Elementary Assistant Principals as Instructional Leaders:
Characteristics and Experiences That Contribute to Their Perceptions
of Readiness for the Role

by

Robert B. Hunter

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Auburn University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Auburn, Alabama
August 6, 2016

Keywords: instructional leadership, assistant principal

Approved by

Linda Searby, Chair, Associate Professor, Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology
Ellen Reames, Associate Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology
Paris Strom, Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology
Chih-hsuanWang, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology

Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the characteristics and experiences of elementary assistant principals that contributed to their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders. Data were collected from survey responses of 118 elementary assistant principals across the state of Alabama. Six key findings were: (1) a majority of respondents reported that their current role required 50% or more of their time was spent on instructional leadership; (2) a high percentage (59%) of elementary assistant principals in Alabama perceived themselves as ready to serve as instructional leaders; (3) neither age nor years of experience as an assistant principal and the age was significant in terms of perceptions of readiness as instructional leaders; (4) ready assistant principals received their most valuable mentoring from one-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by their current principal as well as mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that assistant principals initiated; (5) ready assistant principals reported that the two most effective professional growth opportunities they participated in were one-on-one mentoring and informal meetings with their current principal to discuss issues; and (6) assistant principals who perceived themselves to be ready for the role of instructional leader participated in more professional growth opportunities than assistant principals who perceived themselves as not ready for this role.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge my dissertation chair, Dr. Linda Searby, for her continued support and guidance throughout this process. Her willingness to provide continuous feedback and advise when I needed it the most was invaluable to the completion of this research study. I wish to acknowledge and express gratitude to my other committee members, Dr. Ellen Reames, Dr. Paris Strom, and Dr. Chih-hsuan Wang, for their support and feedback throughout this research study. I also wish to thank Vohn Enloe for being my dissertation partner throughout this tiresome voyage. I want to give a special thanks to my lovely wife and our two children for their patience and support throughout this journey. Words cannot describe the sacrifices they made in allowing me to accomplish this dream. Finally, to my dad, I kept my promise.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

The assistant principal position in schools today is not much different from the original position known as 'general supervisor' created during the 1920s and 1930s. In the early 20th century, general supervisors were school principals' main helpers, and general supervisors took care of the administrative duties of the school. At this time, the principal's main responsibilities were overseeing the instruction of the school and helping teachers improve instruction. The general supervisor's role with non-instructional duties, however, laid the groundwork for what assistant principals do on a daily basis today.

Hausman, Nebeker, and McCreary (2002) stated that disciplining students, dealing with personnel issues, and managing facilities are the main responsibilities of today's assistant principals. Assistant principals today assume the role of manager while principals assume the role of leader (Weller, L., & Weller, S., 2002). In order for assistant principals to reach their maximum potential as instructional leaders, however, they must perceive themselves as instructional leaders.

This is true for assistant principals in Alabama, where this study was conducted. One major reason assistant principals in Alabama need to assume the role of leader and focus on becoming instructional leaders is that in the near future, the Alabama Department of Education Plan 2020 will require all administrators to be evaluated in the area of instructional leadership. This may be problematic for assistant principals if universities and school districts have not prepared them for this role. If schools are going to make the necessary progress required,

1

assistant principals will have to assume the role as instructional leaders. In fact, it needs to be their first priority. Are assistant principals in the state of Alabama ready to assume this role as instructional leader?

Since this researcher's professional interest is school improvement at the elementary level, this study focused on the readiness of elementary assistant principals as instructional leaders. Thus, this research was designed to answer the following central question: "What factors, characteristics, or experiences contribute to elementary assistant principal's perception of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?"

Statement of the Problem

There has never been a time in education where leadership is more vital to the learning environment in schools (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the accountability movement has placed a tremendous amount of pressure on school principals to improve academic achievement for all students (Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). Principals must become curriculum experts who have a true understanding of teaching and learning. Simply stated, principals must become instructional leaders.

Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) characterized an instructional leader as being actively engaged in the following domains: setting direction, developing people, focusing on learning, and improving the instructional program. Principals who assume the role of instructional leader may find it overwhelming. Further, they may discover that they cannot fulfill all of the responsibilities or be viewed as the sole instructional leader of the school. These principals realize and understand that they need assistance. The need for multiple instructional leaders in the same school has redefined the role of the assistant principal (Armstrong, 2009).

Historically, assistant principals have been viewed as school managers and individuals who handle student discipline. They have not been viewed as instructional leaders. In fact, Glanz (1994) described the assistant principal as the "forgotten man" and a "wasted educational resource" (p. 578). Scholarly research has overwhelmingly focused on the role of the principal. There has been little research on how assistant principals perceive themselves with regard to instructional leadership (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

There is a need for research to fill this gap in the research literature on assistant principals. Therefore, this research on elementary assistant principals was designed to address the following research question: What characteristics and experiences contribute to elementary assistant principal's perception of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the characteristics and experiences of elementary assistant principals that contributed to their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders. The results of this study are intended to contribute to the educational research literature regarding elementary assistant principal perceptions of their readiness for instructional leadership. Additionally, this study examined actions that contributed to this process. Responses may inform the preparation of assistant principals in university programs. School districts may also benefit from these findings as related to encouraging and preparing teacher leaders for future assistant principal positions by assigning them to appropriate leadership roles. Finally, the results of this study may help school district central office personnel in creating proper support systems, such as mentoring programs, for assistant principals.

Research Questions

The central research question of this study was: What characteristics and experiences contribute to elementary assistant principals' perception of readiness to serve as instructional leaders? There were also six sub-questions that guided this study.

Sub-questions

1. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?

2. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they feel ready to serve as instructional leaders defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?

3. Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?

4. For those who reported that they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?

5. Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?

6. Did the number of professional growth opportunities that elementary assistant principals in affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

These questions were answered through quantitative methodology. Data from a 2014 Alabama survey of assistant principals was used for this study. Subsets of data from 118 elementary assistant principals were extracted for this current study.

Significance of the Study

Throughout the history of the assistant principal position, assistant principals have been identified as managers within schools, individuals who take care of tasks such as administering student discipline, assigning textbooks, and managing facilities. The new role of instructional leader has become an important and significant duty of contemporary assistant principals (Armstrong, 2009). The goal of this research was to assess assistant principal perceptions of their readiness for the role of instructional leader. Based on the findings of this study, university preparation programs and local school districts may restructure their coursework and professional development programs to better prepare assistant principals for this contemporary role. The findings will also contribute to the limited body of scholarly literature on assistant principals.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include the following:

1. The sample size of this research was acceptable. However, due to the size of the population, it is not generalizable to all elementary assistant principals in the state of Alabama.

2. The nominal amount of research on elementary assistant principals and their roles in elementary schools is considered a limitation.

3. Participants must have completed the entire survey in order for their responses to be counted in the survey data.

4. The conditions where each survey was completed may have had an impact on the participants' responses.

5. Elementary assistant principals are extremely busy; therefore, time may have been a factor in assistant principals fully responding to the survey.

6. This study included only elementary assistant principals in one southern state (Alabama).

Definition of Terms

Assistant Principal: An assistant principal was defined as a person who serves directly underneath the principal (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Instructional Leadership: In this study, instructional leadership was defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and dispositions demonstrated by four core practices: setting directions, developing people, focusing on learning, and improving the instructional

Leader: A leader is someone in the school who sets the vision, coaches and evaluates teachers, develops and manages curriculum and instructional programs, communicates with stakeholders, and uses data to make decisions that impact classroom instruction and student learning (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe 2008).

Mentoring: Mentoring describes a process in which an experienced person works with a less experienced person to help the protégé navigate his or her career path. Mentors may also provide professional development and experience as needed (Mertz, 2004).

Professional Development for Assistant Principals: Professional development for assistant principals describes clearly defined and consistent professional training activities that increase instructional leadership skills (Oliver, 2005).

Organization of the Study

This research study is comprised of five chapters that examine the roles and readiness of elementary assistant principals as instructional leaders. Chapter 2 includes a review of related literature. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the current study with a focus on participants, procedures, and design for completing this research study. Chapter 4 includes analysis of data collected from assistant principals who participated in the study. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for further study.

Summary

Elementary assistant principals are needed for the successful leadership of schools. Their readiness to serve as instructional leaders and perform instructional leadership functions is essential to improve instruction and enhance student achievement. The days of assistant principals working only as school managers are long gone. Assistant principals must take charge and lead in order for teachers and students to attain the rigorous requirements of today's standards.

Elementary assistant principals must make effective instruction the focal point of elementary schools. Therefore, the focus of this research was to assess assistant principal readiness for this challenge. It is critical that we develop a more comprehensive understanding of how assistant principals are professionally developed and mentored to fulfill this important role. This study addressed these issues and provided insight into the critical role of the assistant principal as instructional leader.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The central research question that was addressed by this research was: What characteristics and experiences contribute to elementary assistant principals' perception of readiness to serve as instructional leaders? When the term "instructional leader" is used in schools, most people make the assumption that the "instructional leader is the principal of the school" (Oleszewski et al., 2012, p. 264). Traditionally, assistant principals have not been recognized as instructional leaders.

Glanz (1994) described the assistant principal as the "forgotten man" and a "wasted educational resource." (p. 578).Even though assistant principals are acknowledged for their significant role in schools, there are significantly fewer studies on them as compared to studies of principals (Niewenhuizen & Brooks, 2013).

Public schools today are faced with high academic performance demands, and one instructional leader in a school cannot address all of these demands (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Assistant principals must evolve from the traditional role of disciplinarian and facilities manager to helping lead the teaching and learning that takes place in the school (Oleszewski et al., 2012). The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of how elementary assistant principals viewed themselves in terms of readiness to accept the role of instructional leader. For the purpose of this project, an assistant principal was defined as a person who serves directly underneath the principal (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). The following sections of this literature review discuss the evolution of the assistant principal, roles and responsibilities of assistant

principals, role ambiguity and role conflict experienced by assistant principals, job satisfaction, socialization of assistant principals, and instructional leadership.

Evolution of the Assistant Principal

Understanding the historical origin of the position of assistant principal may help educators gain a better understanding of the reasons assistant principal must be regarded as key instructional leaders in school. Schools administrators today hold much more authority than administrators did in the 19th century. Before the turn of the 20th century, superintendents and principals were not viewed as authorities. Schools were operated by ward boards that were unstructured, and not centralized (Glanz, 1994c). Superintendents and principals looked much like today's lead teachers.

Around the turn of the 20th century, the organization of schools began to change (Glanz, 1994c). Decisions about the daily functions of schools were made by superintendents. According to Glanz (1994a), the principal was not given the autonomy to execute authority to do more than complete attendance and work on other necessary paperwork. At this time, public school enrollment began to grow rapidly. Between 1895 and 1920, public school enrollment grew by more than 50% from 14 to 21.5 million students (Glanz, 1994a).

This growth decreased the responsibilities performed by superintendents and increased the responsibilities of the principal in regards to tasks required to maintain the daily operations of a school, such as assisting new teachers with classroom management skills (Elsbee, 1939). As enrollment increased, the need for principals increased. Between 1920 to 1930 the number of principals doubled. As the number of schools grew, the need to manage curriculum and teaching aspects of schools became vital for principals. The change from daily operations to managing

curriculum defined the principal as more of a manager. The increase in managerial demands brought the need for more supervisors in schools.

Spaulding (1955) recognized two positions that were created to help ease some of the responsibilities of principals: "special supervisors" and "general supervisors" (p. 9).Special supervisors were most often female and were chosen by the principal, but received no special training for the job they performed. These individuals were classroom teachers who were dismissed from some of their teaching duties to help novice teachers become experts in curriculum and instruction (Glanz, 1994b). Special supervisors were more accepted by teachers than general supervisors because the special supervisor's primary role was to assist teachers in the delivery of instruction. Special supervisors were not trained to nor expected to evaluate teachers.

General supervisors were predominantly male and were hired by either the superintendent or principal to assist the principal in the daily operation of the school. The general supervisor, later called the assistant principal, prepared attendance reports, collected data for evaluation purposes, and coordinated special events while performing other necessary managerial responsibilities (Glanz, 1994c).

Within the school structure, general supervisors were viewed as evaluators rather than nurturers. Teachers and staff were much more apprehensive of general supervisors than special supervisors because of the nature of the general supervisor's position. Many general supervisors were seen as critical of the school and were frequently called "Snoopervisors" (Glanz, 1989, p. 38).

By the 1920s, there was an abundance of special supervisors in public schools (Glanz, 1991). By 1920, Glanz (1994c) reported approximately 6,500 special supervisors across the

United States, by 1922 this number nearly doubled. However, at this same time there were popular efforts to create better-organized systems for operating schools; eliminating special supervisors was part of this platform. According to the plan, after eliminating the special supervisor, the principal and general supervisors would handle the responsibilities of the special supervisor.

