

ACT Now Readership Survey Results

Part I ACT Now magazine

A more detailed version of this article can be found on the News and Comments section of the ACT website: www.christian-teachers.org.uk

Feedback

The Summer 2004 edition of *ACT Now* carried a readership survey. The survey invited feedback on two topics:

- Part 1 – *ACT Now* magazine
- Part 2 – Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Ongoing Spiritual Refreshment (OSR).

This article aims to analyse feedback on Part 1 – *ACT Now* magazine. A similar article focusing on data regarding CPD and OSR will appear in the Spring 2005 edition of *ACT Now*.

I would like to begin by offering my sincere thanks to all 90 *ACT Now* readers who took the time and trouble to tackle the four-page questionnaire.

A few caveats

Before any serious analysis can be offered a few caveats need to be put forward. Firstly, because the response rate was just 4%, the results should be treated with due caution. They may or may not reflect the views of the 96% of *ACT Now* readers who did not respond to this survey.

Secondly – as is true of all such research tools – the very fact that the questionnaire asked for judgements and invited opinions, and was prefaced with comments stating that results would be used to ‘improve’ the magazine, meant that it was more likely to appeal to those readers with very strong feelings against the status quo. Given this situation, one might be tempted to surmise that the 96% of readers who did not return the questionnaire were actually expressing a huge vote of confidence in the Summer 2004 edition of the magazine and its editor! However, lest we get too carried away, we should reflect on the fact that when the turn-out in political elections is low it



does not mean voters have extra confidence in the system!

Furthermore, the length of the questionnaire may have also been off-putting. This would have shrunk and sifted the sample further, leaving the three groups researchers love most:

- those with the greatest personal commitment to/appreciation of/need for the topics and themes addressed in the survey
- those with a ‘bee in their bonnet’ or ‘an axe to grind’
- those with time to spare to do justice to the task in hand.

But, even having taken account of the ifs and buts outlined above, I still believe the feedback gained provides useful and illuminating information.

Who responded?

The questionnaire did not ask respondents to describe themselves in terms of age, gender, race, length of teaching experience, etc. It asked for two pieces of personal data:

- the Association of Christian Teachers they belonged to
- the age group they currently teach.

Questionnaire responses by phase:

- 48 teachers of pupils aged 3-11
- 20 teachers of pupils aged 11-19
- 22 others (eg advisors, chaplains, inspectors, middle school teachers, retired teachers).

Questionnaire responses by ACT:

- 2 ACTW members (both from primary teachers)
- 2 ACT Scotland (both from secondary teachers)
- 86 ACT England members (46 primary; 18 secondary; 22 other).

Articles on Christians working in UK schools/colleges was the most popular first preference item

Articles on innovations in teaching and learning from a Christian perspective was the second most popular first preference statement

What do you look for in a magazine for Christians working in schools and colleges?

The readership questionnaire asked respondents to rank seventeen statements about ACT Now magazine in order of preference. The following list shows the five most popular items (the percentage of readers who ranked them first, second or third is indicated in brackets):

- Articles on innovations in teaching and learning from a Christian perspective (50%)
- Articles on Christians working in UK schools/colleges (40%)
- Articles on school leadership, management and administration from a Christian perspective (32%)
- Articles addressing political and social issues from a Christian perspective (24%)
- Articles on managing student behaviour (23%)

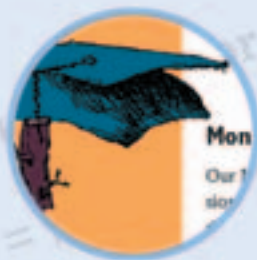
Articles on Christians working in UK schools/colleges was the most popular first preference item. Overall, 22 respondents (24% of the sample) gave this item the number one slot.

Articles on innovations in teaching and learning from a Christian perspective was the second most popular first preference statement. Overall, 21 respondents (23% of the sample) ranked it top.

Interestingly, *Articles on workplace witness and evangelism* was the fourth most popular first choice for primary school teachers. In marked contrast, no secondary teachers ranked it first (although 5% ranked it second and 5% ranked it third). Amongst 'other' respondents 5% ranked it first (5% ranked it second and no one ranked it third).

For secondary teachers, *Articles which address political and social issues from a Christian perspective* was important. Although it received no first preferences, 20% of secondary teachers ranked it second and a further 20% ranked it third.

Relevant editorial which speaks to the educational issues of the day with a Christian voice was peculiarly popular with 'other' respondents. 18% ranked it first and 14% ranked it second (no one ranked it third).



What title would you prefer for the magazine?

The readership questionnaire asked respondents to rank eight possible titles for the magazine in order of preference. The following list shows the five most popular titles (the percentage of readers who ranked them first, second or third is indicated in brackets):

- *ACT Now* (47%)
- *Christians in Education* (39%)
- *Christian Teacher* (37%)
- *Called to Teach* (34%)
- *Christian Teachers* (8%)

Even if results for *Christian Teacher* (37%) and *Christian Teachers* (8%) are added together the total (45%) still does not beat *ACT Now* (47%).

And... the winner is... *ACT Now*

So, where do we go from here? Well, for a start we stick with the winning *ACT Now* title. But we also include a new descriptive strap line *The magazine for Christians in Education*.

But the key to the magazine's success will be its ability to attract high quality articles on the subjects that matter most to its readers.

I therefore invite you all to consider asking not: What can *ACT Now* do for me? but: What can I do for *ACT Now*? Please think and pray – asking God whether He might be calling you to share your thoughts and experiences with others so that you might play a role in helping to build up and encourage other Christians with a heart for education.

■ Rupert Kaye

