8   Four = 3

    Five = 2   Six = 3   Seven = 1   Nine = 1

    Ten = 1   Eleven = 1   Fifteen = 1

8.a. What were the positions of the interviewers?

Members of the interview teams included combinations of all of the following: superintendents; principals; media specialist supervisors; media specialists; teachers; library aides; and students. In the instances where only one interviewer was present, it was the school principal.

9. Describe the overall atmosphere of the interview.

    Cordial/Pleasant/Friendly = 11   Fairly Relaxed = 5   Formal = 5

    Casual = 1   Tense = 2   Stressful = 2   Confrontational = 1

    Very relaxed – they knew her – she anticipated getting the job = 1

10. What types of interview questions were asked? (ice breakers, personal/factual, and professional)

Very few questions, which could be considered ice breakers, were asked. The majority of the questions fell within the personal/factual or professional categories.

11. Tell me examples of specific questions that you were asked. Please try to recall them as close as possible to the exact wording.

Specific questions that were asked of the students in the School Library Media Studies program at the University of Northern Iowa are included in the handbook. The researcher grouped the questions into the following five broad categories: Ice Breakers; Personal/Factual; Professional – General Education; Professional – Media Specialist; and Concluding Questions, Remarks, and Events. The broad category, Professional – Media Specialist, was further divided into 17 narrower categories. Following are the number of questions classified in each broad category and in the 17 narrower Professional – Media Specialist categories:

     I.   Ice Breakers = 2

     II. Personal/Factual = 49

     III. Professional – General Education = 49

     IV. Professional – Media Specialist = 156

          A. Personal/Library Schooling/LibraryBackground and Experience/Professional Development = 13

          B. FavoriteAuthors/Books and ReadingHabits = 7

          C. Ideal Library/FloorPlan/Vision = 10

          D. Promotion/PublicRelations/InstructionandTeaching/

Orientation/Scheduling = 30

E. Discipline/LibraryRules = 4

F. TeamPlayer/TeamTeaching/Cooperation/Collaboration = 5

G. Aides/Associates = 5

H. DiverseSchoolPopulation/SpecialEduation = 3

I. MediaSpecialistRoles = 5

J. Cataloging = 3

K. Automation = 2

L. Copyright = 1

M. ResearchModels/Reference = 6

N. Ordering/Finances/Selection/Weeding = 15

O. ParentalComplaints/Reconsideration/Censorship = 7

P. Internet/A.U.P.s = 8

Q. Computers/Technology = 32

V. Concluding Questions, Remarks, and Events = 11

An insignificant number (2) of interview questions were classified in the Ice Breaker category. The majority (156) of interview questions obtained from fieldnotes by the researcher were classified in the Professional – Media Specialist category. While this number was significant, some interviewers did not ask one question from the Professional – Media Specialist category. These interviewers asked questions from the other four broad categories. Therefore, the types of questions asked by the interviewers ranged broadly in scope and emphasis.

A wide range of questions were asked in the Professional – Media Specialist category. Within this category the majority (32) of questions were centered on (Q.) computers and technology. The fewest questions were asked regarding (K.) automation (2), and (L.) copyright (1).

In addition to the actual interview questions, some school districts requested other interviewing items from the candidate. One school district required the school library media specialist candidate to prepare and present a portfolio. A writing exercise was part of the interview process at two school districts. Two other school districts required the candidate to present a lesson and one of these districts videotaped this presentation.

<u>Recommendations</u>

The researcher believes many school districts need to update their list of questions for the school library media specialist position. While some questions asked of the students in the School Library Media Studies Program at the University of Northern Iowa pertained to the specific job, many others were found to be irrelevant, out-dated, or even illegal. Some districts did not ask one question which actually pertained to the media specialist job.

One way of increasing awareness about interviewing techniques for the school library media specialist might be through researching the interview process from the viewpoint of the school administrator. This researcher believes additional research could be done by interviewing school administrators. School administrators could be queried as to the questions they ask of their media specialist candidates, the intent of the questions, and the responses they are hoping to elicit.

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Appendix

Fieldnote Questions

1. Do you hold a media specialist endorsement?

    a. If yes, do you have a master's degree in the field?

    b. If not, how many hours have you completed in the S.L.M.S. program?

2. How many interviews have you had in the past six months for media specialist positions? (January – July 1999)

3. Where were you interviewed? (name of town and/or city and state)

4. What is the name of the school district? (public or private?)

5. What is the approximate size of the school enrollment?

6. What are the grade levels of this position? Elementary, middle, high school, or K-12?

7. What was the length of the interview?

8. How many interviewers were present?

    a. What were the positions of the interviewers?

        superintendent, principal(s), media specialist supervisor, teachers, library aide?

9. Describe the overall atmosphere of the interview.

10. What types of interview questions were asked? (Ice breakers, personal/factual, and professional)

11. Tell me examples of specific questions that you were asked. Please try to recall them as close as possible to the exact wording.