During the 1920s, the school principal's role changed and principals were no longer teaching classes as part of their responsibilities. The role of the principal had shifted to developing novice teachers in teaching and learning. Because of this, the role of the special supervisor rapidly diminished. The principal was now the individual who was the overseer of instruction in the school. As the 1930s progressed, the principal's administrative role grew even more. During this time, the general supervisor became the principal's main helper and the special supervisor's role vanished (Glanz, 1991). This main helper role evolved to assistant in the 1940s, and this assistant became known as "assistant principal" (Glanz, 1991, p. 42).

The history of the evolution of the assistant principal role is important because it has come to define the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal in today's school setting. The progression of the general supervisor role with non-instructional duties is what laid the groundwork for what assistant principals do on a daily basis. The next section of this literature review examines the current roles and duties of assistant principals in today's schools.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Assistant Principal

The amount of work and number of responsibilities that principals must complete can be quite taxing, which has affected the role of the assistant principal (Armstrong, 2009). Assistant principal roles and responsibilities differ among districts and schools, and can be decided based

on the needs of the principal or teachers. Tasks range from assisting principals with problems to providing support for teachers to attending to the well-being of students (Harvey, 1994).

Watson (2005) referred to the role of assistant principal as "Niche Assistant Headship," implying that assistant principals take care of the exact needs of the school (p. 7). Assistant principals tend to fill their days with the three Bs: "books, behinds, and buses" (Good, 2008, p. 46). Niewenhuizen and Brooks (2013) stated:

> Typically , the duties of assistant principals focus on mundane , yet necessary, managerial tasks, including student discipline, supervision of hallways and lunchrooms, chaperoning dances and co-curricular activities, scheduling assemblies, meeting with parents, and when the principal is away from the building, performing the duties of the principal. (p.187)

This captures the essence of today's assistant principal role (Good, 2008). In addition to understand their roles and responsibilities, assistant principals have to learn the expectations that accompany these roles and responsibilities. This can be challenging since roles and responsibilities of an assistant principal are not clearly defined (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Hausman, Nebeker, and McCreary (2002) identified the duties of assistant principals as disciplining students, school management, public relations, and professional development. Weller, L., and Weller, S. (2002) explained "The terms leader and manager tend to be used interchangeably, but major differences exist" (p. 2). These authors observed that managers often make things happen, while leaders provide vision and inspiration. Weller, L., and Weller, S. (2002) further discussed that in numerous schools, assistant principals assume the role of manager and the principal assumes the role of leader.

Discipline and Management

According to Oleszewski et al. (2012), student discipline/management remains the top duty performed by assistant principals. Frequently, the assistant principal acts as a caretaker and a policeman (Mertz, 2006) to enforce the rules of the school, ensure safety, mediate conflicts, and patrol the halls (Busch, MacNeil, & Baraniuk, 2011). Assistant principals often spend their time handling behavior issues that are disruptive to the learning environment of the school (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

In fact, most professionals in K-12 education view assistant principals as disciplinarians. Mertz (2006) noted that 90% of assistant principals surveyed in New York perceived their chief duties as dealing with disruptive students, parent complaints, lunch duty, scheduling coverage, and administrative paperwork. Similarly, assistant principals in Maine reported devoting the largest percentage of their time to supervising students (Hausman et al., 2002). Dealing with discipline can be a time consuming job for assistant principals leaving less time to work on curricular innovations, mentoring teachers, or even proactive discipline (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

The inordinate amount of time assistant principals spend on discipline is not limited to principals in the United States. Kwan and Walker (2008) found that assistant principals in Hong Kong spent a disproportionate amount of time on supervision problems such as discipline and considered discipline to be the least important aspect of the job. Muijs and Harris (2003) discussed similar results in the United Kingdom. They noted that assistant principals (also known as "assistant/deputy heads") spent large amounts of time on student management duties as opposed to time on instructional duties. According to Marshall and Hooley (2006), spending so

much time working on the negative aspects of student discipline may cause some assistant principals to become cynical

Student discipline is an issue that cannot be avoided in schools. However, Porter (1996) suggested that if assistant principals changed the way they perceived disciplining students and focused on the positive aspects of relationships, they could change their encounters with students who face discipline problems. This view allows assistant principals focus less on student discipline as a negative role. This suggestion notwithstanding, constantly dealing with discipline and student management can negatively impact assistant principals' effectiveness and job satisfaction (Hausman et al., 2002).

Numerous strategies have been recommended to help decrease the time assistant principals spend on discipline issues and increase time for other responsibilities. For example, in a study of a Midwest junior high school assistant principals decreased discipline referrals by spending more time in teachers' classrooms (Keesor, 2005). If assistant principals can reduce discipline problems, they will have more time to concentrate on other duties and responsibilities (Keesor, 2005).

Another approach to decrease discipline and increase time spent on other duties and responsibilities for assistant principals is to spread discipline responsibilities among the leaders and administrators in the school (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Marshall and Hooley (2006) suggested assigning specific responsibilities to assistant principals and rotating these responsibilities on an annual basis. Mertz (2000) confirmed that discipline related tasks did not overwhelm assistant principals who divided disciplining of students with other colleagues.

Student management is going to be a part of the assistant principal's daily routine in schools, but time spent on it can be reduced. Mertz (2000) confirmed that assistant principals

should be involved in managerial duties such as supporting new teachers, serving as an external liaison, and working on school improvement projects in addition to student discipline.

School Management

It takes an incredible amount of work for a school to function at a very high level (Niewenhuizen & Brooks, 2013), and assistant principals can be asked to perform many different tasks for the school to function at this high level. Based on the results of a 1988 national study, Niewenhuizen and Brooks (2013) described the nature of the work required of assistant principals. As early as 1988, Pellicer, Anderson, Keefe, Kelley, and McCleary's study identified multiple duties within school management that were consistent among assistant principals. Management duties were identified as graduation duties, building operations, developing master schedules, budgeting, knowledge of state laws, and transportation (Pellicer et al., 1988).

A study on assistant principal's responsibilities found that the tasks that consumed most of the time of an assistant principal were largely managerial (Abebe, Lindsey, & Heck, 2010). This statement demonstrates that today's tasks are as similar as they were in 1988. Martin (2003) reported:

Involvement in master scheduling, teacher observation, communications, student discipline, parent meetings, and general building supervision were functions that consumed much of the time of the assistant principal and, perhaps as a result, were the most important activities associated with the role. (p. 1)

Consistent with this finding of managerial responsibilities, Bloom and Kovertz (2001) found that it is not unusual for an assistant principal to be assigned a very narrow range of responsibilities related to student discipline, meeting with parents, and building management. These varying tasks and responsibilities can lead to assistant principals being burdened to keep a

school functioning and can take away from the time for instructional leadership (Niewenhuizen & Brooks, 2013).

Personnel Management

Managing teachers is a common task among assistant principals. Assistant principals in Hong Kong identified staff management as the most common responsibility (Kwan, 2009). Assistant principals who were surveyed in Maine identified personnel management as one of the top three duties (Hausman et al., 2002). Assistant principals frequently find themselves not only trying to build a teacher's capacity in terms of teaching, but also evaluating these same teachers. Managing teachers is a major responsibility for assistant principals. Assistant principals are faced with some of the most difficult discipline challenges, including mediating conflicts among teachers (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Public Relations

Assistant principals often find themselves spending much of their time talking to people and serving as public relations managers for their schools (Niewenhuizen & Brooks, 2013). Assistant principals work with a variety of people, including: students, parents, teachers, other administrators, and community stakeholders. These public relations tasks are natural offshoots of working with parents and promoting student activities (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). In this public relations role, the assistant principal can become a positive face for the school and represent the message or culture with which the school wants to be identified (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Instructional Leaders/Leadership

In light of the challenging job of dealing with student discipline issues, assistant principals may welcome the opportunities to be instructional leaders (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Due to increasing demands to improve student achievement, all school leaders, need to become instructional leaders (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

One operational definition of instructional leadership is: a combination of knowledge, skills, and dispositions demonstrated by a school leader (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012). Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) characterized an instructional leader as being actively engaged in the following domains: setting direction, developing people, focusing on learning, and improving the instructional program. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) expanded on this definition of instructional leadership by including the following tasks: setting the vision, coaching and evaluating teachers, developing and managing curriculum and instructional programs, communicating with stakeholders, and using data to make decisions impacting the classroom instruction and student learning.

As recently as 1994, Glanz surveyed elementary and middle school principals in New York; 90% of the principals surveyed indicated they would rather perform instructional types of duties rather than managerial and discipline duties. Researchers have noted that few assistant principals assume positions with instructional leadership duties (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan & Walker, 2008). Throughout the survey, males and assistant principals with less than five years of teaching experience had a tendency to spend less time as instructional leaders (Hausman et al., 2002). Kwan and Walker (2008) discovered that assistant principals did not dedicate much time to instruction and curriculum or working directly with teachers.

However, there have been calls for assistant principals to assert themselves as instructional leaders. Gerke (2004) suggested that assistant principals read articles that pertain to instructional leadership and participate in teacher professional development that is focused on

instruction. The author also advocated assistant principals attend team or grade level meetings focused on instruction.

Marshall and Hooley (2006) encouraged assistant principals to attend teacher professional development. The authors contended that these meetings were vital for assistant principals to identify instructional leadership needs of the school. Good (2008) also recommended that assistant principals visit classrooms on a regular basis. Classroom visits empower assistant principals to become active in classroom lessons and provide opportunities for assistant principals to participate in curriculum-focused discussions with teachers (Good, 2008). One of the most crucial activities an assistant principal can engage in to build capacity for instructional leadership is mentoring. Specifically, Gerke (2004) encouraged assistant principals to find a mentor who has demonstrated exemplary instructional leadership.

Due to the myriad of roles and responsibilities that assistant principals are expected to perform, many assistant express frustration that they do not have enough time to devote to instructional leadership tasks. The next section of this review examines role ambiguity and role conflict experienced by assistant principals.

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is "the degree to which clear information is lacking regarding (a) the expectations associated with a role, (b) methods for fulfilling known role expectations, and/or the consequences of role performance" (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981, p. 44). Marshall and Hooley (2006) also suggested that "role ambiguity can be viewed as 'gray areas' of the position meaning ill-defined, inconsistent, and incoherent responsibilities, roles, and resources" (p. 7).

This infers that there should be structure in place and a clear set of responsibilities for assistant principals (Scott, 2011). Ambiguity can occur when the position is not explicitly

explained. Ambiguity refers to the degree of uncertainty an individual feels regarding his or her duties, authority, allocation of time, and goals (Scott, 2011).

The position of 'assistant principal' is designed so that principals can hold assistant principals accountable for their responsibilities and provide direction as needed; however, assistant principal responsibilities are frequently vague or unclear. Marshall and Hooley (2006) articulated two examples of role ambiguity. In the first example, the assistant principal did not hire substitute teachers, but had to respond to trouble that ensued when substitutes were not screened. In the second example, the assistant principal was ordered to respond to the wishes of the community but was not given direction regarding which activities had priority or the extent to which participation was required.

This type of role ambiguity can cause frustration for assistant principals. If assistant principals do not understand their job expectations or how they are evaluated, they will most likely rely on trial-and-error to meet the needs of the school (Scott, 2011). Marshall and Hooley (2006) stated, "Standardizing job responsibilities of assistant principals within a district would decrease ambiguity, help them understand what is expected, and help others to understand the nature of the position" (p. 66).

Researchers pointed to role ambiguity being negatively associated with assistant principal feelings about their jobs and job performance (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Role ambiguity can cause employees to view themselves as less productive and at odds with their employer (Bauer & Simmons, 2000). Role ambiguity can also lead to high-levels of stress and burnout (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Brock and Grady (2004) identified the following eight suggestions to help assistant principals gain the requisite knowledge of a new administrator:

19

1. Read the job description and contract carefully.

2. Clarify specific responsibilities with the supervisor.

3. Identify the process and criteria for the evaluation

4. Establish two-way communication with the supervisor.

5. Determine how your role supports the goals of the school district.

6. Identify the expectations of constituent groups of the school: staff, parents, students, and community.

7. Identify conflicting expectations held by your (a) the supervisor, (b) staff, (c) parents, (d) students, and (e) the community.

8. Search for compatible solutions to role conflicts. (p. 2)

Brock and Grady (2004) suggested that following these recommendations may help assistant principals experience less role ambiguity.

Role Conflict

According to Weller, L., and Weller, S. (2002), there is no clearly agreed upon job description of an assistant principal. Districts can vary on what jobs and roles assistant principals perform. Marshall (1992) documented role conflict experienced by assistant principals in a comprehensive study. The author stated:

An assistant principal might be required to help teachers develop coordinated curricula, a "teacher support function," but this function conflicts with the monitoring, supervising, and evaluating function. The assistant principal may be working with a teacher as a colleague in one meeting and perhaps an hour later the same assistant principal may be

20

meeting to chastise the same teacher for noncompliance with the districts' new homework policy. When the assistant principal monitors teachers' compliance, assistant principals have difficulty maintaining equal collegial and professional relationships with teachers. (pp. 6-7)

Celikten (2001) reinforced Marshall's study and stated that one of the most difficult challenges an assistant principal will experience is the lack of a clearly defined job description. The author noted that many assistant principals expressed frustration from receiving unclear and vague job descriptions. The attempt to specify specific duties of an assistant principal is difficult due to the various roles of the job (Celikten, 2001). In fact, assistant principals may find themselves with many interrelated jobs. Marshall and Hooley (2006) described different experiences assistant principals encountered with role conflict:

1. Immediate demands (such as discipline) interfere with professionalism.

2. The direct line to the principals is by going through the assistant principal that serves as mediator between teachers and students or students and parents.

3. Job responsibilities require so much time, energy, and emotion that little is left for assistant principal's personal life or development as a professional. (p. 9)

In MacCorkle's (2004) study on factors that influenced assistant principals' career stability, the researcher found that role conflict experienced by assistant principals played a part in whether or not assistant principals were prepared to become principals. Cranston et al. (2004) reported a wide difference between percentages of time spent by assistant principals on different tasks, compared with where they believed they should be spending their time. Assistant principals expressed a desire to manage duties they believed to be vital to the success of the school; however, they were largely involved in tasks that were related to just student issues. The

researchers concluded that when real and ideal roles were closely aligned, assistant principals expressed higher levels of role identity and lower levels of role conflict (Cranston et al. 2004).

Johnson (2001) discussed another aspect of role conflict assistant principals frequently encounter−the "middle-man"−or go-between for teachers, students, parents, and even other administrators. Johnson said, "Teachers love to hate assistant principals and principals hate to love assistant principals. They bear the burden of student contempt as they single handedly hold the line, thin as it is between student anarchy and school policy" (p. 85).

Regardless of role, school administrators experience conflict. Daresh (2001) noted that educational leaders face conflicts within organizations, outside organizations, and within one's own self. Assistant principals face all three of these types of conflict and need assistance to cope with these conflicts when performing the various tasks and responsibilities that are entrusted to them. How assistant principals deal with these challenges frequently has a major impact on their job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction of assistant principals has been linked to their career aspirations (Kwan, 2011). Marshall and Hooley (2006) suggested that "satisfied" assistant principals were those who aspired to become principals. Those who experienced less job satisfaction were more likely to remain as assistant principals. According to Chan, Webb, and Bowen (2003), job satisfaction was related to assistant principals' desire to apply for a principal position. Gronn and Lacey (2010) further obtained information from 160 assistant principals regarding job satisfaction:

> They [assistant principals] testified that those who have an appreciation of the balance
> between job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction inherent in the roles are more likely to

adjust to the various roles required of assistant principals than those who only perceive

the roles to be demanding, stressful, and time-consuming. (p. 282)

Armstrong (2004) surveyed assistant principals in Texas and found that assistant

principals were generally satisfied with their jobs. Armstrong noted that relationships with

supervisors and the chance to use skills required for instructional leadership increased job

satisfaction. According to Marshall and Hooley (2006), assistant principals were more willing to

perform tasks requiring administrative ability than tasks that requiring clerical ability. Marshall

and Hooley stated:

Assistant principals deal with the dilemma of deriving satisfaction from a risky and

sometimes powerless position. They have a great deal of scrutiny. They seek satisfiers;

they respond to pushes and pull from their specific school site, their sense from previous

professional experience about what is important, and the school system's rewards and

incentives. (p. 9)

Assistant principals also find job satisfaction when they believe they are making a

positive impact on the lives of children. Cornell (2003) observed that assistant principals were

satisfied with the actual work itself as well as achievement experienced by students. Research

findings identified recognition, growth, and relationships with others as aspects that contributed

to job satisfaction.

Socialization of Assistant Principals

Socialization is defined as the method of learning and acting out social roles; it is the way

in which individuals learn about and acquire the values, norms, and beliefs that are required to

fulfill organizational roles (Ashforth, 2001). According to Kartal (2009), organizational

socialization is defined as the obedience of the individual to values and norms of the

organization. Kartal further suggested that positive organizational efforts increase an employee's job satisfaction and devotion to his or her job. These same efforts can help individuals during a time of frustration and prevent employees from quitting (Chao, 2007).

Organizational and socialization instruct employees of the skills necessary to be effective and teach employees about the organization and its history, language, values, and policies of the organization (Kartal, 2009). By experiencing organizational socialization, school administrators can attain job experience and learn the social system of the school (Normore, 2003).

Matthews and Crow (2003) identified professional and organizational socialization as two major factors that indoctrinate new administrators, which can have a major impact on how administrators will be defined in their careers. Mertz (2006) suggested that an organization's norms and beliefs produce both favorable circumstances and restrictions, which socialize new administrators.

Researchers who study school administrators discuss the socialization of principals. Hart (1993) defined three stages of principal socialization: encounter, adjustment, and stabilization. More recently, Matthews and Crow (2003) added the anticipation or pre-entry stage to Hart's three stages of principal socialization. Based on socialization models, Shoho and Barnett (2010) defined career stages of principals, including: pre-entry, encounter, and adjustment.

The pre-entry stage begins even before newly assigned principals begin in their schools; principals learn role of the responsibilities of the position and research roles before starting the job. In the encounter stage, principals decide on changes that need to be made and begin to implement the necessary changes. According to Shoho and Barnett (2010), the encounter stage is comprised of plans to initiate and implement change. After the encounter phase, principals adjust

24

and redefine their plans; this is known as the adjustment phase. This cycle leads to career stabilization.

Socialization of Assistant Principals

The previously identified stages of pre-entry, encounter, and adjustment of a principal's career might not be the same for assistant principals (Oleszewski et al., 2012). According to Oleszewski et al (2012), "Assistant principals have to be prepared for their many roles and they must learn the norms and expectations of the organization, often referred to as career socialization" (p. 270). As previously noted, assistant principals' responsibilities and duties are extremely diverse as compared to principals'.

Further, assistant principals who were hired in the last 10 years have faced many socialization issues due to significant organizational changes such as more rigorous curriculum, budget constraints, and personnel issues (Armstrong, 2009). In many districts, these changes have added to already demanding workloads and diminished administrator support (Armstrong, 2009).

Socialization of assistant principals occurs differently than other educational leadership positions (Armstrong, 2009). Much of the training assistant principals receive is from studies of school administration based on the principalship. Therefore, assistant principals are socialized more through on-the-job training (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Hence, socialization is vital to the development of an assistant principal's career (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Fishbein and Osterman (2001) describe this socialization:

The transition from teacher to assistant principal is an important professional organizational passage that carries significant dreams and transformational possibilities for new administrators and their communities. However, it is not unusual for new

assistant principals who enter administration with the intention of making a positive difference for students beyond the classroom, to experience pervasive organizational rites of passage that work together to divest initiates of their previous teacher values and socialize them into traditional administrative roles. (p. 3)

Rites and Passages

Career socialization stages or phases are closely aligned with Gannep's (1960) rites of passage in traditional societies. These rites of passage are the symbolic and ritualistic actions and ceremonies that mark the passage between social roles (Gannep, 1960). There are multiple stages that comprise rites of passage including: separation, transition, incorporation that assists with role exit, movement between roles, and role entry (Ashforth, 2001).

In traditional societies, inductees of a new social role may find themselves in a position where they are not fitting in with their former social group and must make adjustments in order to be accepted into the new social group. Inductees are infiltrated into their new group and must find ways to meet the expectations of their new situation (Cobb, 2008).

There are socialization boundaries that new assistant principals must learn to navigate. Greenfield (1985) identified these boundaries as hierarchical, functional, and inclusionary. New assistant principals experience hierarchical boundaries when they leave the classroom and transition to the middle management role of assistant principal. Assistant principals encounter functional boundaries when they manage students, facilities, and curriculum. Finally, assistant principals must adhere to inclusionary boundaries if they want to fit into the school's sphere of influence. By maneuvering through these boundaries, assistant principals lose their identities as classroom teachers and begin accepting traits and responsibilities as well as identifying themselves as administrators.

Armstrong (2010) discussed these stages i as rites of passage for assistant principals. Stages included "separation, transition, incorporation that facilitates role exit, movement between roles, role entry, and they may include the involvement of significant others, the manipulation of symbols, and the use of scripted behaviors" (Armstrong, 2010, p. 688).

New assistant principals may find themselves in the separation stage isolated from teachers with whom they once identified. During the separation stage, assistant principals might also experience initiation into a new group comprised of administrators. This initiation takes place after new assistant principals demonstrate that they are willing to accept the expectations of their new role as administrators (Cobb, 2008). Armstrong (2010) described this initiation as an important rite of passage and noted that it represents a period of time in an assistant principal's career when he or she is truly transitioning from teacher to administrator. Rites of passages are different for every new assistant principal and frequently serve different functions for each organization.

According to Armstrong (2010), organizational rites of passage remind assistant principals that they are leaving a previous role and being accepted into their new social group. This organizational rite of passage demonstrates role transformation. Ashforth (2001) suggested that this transition helps support assistant principals both socially and psychologically. Assistant principals develop their new role identity which can add uniformity to existing group of administrators.

There have few studies in educational administration regarding administrative rites of passage (Armstrong, 2010). Nevertheless, socialization practices communicate acceptable behaviors to new assistant principals. Additionally, there are data that demonstrate how organizations reinforce assistant principal role adjustment. Armstrong (2009) noted that

27

information can be communicated by cultural artifacts such master keys to school building, badges with titles, and walkie-talkies. The use of a walkie-talkie sends the message that the assistant principal is being positively socialized by communicating with the principal while other teachers are observing.

In addition to rites of passage, socialization pressures occur as new assistant principals leave the teaching ranks and join the administrative ranks. As stated earlier, new assistant principals are placed in a different social context, and their responsibilities of dealing with parents, students, and other administrators is different from what they experienced in the classroom. According to the experts, new assistant principals are frequently unprepared to assume these difficult responsibilities.

Referencing Conway (1990), Armstrong (2010) confirmed the presence of separation, transition, and incorporation rites of passage that reinforce differences between teachers and administrators and establish an underlying "we versus them" mentality (p. 198). Armstrong (2010) described these separation rites as "subtle shunning" and "polite silences" from teachers when new assistant principals are announced from within the teaching ranks (p. 20). Transition and incorporation rites can take place as new assistant principals are introduced to the faculty and staff members attempt to embarrass new assistant principals through "humor tests" and other subtle forms of initiation.

In summary, assistant principals may encounter challenges in transitioning from classroom teaching to administration. In the next section, mentoring will be described as a helpful support system for assistant principals.

Mentoring

Definition/Purposes of Mentoring

The definition of mentoring can be found in both the professional and educational literature. As far back as 1978, Levinson discussed mentoring as it related to the socialization process of young men in their professional roles. Levinson said, "A mentor may act as host or a guide" (p. 73). Ten years later, Wadsen (1988) defined mentoring for educational administrators:

> The mentor is a master at providing opportunities for the growth of others, by identifying situations and events which contribute knowledge and experience to the life of the steward. Opportunities are not happenstance; they must be thoughtfully designed and organized into logical sequence. Sometimes hazards are attached to opportunity. The mentor takes great pains to help the steward recognize and negotiate dangerous situations. In doing all this, the mentor has an opportunity for growth and service, which is the highest form of leadership. (p. 17)

In 1999, Crosby identified a mentor as "a trusted and experienced supervisor or advisor who by mutual consent takes an active interest in the development and education of a younger, less experienced individual" (p. 13). Even though the definitions of mentoring are divergent in the literature, the definition typically depicts an experienced person working with a less experienced person (protégé) to help that protégé in his or her career path and provide professional development and experience as needed (Mertz, 2004). Daresh (2004) tied together definitions of mentoring by stating, "The element that serves as the foundation for any conceptualization of mentoring is the fact that this activity must be part of the true developmental relationship that is tied to an appreciation of life and career stages" (p. 499).

Daresh (2004) noted that mentoring can serve several different purposes to support the growth of new administrators. First, the mentor can help the novice administrator develop cognitive skills. Specifically, mentors help mentees to formulate ideas and patterns of thinking. Second, mentors provide mentees an organizational perspective to make systematic improvements. Third, mentoring can assist mentees become effective leaders (Daresh, 2004).

Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring novice administrators to enhance their development as new professionals is not new. According to Daresh (2004):

> Mentoring can be traced back many centuries ago. Utilizing mentoring relationships to better one's self in their profession dates back to Homer's Odyssey. In the Odyssey, Mentor was the teacher chosen by Odysseus to teach his son Telemachus. This literary example suggests a more experienced person that is full of wisdom is to serve and mold the lives of colleagues. (p. 498)

According to Daresh (2004), mentoring helps principals become effective administrators in two ways. Mentors are identified as administrators who are recognized as role models and guides for beginning administrators. The term *mentor* is often applied to administrators who are experienced and can explain how the school and district functions. Mentors can also describe how they have managed expected roles and become recognized school leaders. A strong mentor is viewed as someone who truly understands the problems and issues experienced by mentees (Orland-Barak &Hasan, 2010).

The second value of mentoring is the ability of mentors to help mentees develop personal and professional goals (Daresh, 2004). Specifically, mentor can assist mentees develop a greater awareness of their own personal values as new administrators. According to Daresh (2004), this

defining time can include making a personal commitment to the role of administrator, reflecting on decisions to be made and willingness to make changes, and clarifying educational stances regarding school issues.

Mentoring can be valuable to both mentors and mentees (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004). Mentees are afforded opportunities to share what they have experienced and receive feedback and assistance regarding their beliefs and leadership abilities (Ehrich et al., 2004). Mentoring is a type of learning in which mentees find individuals who can help and challenge them towards achieving personal and professional growth (Smith, 2007).

Sherman and Crum (2008) explained, "Mentees gain leadership knowledge and skill through dialogue with mentors and opportunities to enact best practice" (p. 110). Duncan and Stock (2010) described mentoring as "a creative method of promoting professional development that encourages self-actualization and growth and focuses on developing the whole person" (p. 296).

According to Daresh (2004), individuals who have experienced mentoring in formal mentoring programs reported multiple benefits. Examples of benefits include more confidence about professional competence and the application of theory to practice. Mentees have also reported enhanced communication skills as a result of mentoring based on interactions between experienced administrators (mentors) and novice administrators (mentees). Mentoring provides the novice administrators opportunities to learn skills and knowledge from mentors. Through the mentoring process, protégés gain a sense of belonging in the administrative ranks which helps with socialization and self-confidence.

As previously noted, mentors can also benefit from the mentoring process. Mentors can gauge their own professional growth and reflect on their own practices for successes and areas

for improvement (Ehrich et al., 2004). According to Clayton, Sanzo, and Myran (2013), this reflection can be rewarding and increase job satisfaction of veteran administrators. Mentors may also find the process to be rejuvenating within their own career trajectories (Daresh, 2004).

Hansford and Ehrich (2006) identified t self-confidence as an outcome that mentors experienced through mentoring as well as satisfaction in helping a new generation of administrators lead schools. Mentors also identified praise from peers as another benefit of mentoring (Daresh, 2004).

According to Naicker et al. (2014), mentees described effective mentors as well-informed, qualified, caring, reliable, available, and truthful. Hall (2008) noted that trust was crucial to establishing productive mentor-mentee relationships. In the absence of trust, mentoring relationships can suffer. Morse (2006) identified self-confidence as a key trait of mentors while Smith (2007) noted listening decision making skills as desirable traits among mentors.

Pairing mentors and mentees has been discussed in numerous studies as vital to mutually beneficial mentoring (Riley, 2009). Hall (2008) stressed that poorly paired mentors and mentees can be detrimental to the learning process. For the purpose of matching mentors and mentees, Riley (2009) suggested that mentors and mentees be geographically close to one another and share similar interests and learning styles.

Mentor training is crucial to successful mentoring (Niacker et al., 2014). Daresh (2004) noted that even when mentors demonstrate all of the positive attributes for effective mentoring, they still need training to facilitate meaningful mentoring.

Mentoring Programs

School districts can also reap the benefits of implementing mentoring programs for novice administrators (Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran, 2010). Benefits of mentoring programs

include: more capable administrators, focus on life-long learning, higher levels of motivation, improved self-esteem, and greater productivity (Daresh, 2007). Lashway (2003) described the following three characteristics of instructional induction or mentoring programs for school districts:

1. Mentoring programs should respect the needs of the new administrator.
2. Districts can utilize one to one mentoring but they should also use a wide array of strategies , including portfolios, study groups, focus groups, and peer coaching.
3. Mentoring should be embedded in the culture of the school district. (p. 7)

Hilliard and Newsome (2013) made several recommendations for principals who are mentoring assistant principals, stating "the principal should really get to know the assistant principal" (p. 154). According to these authors, developing rapport with assistant principals allows the principal to learn about the talents and skills they bring to the school. Additionally, assistant principals can share views about how they can help guide the instructional program of the school.

Hilliard and Newsome (2013) further recommended, "[p]rincipals should share the instructional leadership, supervision, and management opportunities with the assistant principal" (p.154). They identified the following five strategies the assistant principal can assist the principal:

1. Establish learning communities with a focus on student achievement.
2. Demonstrate skills and knowledge of being a strong instructional leader.
3. Expand resources and partnership support to the school.

4. Coach teachers and encourage teachers to be leaders by building teachers' knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions and practices to lead to improve the school, because this practice too will help teachers believe that they are valued and supported.

5. Develop students as a leader in the school, i.e., tutors and peer mentors. (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013, p. 155)

Hilliard and Newsome (2013) concluded that when principals establish that assistant principal are valuable assets to the school then assistant principals can help teachers do a better job. Assistant principals help set a positive tone for the school and promote academic growth of students.

According to Riley (2009), the lack of time is a major constraint to mentoring, as reported throughout the literature. Recommendations for reducing time as a barrier to mentoring include limiting the number of mentees per mentor, assigning a mentor to a group, and utilizing technology such as video conferencing (Naicker et al., 2014). These recommendations may alleviate some of the stress often associated with time constraints.

In a South African study on mentoring as a strategy for leadership development of school principals, Naicker, Chikoko, and Mthyiyane (2014) found multiple factors that can and do impact the effectiveness of mentoring of new headteachers (better known as principals in the United States). These authors identified the following four factors that frequently impact mentoring programs in school districts: availability of time for mentoring, matching mentors and mentees, qualities of the mentor, and mentor training.

Mentoring for Assistant Principals

The socialization of individuals as assistant principal can be a complex and multi-layered process (Clayton et al., 2013). Assistant principals need support to become successful in adapting

34

to the role; one solution that has been shown to be successful in the socialization process is mentoring programs (Crow & Matthews, 1998). Mertz (2004) described mentoring as beneficial to individuals to acclimate to administrative positions in educational settings. Similarly, Oleszewski et al. (2012) viewed mentoring as important to the professional growth of assistant principals.

Assistant principals have suggested that principal mentors are key architects of their growth as they enter leadership roles (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Daresh (2004) stated, "having a mentor is the single most powerful thing an assistant principal can do to enhance personal survival and effectiveness" (p. 97).This positive relationship can greatly reduce stress levels associated with one's first administrative role (Retelle, 2010).

In summary, mentoring has been seen as a way to help socialize newly hired assistant principals. When mentors and mentees are matched successfully, both can benefit from the mentoring process. This relationship also reaps rewards for school districts that are trying to develop leaders who can positively influence all of the stakeholders in their schools.

Another mechanism to support assistant principals in the socialization process is professional development. The next section of this literature review discusses the importance of professional development for assistant principals.   .

Professional Development

Historically, professional development for assistant principals has been largely ignored in the research literature (Oliver, 2005). However, several researchers have recommended that assistant principals should receive training in areas other than solely managerial tasks. Marshall (1992) stated, "Assistant principals need to be prepared to fill roles and functions of administrators and to face the fundamental dilemmas in administration" (p. 89).

35

Traditionally, assistant principals have not received comparable levels of professional development as teachers or principals (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Therefore, it is incumbent upon assistant principals to ensure they receive professional development that prepares them for their roles now and in the future (Oliver, 2005). Training opportunities for assistant principals should help assistant principals build their capacity as instructional leaders (Drago-Severson & Avarena, 2011). Oliver (2005) stated, "There is a dire need for assistant principals to participate in clearly defined and consistent professional growth activities to increase instructional leadership skills by assistant principals" (p. 90).

The research on professional development is increasing, but assistant principals must still spend their own time to develop leadership skills (Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2013). Armstrong (2009) demonstrated that in-service training for assistant principals was not adequate. The author stated, "[a]ssistant principal training is haphazard and this has contributed to new assistant principals' transitional strain" (p. 125).

Glanz (2004) recommended that assistant principals be given help with their managerial duties so they can concentrate on their instructional leader roles. Kwan and Walker (2008) suggested that professional development for assistant principals should enhance their skills and abilities to promote change management and administer teacher evaluation systems.

Assistant principals themselves have expressed their needs in regards to professional development. According to Marshall and Hooley (2006), assistant principals felt they needed professional growth activities in managerial tasks such as: discipline management, communicating with parents, emergency and safety procedures, drug education, technology, scheduling, and fiscal management. Assistant principals also identified instructional leadership as a growth opportunity (Oliver, 2005).

Instructional leadership topics of interest included: teacher evaluations, curriculum, instruction, and student achievement (Oliver, 2005). Likewise, Owen-Fitzgerald (2010) noted that instructional leadership was a highly-requested topic for professional development by assistant principals. Oleszewski et al. (2012) asserted that if assistant principals received more training in instructional leadership, they would be more likely assume instructional leadership roles and more prepared to become principals.

Researchers have demonstrated that school districts should be involved in leadership development of assistant principals, and this training will help school districts grow their own leaders (Gurley et al., 2013). In lieu of formal leadership programs for assistant principals, school districts must rely on informal socialization processes to train assistant principals, and these processes are frequently ineffective (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Oliver (2005) has made a number of recommendations regarding professional development for assistant principals, including involvement in conferences, workshops, and institutes that stress instructional leadership (Oliver, 2005). Oliver stated, "Professional development programs should not just provide information but professional development programs should require assistant principals to step outside of the box and experience being instructional leaders as well as managers" (p. 97).

Oliver (2005) noted that time, location, mode of delivery, and relevant topics should be considered by school districts when planning professional development for assistant principals. If these factors are not considered, assistant principals often view professional development as not important and not meaningful to their growth as instructional leaders.

Oliver (2005) further noted that professional development should be offered continuously to assistant principals, and school districts should avoid one-shot professional development

sessions (Oliver, 2005). Continuous professional development sends a message that the school district is committed to developing assistant principals (Oliver, 2005). According to the author, on-going professional development can help assistant principals learn the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind to become effective instructional leaders (Oliver, 2005).

Oliver (2005) also suggested that assistant principals should develop and continuously monitor their own professional growth plans for targeted professional development. Professional growth plans can help assistant principals keep track of requisite managerial and instructional leadership skills (Oliver, 2005). When professional development plans are structured, individual strengths and weaknesses can be identified by assistant principals and evaluators for targeted trainings (Oliver, 2005). Oliver concluded that quality professional development programs are needed for assistant principals to become instructional leaders (p. 97).

Marshall and Hooley (2006) noted that "grow your own programs" are advantageous to assistant principals and help school systems by training potential administrators for leadership positions. These "grow your own" programs help assistant principals learn district protocols and prepare for the interview process should they decide to pursue the principalship.

While these recommendations are supported by the literature, research on professional development programs has resulted in equivocal findings (Oleszewski et al., 2012). According to Hausman et al. (2002), assistant principals reported that professional development opportunities had a minimal impact on their success. Further, assistant principals reported that their experiences as teachers had had a greater impact on their success than did professional development growth opportunities. Consequently, Oleszewski et al. (2012) advocated for more research on the subject of professional development and its potential benefits for assistant principal growth and development.

The following section of this literature review addresses how role conflict and ambiguity, socialization, mentoring, and professional development impact the career paths of assistant principals.

Career Paths of Assistant Principals

As noted throughout this review of the literature, assistant principals have numerous roles and responsibilities in the school setting. Topics of interest have included assistant principal satisfaction with their job role, transitions to this administrative role, and mechanisms and strategies that school districts can enact to help assistant principals find success in their job. Additionally, researcher have addressed a range of questions regarding socialization of assistant principals and its impact on job advancement, mentoring of assistant principals, managerial tasks and their relationship to career advancement, and the impact of professional development in assistant principals' decision to seek career advancement.

Marshall, Mitchell, Gross, and Scott (1992) conducted a field study that examined enculturation and socialization of assistant principals to seek answers to many of these questions regarding the career trajectories of assistant principals. Research findings build the foundation of the career adjustment model (Marshall et al., 1992). This model describes factors that influence the decision of assistant principals to seek the principalship. Based on these factors, Marshall et al. (1992) placed assistant principals into five distinct career path categories: upwardly mobile, career, plateaued, shafted, and considered leaving.

Upwardly mobile. The upwardly mobile assistant principal is described as an individual who has benefited from an influential mentor and seeks to be involved with colleagues in his or her school. This person strives to network with others throughout the school district (Oleszewski et al., 2012). This assistant principal is typically active in educational organizations and wants to

serve on school and district committees. According to Marshall et al. (1992), these individuals "can manipulate political situations to their advantage" (p. 14).

Upwardly mobile assistant principals handle tasks such as teacher evaluations; they tend to be viewed positively by principals and district administration (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Upwardly mobile individuals are not content with remaining assistant principals and desire to rise to the principal position. Upwardly mobile assistant principals look and play the part of what the district is seeking in a school principal (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Career. Career assistant principals resemble upwardly mobile ones e but are content in their role as assistant principals. Career assistant principals find great satisfaction in their job and happiness in their life as an assistant principal. These individuals tend to be viewed positively by their principal, teachers, parents, and students (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Career assistant principals perform tasks that are deemed important by the principal and are frequently trusted by the principal to be decision-makers. Career assistant principals differ from upwardly mobile ones in that they do not seek opportunities from professional organizations and are extremely driven by how they can improve the current school (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Plateaued. Plateaued assistant principals desire to become principals but for a variety of reasons have not been provided the opportunity. Due to a lack of opportunity, plateaued assistant principals tend to be dissatisfied with their current position; they may also be disgruntled with administration (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Plateaued assistant principals do not have mentor from whom to seek advice. Plateaued assistant principals frequently make poor decisions and shy away from correcting these mistakes. Poor decision making could one reason the plateaued assistant principal has not been identified for career advancement. According to Oleszewski et al. (2012), "this person lacks skills in

disciplining students, instructional evaluation, community relations, and does not respond positively to constructive feedback or criticism" (p. 279). School district personnel do not view the plateaued assistant principal as someone who looks or plays the part of a principal. Plateaued assistant principals come to the realization they are not going to advance their careers and over time shift to career assistant principals. Oleszewski et al. (2012) proposed an important question once this shift takes place, "Does the plateaued assistant principal take pride in his/her job like career assistant principals?" (p. 280).

Shafted. Shafted assistant principals display many of the same characteristics as upwardly mobile assistant principals. At one point in their careers they were active members of professional organizations and networked with colleagues. However, shafted assistant principals have not been selected to become a principal or to assume any other leadership position. Frequently, shafted assistant principals have not been successful due to the loss of a mentor (e.g., mentor leaving for another position or retiring) (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Shafted assistant principals are frequently viewed as individuals who have difficulties with administration and cannot be entrusted with making decisions due to overwhelmingly negative attitudes or beliefs. Shafted assistant principals are overlooked for promotion due to circumstances beyond their control, such as district downsizing or unexpected changes in key leadership. Over time, these unforeseen circumstances can result in previously upwardly mobile assistant principals becoming shafted assistant principals. Marshall et al. (1992) stated, "The shafted assistant principal was once upwardly mobile but lost out due to some circumstances not totally within the candidate's control" (p. 18).

Considered leaving. Assistant principals who considered leaving frequently believe "they are overqualified as an assistant principal and undervalued for their contribution"

(Marshall et al., 1992, p. 18). These assistant principals tend to make this observation early in their careers and possess sufficient skills to pursue other professional pursuits. Assistant principals who consider leaving oftentimes have mentors but not strong mentors (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Assistant principals who consider leaving believe they did not receive adequate support from administrators and were assigned tasks that were beneath them, such as bus duty and textbook inventories. Rather, these assistant principals suggest they should have been given instructional tasks such as teacher evaluations and decisions regarding the curriculum (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

According to Oleszewski et al. (2012), this description provides an accurate picture of assistant principal characteristics. However, the authors advocated for model updates due to more recent educational issues such as high stakes testing and accountability efforts. Oleszewski et al. (2012) also noted that there are fewer assistant principals choosing to become career assistant principals due to the many managerial tasks that they are assigned. Additionally, a significant number of assistant principals desire to become instructional leaders.

In addition to updating the model, Oleszewski et al. (2012) recommend the model be updated to include additional categories. For example, the authors proposed splitting the downwardly mobile assistant principal into voluntarily involuntarily mobile categories. Subdividing this category would help differentiate those who are labeled downwardly mobile due to poor job performance and those who are labeled downwardly mobile due to individual perceptions of role.

Oleszewski et al. (2012) suggested updating the model to include two primary categories of assistant principals: those who stay and those who leave. Assistant principals who stayed

would include shafted, career, and plateaued professionals. Those who left would include individuals who advanced to upper administrative positions or those who chose to leave.

Thus far, this review has focused on the many roles assistant principals perform and how these multiple roles affect their decision to seek advancement, stay in their current role, or leave the field. Irrespective of decision, assistant principals must understand instruction and build teacher capacity. This next section discusses the requisite leadership skills needed to accomplish these instructional leadership tasks.

Instructional Leadership

Principals have always been held accountable for managing well-run schools (Wahlstrom, 2012). Historically, principals have managed teachers and students, and handled the basic operations of maintaining a building. Principals who managed effective schools shifted focus in the late 1970s (Wahlstrom, 2012). According to Wahlstrom (2012), researchers at this time reported elements of effective schools:

- An ethos or culture oriented toward learning, as expressed in high achievement standards and expectations of students;

- An emphasis on basic skills;

- A high level of involvement in decision making and professionalism among teachers;

- Cohesiveness;

- Clear policies on matters such as homework and student behaviors. (p. 69)

These elements suggested changes in what had historically been considered the principal's role. This shift in the role of the principalship led to educational administration programs concentrating on what would become "instructional leadership" (Wahlstrom, 2012).

Prior to this period of time, there was no one in the school known as an "instructional leader." In fact, Hallinger (2005) said, "During the 1980s relatively little reference was made to teachers, department heads, or even to assistant principals as instructional leaders. There was little discussion of instructional leadership as a distributed characteristic or function to be shared" (p. 221). According to Townsend, Acker-Hocevar, Ballenger, and Place (2013):

This view of instructional leadership was hierarchical and managerial and lends itself to the view that the school leader was the single person to oversee local implementation of decisions designed to maximize student learning and to improve the school in doing so. (p. 68)

In the 1980s, policymakers stressed that for schools to be successful they must be led by principals who focused their efforts on building themselves as strong instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2005). These instructional leaders were portrayed as "directive leaders who had turned low-performing schools around" (Hallinger, 2005, p. 3). These leaders were also perceived as culture builders who set high expectations for students and teachers and viewed as individuals who could overcome obstacles and pressures that kept principals away from the classroom (Hallinger, 2005).

Principals who were considered instructional leaders were described as goal-oriented in terms of establishing learning targets for their schools (Hallinger, 2005). These leaders facilitated teacher success in helping students achieve and focused on student outcomes (Hallinger, 2005). The vision of achieving academic goals was presented to all stakeholders by these instructional leaders, and achieving academic outcomes was considered to be an effective practice in turning around low performing schools.

The principals who were considered to be instructional leaders managed, coordinated, controlled, and supervised curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2005). These instructional leaders pinpointed teaching strategies and activities from the classroom that helped teachers assist students in attaining learning outcomes. Principals who were considered instructional leaders tended to be charismatic and hands-on with the curriculum (Hallinger, 2005).

According to Hallinger (2005), these principals were "hip-deep" in teaching and learning. Principals were fearless in working side-by-side with teachers and sought ways to improve instruction (Hallinger, 2005). Marshall (1996) stated, "Due to the fact these principals were considered somewhat heroic led other principals who did not demonstrate these same qualities to believe they were inadequate as an 'instructional leader'" (p. 336).

Definition of Instructional Leadership

There have been numerous models in which instructional leadership has been defined. However, the model constructed by Hallinger and Murphy (1987) is one of the most popular models referred in research studies (Hallinger, 2005). This model identifies the following three dimensions of instructional leadership and their application to the principalship:

- Defining the School's Mission,

- Managing the Instructional Program, and

- Promoting a Positive School Climate (Hallinger, 2005, p. 5).

Defining the school's mission. *Defining the School's Mission* is involves framing and communicating the goals of the school (Hallinger, 2005). This dimension is based on the principal laying the foundation for the purpose of the school and establishing how the principal works with school staff to ensure the school has well-defined and measurable goals based on

student achievement. The principal is also expected to ensure these goals are articulated throughout the school community (Hallinger, 2005).

Hallinger (2005) recommended that principals establish school goals that are clear and written down so that no one can misinterpret intended outcomes According to Hallinger (2005), the mission sets priorities for teachers, and teachers will support the mission of the school when it is demonstrated by the principal.

Managing the instructional program. The second dimension, *Managing the Instructional Program*, is focused on instruction and curriculum (Hallinger, 2005). The principal's responsibilities in this instructional dimension are to supervise and evaluate teaching, coordinate curriculum, and monitor student progress (Hallinger, 2005). This dimension includes principal involvement in the teaching and learning that takes place in the school. The components of this dimension require principals and teachers to share ownership for teaching and learning to improve in student achievement (Hallinger, 2005). Managing the instructional program is the dimension in which principals study and refer to data as they seek to help teachers improve instruction to enhance student achievement.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. According to Hallinger (2005), the third dimension of instructional leadership, *Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate*, is comprised of "several functions: protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintain high visibility, promoting incentives for teachers and students, and developing high expectations and standards" (p. 6). In this dimension, principals establish a culture that focuses on and rewards improved instruction. The principal models the desire to constantly improve teaching and learning and supports teachers who are continuously seeking to

46

improve their craft. These instructional leaders protect instructional time and provide high-quality professional development (Hallinger, 2005).

Based on these three dimensions, Hallinger (2005) articulated the following recommendations for aspiring instruction leaders:

- creating a shared sense of purpose in the school, including clear goals focused on student learning;

- fostering the continuous improvement of the school through cyclical school development planning that involves a wide range of stakeholders;

- developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture aimed at innovation and improvement of teaching and learning;

- coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student outcomes;

- shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the school's mission;

- organizing and monitoring a wide range of activities aimed at the continuous improvement of staff; and

- being a visible presence in the school, modeling the desired values of the school culture. (p. 13)

Current Model of Instructional Leadership

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), the three dimensions of instructional leadership from Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model should not just be confined to instructional leadership but should be the core function of all successful educational leadership endeavors. Based on studies of linking leadership to learning, Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) suggested similar core practices for effective leadership including: setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program.

Leithwood (2011) defined the category of *Setting Directions* with four specific practices: "building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, creating high performance expectations, and communicating the direction" (p. 59). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) suggested that building a shared vision was an inspirational task which could raise emotions in people and promote self-efficacy and thereby help individuals achieve desired goals. Fullan (2003) defined this process as developing a moral purpose.

Leithwood (2011) described the *Developing the People* category based on the following practices: "providing individualized support and consideration, offering intellectual stimulation, and modeling appropriate values and practices" (p. 60). These practices are ways in which leaders express their concerns about the needs of the staff (Leithwood, 2011). *Developing the People* is similar to Hallinger and Murphy's (1987) concept of "rewarding and providing incentives for teachers" from the category *Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate*. The practice of "developing people" is built upon the leader's ability to build capacity of staff members in order to attain the goals that are set for members of the school (Leithwood, 2011).

The principal is also regarded as the one who helps staff members persevere in building capacity. According to Leithwood (2011), the rationale for building capacity is that "people are motivated by what they are good at" (p. 60). Therefore, when teachers attain the capacity to improve in craft such as teaching, they become more motivated (Leithwood, 2011).

Improving the Instructional Program includes practices that have a direct impact on teaching and learning; they include: "staffing the program, providing instructional support, monitoring school activity, buffering staff from distractions to their work, and aligning resources" (Leithwood, 2011, p. 61). Leithwood (2011) argued that this category has significant

effects on results related to student achievement and are most frequently characteristics of instructional leadership (Leithwood, 2011).

Refining and Aligning the School Organization is comprised of the following four practices: "building collaborative cultures, restructuring the organization to support collaboration, building productive relationships with families and the community, and connecting the school to the wider community" (Leithwood, 2011, p. 62). This category is not found in Hallinger and Murphy's three dimensions of instructional leadership model, but speaks to building "Professional Learning Communities" (PLC). This category describes mechanisms that promote healthy conditions for collaboration among all school staff members. Leithwood (2010) stated, "People are motivated when they believe the circumstances in which they find themselves are conducive to accomplishing the goals they hold to be personally important." (p. 60). Now that instructional leadership is defined, a question still remains: How do principals conceptualize or carry out instructional leadership? The next section discusses how principals implement instructional leadership.

Conceptualization of Instructional Leadership

Mitchell and Castle (2005) explored the role of principals as instructional leaders in elementary schools revealed how principals have conceptualized instructional leadership. These authors defined conceptualization as "how school administrators, in these cases the principals, carry out the role of what it means to be an instructional leader" (Mitchell & Castle, 2005, p. 410). Several principals expressed inadequacy to serve as instructional leaders because they viewed their role as instructional leaders as "curriculum experts" (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). However, these authors stressed that principals being viewed as curriculum experts was not as

important as principals' willingness to lead teachers in reflexive thinking and problem solving. Mitchell and Castle (2005) recommend:

> The principal's instructional role should be encouraging, inviting, and promoting inquiry. The length they have been out of the classroom becomes irrelevant; what matters is their capacity to lead in the process of critical inquiry. From this perspective, principals understand their roles as instructional leaders to be much more about bringing visibility to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of staff members as about imparting new knowledge. (p. 412)

Wahlstrom (2012) noted that principals who are viewed by teachers as instructional leaders possess the ability to foster dialogue with teachers about teaching and learning. This is one specific and meaningful way for principals to conceptualize instructional leadership. The ability of principals to make suggestions, give feedback, and praise teachers promotes independent thought and decision making regarding teaching and learning. Mitchell and Castle (2005) suggested that this framework among teachers and principals creates a culture of "professional inquiry"(p. 409). Further, these authors noted that where teachers in schools desire to improve organizational capacity is where professional practice is improving.

According to Mitchell and Castle (2005), elementary principals conceptualized instructional leadership through "formal and informal dimensions" (p. 416). The formal dimension included activities such as professional development meetings in which knowledgeable principals taught topics that impacted student achievement. These elementary principals did not rank themselves high in functioning in this dimension.

The informal dimension described by elementary principals included a willingness to create a true learning environment. Based on interview data, Mitchell and Castle (2005)

identified certain activities that contributed to the informal dimension including: "chatting informally, providing positive feedback to teachers, discussing teaching strategies, arranging mentoring opportunities, modeling teaching, modeling reflection, and providing materials" (p. 417).

These authors did not, however, observe these actions taking place with any frequency. The activities they observed the most were "chatting informally with teachers and giving praise to both teachers and students" (Mitchell & Castle, 2005, p. 417). Chatting informally and praising teachers and students were considered by the researchers to be part of the informal dimension as well as culture building activities. These authors did not witness as much of the formal dimension such as capacity building activities like "mentoring or modeling reflection" (p. 416).

According to Mitchell and Castle (2005), principals direct their attention on both broad and specific levels in terms of functioning as instructional leaders. Broad levels direct principals to look closely at affective and cognitive climates within the school while more specific levels direct principals to focus on students, teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders (Mitchell & Castle, 2005).

Mitchell and Castle (2005) discovered that elementary principals focused more attention on the affective rather than cognitive climate. These elementary principals expressed the belief that by focusing on positive relationships with teachers, teachers would in turn focus greater attention on instruction. These principals perceived their ability to build positive relationships facilitated instructional leadership (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). These same elementary principals recognized that it was their responsibility to create a cognitive climate, but they relied more

heavily on formal professional development than personal initiative to build this climate (Mitchell & Castle, 2005).

Sources of Tension

Mitchell and Castle discovered "three sets of tensions that possibly impact elementary principals' approach to instructional leadership" (p. 417). These tensions included: "proactive and reactive leadership approaches, facilitative or directive leadership approaches, and the ability to build consensus or gain compliance when it came to making decisions about issues that were related to instructional areas" (Mitchell & Castle, 2005, p. 417).

The first tensions of proactive and reactive decisions were based on principals having to make decisions in a quick and reactive manner. Mitchell and Castle (2005) noted that elementary principals "seemed to always have been making decisions after the fact" (p. 417). These decisions were made despite pre-planning such as specialized grouping of classes and common planning periods for teachers to collaborate. There seemed to be certain situations that forced principals to react when making decisions. According to Mitchell and Castle (2005), "this feeling of being pulled in both directions was a source of tension for these elementary principals" (p. 417).

The second source of tension was based on watching principals attempt to preserve a culture in the schools in which teachers were autonomous enough to meet the needs of their students. Mitchell and Castle (2005) viewed this as a facilitative culture. However, principals feared that a culture in which there was too much autonomy or freedom would cause teachers to react negatively given a directive. Principals wanted to act collaboratively in creating a cognitive climate but occasionally needed to take control of the situation. According to Mitchell and Castle

(2005), this caused principals to experience tension due to the teacher autonomy they had been previously established.

Mitchell and Castle (2005) described the third source of tension as building consensus or gaining compliance related to making decisions that affected the learning climate. The authors noted that principals did not use "open-confrontation to promote instructional improvement" (p. 418). Principals insisted that teachers should work collaboratively in working towards instructional goals.

However, when principals needed to conduct follow-up visits to ensure goals were being met, principals "encountered tension in finding a balance between directing teachers and expecting compliance" (Mitchell & Castle, 2005, p. 418). This situation also caused stressed among principals (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). Teachers surveyed in this study appreciated assertive, directive leadership with regards to making instructional decisions. According to teachers, directives provided security and demonstrated that elementary principals were confident in their decisions with regard to improving the instructional program (Mitchell & Castle, 2005).

The next section of this review addresses questions regarding ways in which instructional leaders overcome tensions and focus attention on enhancing learning for all students.

Five Practices to Instructional Leadership

Mendels (2012) from the Wallace Foundation (2012) identified five practices that are essential to impacting instructional leadership. These five practices include the following:

1. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards;

2. Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail;

3. Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision;

4. Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost; and

5. Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. (p. 55)

Instructional leadership starts with creating a vision based on setting high expectations for all students (Mendels, 2012). Principals establish this vision and bring others along in promoting the vision. According to Porter, Murphy, Goldring, Elliott, Polikoof, and May (2008):

The research literature over the last quarter-century has consistently supported the notion that having high expectations for all, including clear and public standards, is one key to closing the achievement gap between advantaged and less advantaged students and raising achievement of all students. (p. 13)

Louis et al. (2010) found that principals who were highly rated by teachers developed a climate based on a vision that nurtured instruction and high expectations. These principals "kick it up a notch when it comes to establishing the vision that all students can learn at high levels and believe in research based strategies" (Louis et al., 2010, p. 84).

A second practice that establishes instructional leadership based on fostering a climate that promotes collaboration among teachers and encourages teachers to collaborate with students regarding learning. Administrators understand that building safe schools is necessary, but creating a culture in which students know they are supported is essential.

According to Mendels (2012), effective administrators build schools in which students know there are adults who truly care about their learning. In these types of schools, teachers collaborate with one another on instructional practices. Principals in these schools discourage

54

teachers from working in isolation and establish conditions for meaningful collaboration to occur (Louis et al., 2010). Portin et al. (2009) noted that collaborative climates promote student learning; these climates maintain:

> A sense of student and staff safety; respect for all members of the school community, without regard to the professional status or position; an upbeat, welcoming, solution-oriented, no-blame, professional environment; an effort to invite and involve staff in various school-wide functions; and a parallel outreach to students that engaged and involved teachers them in a variety of ways. (p. 59)

Administrators who want to enhance their instructional leadership skills pay close attention to the quality of instruction in their schools (Mendels, 2012). They visit classrooms daily to observe and evaluate instruction and "make close observations of what is working and what isn't. And they make sure to discuss what they have found with teachers" (p. 56).

Observations of teachers need to be frequent and accompanied by teacher feedback that occurs shortly after classroom visits in order for teachers to reflect on the dialogue (Mendels, 2012). Effective administrators who are focused on enhancing instruction provide feedback from observations and provide opportunities for teachers to discuss instructional strategies to improve instruction. Portin et al. (2009) identified block scheduling, faculty meetings dedicated to instruction, and colleague visits as effective times for these discussions to occur.

Administrators who are interested in improving instructional leadership skills hire teachers who display strong instructional skills. Further, these administrators make significant efforts to retain these teachers (Mendels, 2012). Administrators also support their teachers (Mendels, 2012). Darling-Hammond (2007) stated, "[t]he number one reason for teachers'

55

decisions about whether to stay in a school is the quality of administrative support and it is the leader who must develop the organization" (p. 17).

Principals are working at a time in which accountability and student data are requirements for effective instructional leaderships (Mendels, 2012). Administrators who want to enhance their instructional leadership skills engage teachers in making instructional plans that impact student learning (Mendels, 2012). Portin et al. (2009) suggested that these leaders know how to ask questions about student data that will help teachers provide feedback to students and enhance student achievement.

Effective principals know how to structure their jobs to incorporate these practices and strive to make their schools environments that are conducive to learning (Mendels, 2012). Porter et al. (2008) proposed, "six key steps that assist administrators in following through with the responsibilities of being an instructional leader: planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring" (p. 15). These steps can help instructional leaders structure their positions to maximize effectiveness (Mendels, 2012).

Research on Instructional Leadership

In early research on instructional leadership, the direct effects model was believed to be effective (Townsend et al., 2013). However, Hallinger and Heck (2011) researched four different models of leadership and its effect on 192 schools in the United States. Results indicated that the hierarchical effects model significantly underperformed.

Rather, the concept of "distributed leadership among teachers and administrators [resulted] in more direct impact than the hierarchical leadership from one single person (Townsend et al., 2013). Townsend et al. (2013) added, "If we make rapid changes to a continually increasing workload, then the position of a single 'heroic leader' becomes virtually

untenable." (p. 68). Even though previous research findings have suggested that one person cannot significantly impact student achievement, there are still many who are infatuated by the thought that one person as the leader is vital to student achievement (Townsend et al., 2013).

However, principals and their notions of leadership are important. Simkin, Charner, and Suss (2010) stated: "principal leadership is second only to teacher quality when they asked administrators and policy advisers to rank the importance of 21 education issues, ranging from special education and English language learning to school violence and reducing the dropout rate" (p. 9).

Similarly, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) identified leadership as the second most significant variable regarding student achievement and school effectivness. In 2010, Leithwood et al. (2004) asserted:

> In developing a starting point for this six-year study, we claimed, based on preliminary review of research, that leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. After six additional years of research, we are even more confident. (p. 9)

These authors determined that the impact principals had on student achievement was not direct; however, the indirect impact of principals on student learning was statistically significant.

Summary

The need for school principals to have helpers during the 1930s and 1940s led to the position that is now known as the assistant principal. The history of the assistant principal role has defined the functions and responsibilities of most assistant principals to this day. In most schools, assistant principals are assigned managerial tasks that principals either do not have time for or do not wish to pursue. These tasks frequently include: disciplining students and managing

the school, personnel management, and public relations. In many schools, principals are viewed as leaders and assistant principals as managers.

However, many assistant principals have expressed the desire to perform instructional leadership responsibilities. Instructional leadership responsibilities, such as observing teachers and working with curriculum, are duties that define the concept of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and dispositions demonstrated by a school leader (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012).

Many assistant principals do not have a clearly defined job description and frequently find themselves dealing with problems they struggle to solve. Many assistant principals experience unclear expectations and uncertainty which leads to role ambiguity.

Assistant principals can also find themselves stuck in the middle of situations and become negotiators between teachers and principals. Oftentimes, assistant principals are expected to handle situations that would be better suited for principals. Role ambiguity and role conflict must be dealt with by assistant principals if they are to find success in their careers.

Assistant principals must learn how to deal with their expected roles and responsibilities, learn the norms of the school, and adjust to the expectations of principals. The process of learning and adjusting to school expectations is defined as socialization. Socialization is vital to the development of assistant principals' careers, and on-the-job training occurs in stages with specific boundaries. These stages and boundaries are known as rites and passages.

One mechanism that can help assistant principals find success in the socialization process is mentoring. Mentoring can help assistant principals become strong leaders who can manage diverse roles and expectations. Principals who are willing to serve as mentors to assistant principals can help facilitate the successful transition of assistant principals from the classroom.

Mentors advise mentees of school functions and prepare them for expectations from the school district. Mentors can also benefit from the mentoring process by reflecting on their own experiences and professional practices. School districts often benefit from experienced administrators mentoring novice assistant principals; therefore, school districts should ensure that organizational practices are a priority for all school leaders. Best practices include mentor training and proper matching of mentors and mentees.

Professional development can also support assistant principals in the socialization process. Although professional development for assistant principals is not specifically mentioned in the literature, professional development can prepare assistant principals for their multiple responsibilities.

Researchers have recommended that assistant principals receive the same types of professional development as principals to be better prepared for the role of instructional leaders. School districts can benefit when assistant principals receive the proper professional development by preparing assistant principals to serve as future principals.

The previously discussed sections of this literature review including assistant principals' role and responsibilities, socialization, mentoring, and professional development impact the careers of assistant principals. The impacts of these mechanisms guide assistant principals in their decision to stay in their current role or seek the position of principal. The impacts of these factors comprise the career adjustment model. The career adjustment model consists of five categories of assistant principals: upwardly mobile, career, plateaued, shafted, and considered leaving.

Principals are now expected to be instructional leaders. Instructional leadership evolved from the effective schools movement in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, the concept of instructional

leadership evolved with a focus on improving low performing schools. These individuals were viewed as the single person responsible for improvements in turn-around schools.

Further, instructional leaders were considered culture builders who set high expectations students and teachers who spent a great deal of time in classrooms and focused on student outcomes. Instructional leaders were knowledgeable about curriculum and focused on improving instruction.

Observations of leaders of the 1980s defined characteristics of instructional leadership. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model consisted of the following dimensions: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting positive school climate. This model was popular throughout the 1990s.

The current model of instructional leadership is not solely confined to instructional leadership but serves as the core for successful educational leadership. Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) recommended that core practices of leadership should be based on the following characteristics: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program.

Principals conceptualize the role of instructional leadership in multiple ways including dialogue centered on instruction. Principals promote instructional leadership along two dimensions: formal and informal. Additionally, principals direct their attention on broad and specific levels. The broad level is focused on the affective and cognitive climate of the school, and the specific level is focused on students, teachers, parents, and any other stakeholders.

Principals also encounter obstacles in serving as instructional leaders. Obstacles include proactive and reactive leadership approaches, facilitative or directive leadership approaches, and the ability to gain consensus or gain compliance in terms of instructional decisions. There are

five practices that are vital to impacting instructional leadership and may help in overcoming many of these obstacles. These practices include: crafting a vision, creating a climate, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, and managing processes to enhance school improvement. When instructional leaders focus on these five processes, the task of improving student achievement becomes more attainable.

Early research on instructional leadership focused on the direct impact of leaders on student achievement. More recently, research has focused on how distributive instructional leadership impacts student achievement and the ways in which the distributed model directly impacts student achievement as compared to the previous hierarchical model. Additionally, researchers have noted that instructional leadership should not be focused on a single leader. This is where the instructional role of assistant principals becomes vital. One person alone cannot be responsible for improving a school; assistant principals are essential. The research in this review supports this message.

This literature review focused on the historical evolution of assistant principals and and the concept of instructional leadership as related to assistant principals. Lambert (2002) stated, "The days of the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for the entire school without the substantial participation of other educators" (p. 37). This research explored one of these "other educators," the assistant principal.

Chapter 3

Methods

The goal for all school leaders is to enhance teaching and learning to increase student achievement for all students. Scholarly research has demonstrated that leadership can positively impact student achievement (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Principals cannot always be the person in the school who is responsible for this leadership; assistant principals are needed to share this responsibility. Even though traditional roles and responsibilities of assistant principals have been management-oriented, contemporary demands dictate that they must become *instructional* leaders.

Previously research on instructional leadership has overwhelmingly focused on the role of the school principal. By comparison, there has been little scholarly research on assistant principals and their impact as instructional leaders (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). There are no clear data regarding secondary and elementary assistant principal perceptions regarding instructional leadership nor prior experiences that may enhance their readiness. Additionally, there is paucity of research regarding sources of support assistant principals could access to improve as instructional leaders. To investigate these concerns, the researcher and a doctoral student colleague designed companion dissertations–one with secondary assistant principals as participants, and one with elementary assistant principals as participants. This study focused on elementary (K-6) assistant principals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the characteristics and experiences of elementary assistant principals that contribute to their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders. The survey developed by the researchers will contribute to the knowledge of the essential role assistant principals play as instructional leaders in the school setting. It will also provide recommendations that may improve the practice of school leadership in all schools.

Significance of the Study

Since the 1930s, when the position of assistant principal became a fixture in schools, assistant principals have been identified as managers who take care of routine tasks such as student discipline, assigning textbooks, and managing facilities. However, with the contemporary demands placed on all school leaders to focus on instruction as the chief priority of their work, the role of assistant principal must now include *instructional* leadership. The intent of this study was to identify whether assistant principals perceived themselves as ready to be instructional leaders and to capture characteristics and experiences assistant principals identified as enhancing their readiness.

The researcher identified specific activities that promote readiness and best prepare them for the role of instructional leader. The results of this study will contribute to educational leadership research about how elementary assistant principals become instructional leaders and may suggest actions universities and school districts can take to better prepare elementary assistant principals in gaining confidence for the role of instructional leader.

The Researcher's Role

The role of the researcher was to identify the factors, characteristics, and experiences that were significant in contributing to elementary assistant principal perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders. The researcher has served in two central office positions. The first position was serving in a central office position as elementary coordinator. The other central office position was assistant superintendent for elementary grades K-6. Prior to the elementary coordinator and assistant superintendent positions, the researcher spent 10 years as an elementary principal without an assistant principal. At the time of this study, the researcher was supervising seven elementary principals and seven elementary assistant principals.

The researcher's lack of experience as an assistant principal himself could be considered a limitation to this research. However, after conducting this research and supervising principals and assistant principals, the researcher has gained a tremendous appreciation for the position of assistant principal. The researcher understands the need for assistant principals to assert themselves as instructional leaders and is now in a central office position that enhances his ability to support assistant principal growth in this role.

Research Questions

The central research question of this study was: What characteristics and experiences contribute to elementary assistant principal perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders? There were six sub questions.

Sub-Questions

1. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?

2. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they feel ready to serve as instructional leaders defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?

3. Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?

4. For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?

5. Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?

6. Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

Methods

The data set analyzed for this study was originally collected for a mixed methods study conducted between October, 2013, and April, 2014, in the state of Alabama, with approval from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board. The conceptual framework for the study was based on the work of Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) and their description of instructional leadership as characterized by four essential components (i.e., setting direction, developing people, focusing on learning, improving the instructional program). This description was repeated throughout the survey instrument utilized in this study.

Population and Sample

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a subset of the larger data set, extracting survey data that were created by elementary assistant principal respondents in the state of Alabama. The designed survey was sent to approximately 1,150 assistant principals across Alabama during the 2013-2014 school year. The sample was drawn from only those participants who responded to the designed survey and completed the entire survey.

The population identified for this research yielded 581 (50.5% response rate) elementary and secondary assistant principal responses from K-12 schools across the state of Alabama. However, 120 survey respondents did not finish at least 50% of the survey questions. Therefore, their responses were not used in data analysis. The original dataset produced 461 usable survey responses which rendered a final response rate of 40%.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher only used responses from assistant principals who were currently working in schools that served grades kindergarten through sixth-grade. Therefore, the researcher used a subset of the original dataset. This subset contained 118 responses, with 84 females and 32 males. Two elementary assistant principals did not indicate gender on the survey. However, gender was not a variable of interest for this study. Participant ages were determined by intervals. Table 1 indicates participant age groups. Table 2 indicates participants' years of experience as assistant principals.

Table 1
Participant Ages

	Age	
	Number in Sample	Percentage (N=122)
22-30	4	3.4
31-35	13	11.0
36-40	30	25.5
41-45	29	24.6
Over 45	41	34.7
No Response	1	0.8
Total	118	100

Table 2
Participants Years as Assistant Principal

Years as Assistant Principal	Number (Percentage) in Sample (N=122)
1	20 (16.9)
2	17 (14.4)
3	10 (8.5)
4	9 (7.6)
5 or more	62 (52.5)

Instrumentation

The researcher used an online survey as the data collection method. The survey was designed by Browne-Ferrigno from the University of Kentucky, and Searby, from Auburn University, Alabama, as a part of a large, two-state study of assistant principals. These researchers are experienced professors of educational leadership and experts in designing, delivering, and evaluating of the following topics: preparatory programs for aspiring principals, in-service mentoring, and professional development programs for current principals.

The survey consisted of 37 main questions, including 30 multiple choice questions (with several sub-questions in most cases), one question with a four-point Likert-type scale for each of nine items, and six open-ended questions.

Content validity for the survey items was grounded by two methods (Gall, M., Gall, J., & Borg, 2010). The first method of validation was based on author alignment with current literature on assistant principals from Leithwood and Seashore-Lewis (2012) concepts of instructional leadership: setting direction, developing people, focusing on learning, and improving the instructional program. The second manner in which the survey was validated was through a pilot study with an expert panel of both assistant and senior principals. Feedback from these experts was incorporated into the final version of the survey.

Once the paper version of the survey was completed, selected assistant and senior principals provided recommendations for survey improvement including word changes, additional options on multiple choice questions, and ordering of the questions. Once this process was completed, a veteran assistant superintendent who has responsibilities for conducting professional development and evaluating assistant principals provided specific recommendations on the final print version of the survey.

After the survey was converted to electronic format in Survey Monkey™, a commercial survey design tool, it was delivered to a small group of active assistant principals who provided their feedback on technical problems they encountered while they took the survey. Finally, this survey was reviewed and approved by members of the Institutional Review Board at Auburn University.

Instrument Reliability

The survey has been administered one time, and only internal consistency reliability on related items could be determined (Gall et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha was determined for two items on the survey. These two items were as follows:

- "Among the professional growth opportunities for developing instructional leadership, identify "yes", I have had the opportunity to participate or "no", I have not had the opportunity to participate".

- "Indicate how effective the professional growth opportunities have been for you using very effective, effective, somewhat effective, not effective, and not applicable". I

For this current research study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed and indicated a range from .65 to .75.

Measures

The approved survey was distributed to approximately 1,150 assistant principals from the state of Alabama. The group was provided instructions on how to complete the survey; surveys were sent through Survey Monkey. Participants remained anonymous. The survey consisted of 37 items and included dichotomous and nominal questions. In this present study, six questions from the survey were chosen that would provide data to answer the research questions. Questions included: age, years of experience as an assistant principal, extent to which the assistant principal position required one to perform duties as an instructional leader, opportunities to participate in professional growth opportunities for developing instructional leadership, effectiveness of mentoring activities, and perception of readiness to become an instructional leader.

Age and experience questions were divided into intervals. Ages were divided into the following intervals: (1) 22 to 30, (2) 31-35, (3) 36-40, (4) 41-45, and (5) over 45. The question about the extent to which the participants performed duties as an instructional leader was divided into the following options: (1) my entire job description is about instructional leadership, (2) over 50% of duties involve instructional leadership, (3) approximately 25%-50% of duties

involve instructional leadership, (4) less than 25% of duties involve instructional leadership, and (5) my duties do not involve instructional leadership.

The question regarding professional growth opportunities were divided into the following nine activities: (1) District-assigned formal mentoring program for assistant principals; (2) District-sponsored professional development activities specifically for assistant principals; (3) District-paid professional conferences or meetings where attendance is expected or required; (4) Programs provided by state administrator association (e.g., academies, conferences); (5) One-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by your current principal; (6) Informal meetings among principals and assistant principals to discuss issues; (7) Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by local university; (8) Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by state agency (e.g., CLAS); and (9) Mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that you initiated (i.e., you sought help).

The question regarding effectiveness of mentoring was divided into the same nine activities as the previously identified in the question regarding professional growth opportunities. The question regarding years of experience was divided into the following options: (1) one through four, and (2) five or more. Finally, the question regarding perceptions of readiness was divided into the following response options: (1) very ready, (2) somewhat ready, (3) not ready, and (4) not applicable−I am not responsible for instructional leadership in the school where I work. See Appendix 1 for the complete survey.

Research Design

The researcher utilized a quantitative design to determine the relationship between assistant principal beliefs regarding readiness to assume the role of instructional leader based on age, years of experience in the role, the experiences they had as teacher leaders before becoming

administrators, and professional development and mentoring they had received in order to assume this role.

Independent/Dependent Variables

According to Gall et al. (2010), "[q]uantitative research designs either explicitly or implicitly conceptualize variables as reflecting a causal relationship to each other" (p. 241). This researcher conceptualized variables as reflecting a causal relationship between variables. In this study, the cause variables or independent variables were age and years of experiences of assistant principals and assistant principal background experiences as related to mentoring and professional growth opportunities. The effect variable or dependent variable was perception of readiness to become an instructional leader. For research sub-question 6, perception of readiness served as the independent variable and professional growth opportunities served as the dependent variable.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The original study from which these data were drawn was approved by the Auburn Institutional Review Board. However, approval was sought to use the existing data set for analysis for this study, as publications reporting the findings are likely, and will be attributed to the study author. The study was deemed to be "Exempt", since no additional human subjects were involved.

<div align="center">

Research Procedures

</div>

Data Collection

Data were collected through a survey to Alabama elementary and secondary assistant principals via electronic mail through the web-based survey tool, Survey Monkey. This method allowed for a greater sampling population and more flexibility on the part of participants. The

survey was first distributed on October 1, 2013; subsequent solicitations to participants continued until March 12, 2014.

The survey was distributed with the support of district superintendents in all Alabama school systems. An email with the link to the Survey Monkey website was sent to superintendents asking them to forward it to all of their assistant principals. In this manner, all 1, 150 Alabama assistant principals were asked to participate; the survey yielded a sample of 581 participants from both secondary and elementary assistant principals. This study used a subset sample of 118 elementary participants.

Statistical Analysis

The researcher utilized the statistical analysis procedures of descriptive statistics programs in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22.0. Responses for these 118 surveys were exported into SPSS, and analyses were performed using the SPSS 22.0 version. Descriptive statistics were used with demographic data related to age and years of experience as compared to perception of readiness to assume the role as an instructional leader. For this study, the researcher was only interested in age and years of experience as an assistant principal; other demographics such as race and gender were not used. Statistical analyses used to address the research questions included: Pearson Chi-square (x^2), Linear Regression, and Analysis of Variance (One-Way ANOVA).

Because study consisted of frequencies in categories, Pearson Chi-square (x^2) tests were an appropriate statistical test to implement (Gall et al., 2010). Logistic regression was also an appropriate technique to use because logistic regression allows researchers to determine how well scores for each set of independent variables predict scores on the measured dichotomous

dependent variables and how well the combination of scores for measured independent variables predict scores on measured variables (Gall et al., 2010).

In this study, age and years of experience were compared to see which one carried more weight in predicting perception of readiness to assume the role as an instructional leader. According to Ross and Shannon (2008), "The one-way ANOVA allows you to determine whether or not statistically significant differences exists across groups or levels, which indicates whether or not there is a main effect for the independent variable." (p. 71).

ANOVA was an appropriate analysis because this study examined how the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals was affected by elementary assistant principal perceptions of readiness. Table 3 shows an alignment of each survey research question to the statistical analysis used.

Table 3

Survey Research Questions and Statistical Analysis Employed

Research Question	Correlating Survey Questions	Descriptive Statistics
1. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?	#22	Chi-square (x^2)
2. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they are ready to serve as instructional leaders as defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?	#30	Chi-square (x^2)
3. Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?	#1, #12, #30	Logistic Regression
4. For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?	#29, # 30	Chi-square (x^2)
5. Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as instructional leaders?	#28	Chi-square (x^2)
6. Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?	#28, #30	One-way ANOVA

Summary

This chapter provided a description of the methods used within this current study including the development of the instrument, validity and reliability, and administration of the full, statewide survey of elementary assistant principals. Using a subset of elementary principal responses, the researcher utilized a quantitative design to determine the relationship between assistant principal beliefs of readiness to assume the role of instructional leader as related to age, years of experience in the role, mentoring, and professional development they had received.

All elementary assistant principals in Alabama were invited to participate in the study via Survey Monkey, an online survey tool. This study focused on 118 surveys that were completed and submitted from only elementary assistant principals serving grades kindergarten through sixth grade. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to identify factors, characteristics, and experiences that significantly contributed to elementary assistant principal perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders. The researcher's goal was to discover the extent to which elementary assistant perceived themselves as ready to be instructional leaders and identify the prior experiences that may have enhanced their readiness.

Additionally, the researcher wanted to learn about sources of support assistant principals accessed in order to improve as instructional leaders. Good (2008) suggested that student achievement is enhanced when assistant principals are active as instructional leaders in the school environment. In this research, the independent variables included: age and years of experiences of assistant principals as well as assistant principal background experiences related to mentoring and professional growth opportunities. The dependent variable was perception of readiness to become an instructional leader.

Research Questions

The central research question of this study was: What characteristics and experiences contribute to elementary assistant principal perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders? There were six sub-questions.

Sub-Questions

1. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?

2. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they feel ready to

serve as instructional leaders defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?

3. Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?

4. For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?

5. Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?

6. Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

Analysis of Results

Research Question 1

To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?

A Chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted to determine whether there were an equal number of elementary assistant principals reporting on the percentage of their duties that required them to perform the four functions of instructional leadership as described in

this study. This goodness-of-fit test indicated that the percentage reported from elementary

assistant principals about their duties requiring instructional leadership was statistically

different ($\chi^2_{(3)} = 21.53$, $p < .001$).

Of the 118 elementary assistant principals who participated in the in this study, 28

(24%) reported their entire job description was about instructional leadership, 50 (42%)

reported over 50% of their duties involved instructional leadership, 24 (20%) reported

approximately 25%-50% of their duties involved instructional leadership, and 16 (14%)

reported less than 25% of their duties involved instructional leadership. None of the

participants reported having duties that did not involve instructional leadership. Table 4

depicts these values.

Table 4
Position Required as Instructional Leader

Percentage of Duties (Number/Percentage)					
100%	>50%	25-50%	<25%	0%	Total
28 (24.0)	50 (42.0)	24 (20.0)	16 (14.0)	0 (0.0)	118 (100.0)

Research Question 2

To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they are ready to serve as

instructional leaders as defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?

Of the 118 elementary assistant principals who participated in the in this study, 70 (59%)

reported they were very ready to serve as an instructional leader, 44 (38%) reported they were

somewhat ready to serve as an instructional leader, one (.9%) elementary assistant principal

reported he or she did not perceive him/herself as ready to serve as an instructional leader, two

(1.7%) reported that the question regarding readiness to serve as an instructional leader was not

their responsibility in the school in which they worked. One of the 122 participants in this study

did not answer the question in the survey.

The second research question was: "To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they are ready to serve as instructional leaders as defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?" (See Table 5). A Chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted to determine whether there were an equal number of elementary assistant principals reporting how they perceived themselves as related to readiness to assume the role of instructional leader. This goodness-of-fit test indicated that the percentage reported from elementary assistant principals about their perceptions of readiness were statistically different ($\chi^2_{(3)} = 116.88$, $p < .001$).

Table 5

Frequency of Perception of Readiness in Instructional Leadership

Readiness	Number (%)
Very Ready	70 (59.0)
Somewhat Ready	44 (38.0)
Not Ready	1 (0.9)
Not Applicable	2 (1.7)
Missing	1 (0.9)

Research Question 3

Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?

A logistic regression was performed to ascertain the effects of age and years of experience as an assistant principal on the likelihood that elementary assistant principals would perceive themselves as ready to serve as an instructional leader. The logistic regression model was not statistically significant ($\chi^2_{(2)} = .956$, $p = .620$). The model explained 1.1% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in perception of readiness and correctly in 59% of cases. In addition, the years of assistant principal experience and age were not good predictors of readiness to be an instructional leader (as shown in Table 6).

Table 6

Logistic Regression Model Estimating Effects of Age and Experience on Perception of Readiness (n = 114)

Variable	B	SE	Wald	df	p Value	OR
Age	.127	.179	.499	1	.480	1.135
AP Years of Experience	-.110	.127	.751	1	.386	.896
(Constant)	-.522	.708	.543	1	.461	.593

Model χ^2 = .956, df =2, p =.620

Research Question 4

For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?

The fourth research question "For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?"(See Table 7). A Chi-square analysis was conducted to assess the effectiveness of five mentoring activities as rated by 70 participants. The mentoring activities that assistant principals reported to be most effective were one-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by their current principal ($\chi^2_{(3)}$=46.30, $p<.001$) and mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that assistant principals initiated ($\chi^2_{(3)}$=30.40, $p<.001$). District-assigned formal mentoring programs for assistant principals ($\chi^2_{(3)}$=12.77, $p=.01$) and formal or informal mentoring programs sponsored by state agencies ($\chi^2_{(3)}$=11.47, $p=.01$) were reported the next most effective activities by assistant principals. The mentoring activity that demonstrated the least statistical significance in affecting perception of readiness was formal or informal mentoring programs sponsored by local universities ($\chi^2_{(3)}$=9.60, $p=.02$). This is statistically significant, but not as significant as others.

Table 7

Effectiveness of Mentoring Activities Related to Instructional Leadership

Mentoring Opportunities	χ^2 (df=3)	*p*-value
District-assigned formal mentoring program for AP	12.77	.01
One-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by your current principal	46.30	<.001
Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by local university	9.60	.02
Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by state agency	11.47	.01
Mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that you initiated	30.40	<.001

Research Question 5

Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?

A Chi-square Independence analysis was conducted to assess the nine professional growth opportunities impacted perceptions of readiness (See Table 8).

Statistically significant results showed that those who reported they were very ready or somewhat ready to assume the role of instructional leader participated in one-on-one mentoring with their current principal with moderate effect size ($\chi^2_{(2)}$=9.87, *p*=.01, Cramer's V = 0.292) and informal meetings among principals and assistant principals to discuss issues with moderate to strong effect size ($\chi^2_{(2)}$ =9.44, *p=.01,* Cramer's V = 0.284).

Table 8

Participation in Professional Growth Opportunities Related to Instructional Leadership

Professional Growth Opportunity Activities	χ^2 (df=2)	*p*-value
District-assigned formal mentoring program for AP	.06	.97
District-sponsored professional development activities specifically for AP	3.68	.16
District-paid professional conferences or meetings where attendance is expected or required	3.03	.22
Programs provided by state administrator association such as CLAS, or the Regional In-service Center	4.12	.13
One-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by your current principal	9.87	.01
Informal meetings among principals and assistant principals to discuss issues	9.44	.01
Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by local university	.94	.63
Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by state agency	.76	.69
Mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that you initiated	1.29	.52

Research Question 6

Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

A one-way analysis of variance was completed to address the research question "Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perception of readiness as instructional leaders?" (See Table 9). Perception of readiness served as the independent variable for the following three groups: very ready, somewhat ready, and a combined group of not ready and not applicable. Professional growth opportunities were the dependent variable. Table 9 presents group means and standard deviations.

Table 9

Results of Descriptive Statistics: Professional Growth Opportunities Affected by Perception of Readiness Level

Readiness Level	N	M	SD
Very Ready	70	5.44	1.61
Somewhat Ready	44	4.82	2.07
Not ready/Not Applicable	3	2.33	2.52
Total	117	5.12	1.88

There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .178$). Overall, results suggested that professional growth opportunities were affected by perception of readiness when comparing those who were very ready to those who were either not ready or not applicable F (1, 2) = 5.24, p = .007. The effect size was moderate, $\eta^2 = .08$. In order to identify which pairs of means differed at statistically significant levels, a pairwise comparison analysis for all possible pairs was conducted using the Bonferroni post hoc procedure. The Bonferroni procedure indicated that the only group that showed statistical significance was the "somewhat ready" group compared to the not ready/not applicable group (p=.01).

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?

Finding 1. Elementary assistant principals across the state of Alabama reported they were required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership. In this study, 66% of principals surveyed reported that over 50% of their duties consisted of instructional leadership.

Research Question 2

To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they are ready to serve as instructional leaders as defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?

Finding 2. Elementary assistant principals across the state Alabama perceived themselves to be ready to serve as instructional leaders at a high frequency.

Research Question 3

Which variable, age or years of experience carries, more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?

Finding 3. Neither of the variables, age nor years of experience, were statistically significant in predicting readiness of elementary assistant principals across the state of Alabama to serve as instructional leaders.

Research Question 4

For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness.

Finding 4. One-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by their current principal and mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that assistant principals initiated were reported to be the most effective forms of mentoring for elementary assistant principals across the state of Alabama.

Research Question 5

Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?

Finding 5. The only two professional growth opportunities that elementary assistant principals across the state of Alabama reported they participated in that led them to report a readiness to serve as instructional leaders were one-on-one mentoring with their current principal and informal meetings among their principals to discuss issues.

Research Question 6

Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

Finding 6. Professional growth opportunities were affected by perceptions of readiness when comparing those who were very ready to those who were not ready or not applicable. However, there was no statistically significant difference when comparing those who were very ready to those who were somewhat ready.

The following chapter discusses the results and their implications related to assistant principal perceptions of readiness and their role as instructional school leaders. Additionally, future research is discussed to improve the field of school leadership.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Chapter 5 is divided into six sections. The first section is a brief review of the literature and a summary of the study that served as the foundation of this research. The next section reviews the findings of the study that were presented in Chapter 4 and demonstrates how research findings confirm or disconfirm existing scholarly research on assistant principals. Further, this section includes the researcher's interpretations of findings as related to current demands on assistant principals as instructional leaders. The next section identifies implications of the findings and their utility to various stakeholder groups. The fourth segment of Chapter 5 offers limitations of the study and suggestions for future research regarding assistant principals as instructional leaders. The fifth section discusses the researcher's positionality and learning experiences from this research study. The final section of Chapter 5 is a summary of this research project.

Literature Review Revisited and Summary of Study

In the 1930s and 1940s, the role of school principal changed from working as a part-time teacher/part-time administrator to the overseer of the instructional needs of the school. These changes in the principal position created a need for a main helper to assist in managing the school. This main helper position evolved into what is now known as the assistant principal (Glanz, 1991). Essentially, assistant principals were hired to help do what principals either did not want to or have time to do (Glanz, 1994). The assistant principal role during the 1930s and 1940s still defines the role and responsibilities of assistant principals in today's schools.

Roles and responsibilities of assistant principals can differ from district to district and even school to school. The scope of the assistant principal's work is typically decided by the principal (Armstrong, 2010). However, these responsibilities are frequently unclear or poorly defined (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Hausman, Nebecker, and McCreary (2002) noted that most of the responsibilities and work of assistant principals includes student discipline, school management, public relations, and personnel management. Good (2008) found that even after assistant principals know their roles and responsibilities, they have to learn what is expected of them from not only the principal, but the entire school community. When assistant principals do not know what is expected of them, they can experience role conflict and role ambiguity (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Weller and Weller (2002) reported that in many schools, assistant principals assumed the role of manager while principals assumed the role of leader.

Assistant principals must be prepared to handle their diverse roles and learn the norms and expectations of the school. This learning process is referred to as socialization (Armstrong, 2009). Socialization is important because assistant principals are frequently exiting their teaching careers and dealing with issues as administrators for the first time. This on-the-job training is vital to the successful transition of assistant principals.

One process that promotes assistant principal socialization and development is mentoring. Mentoring can help new assistant principals formulate ideas and evolve as effective leaders (Daresh, 2004). Mentoring is considered one of the most important mechanisms in assuring the professional growth of assistant principals (Oleszewski et al., 2012). A strong mentor is viewed as someone who understands the problems and issues of mentees and can aid assistant principals in adjusting to their roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders (Orland-Barak & Hasan, 2010).

Professional development is another mechanism that can support the growth and development of assistant principals. If assistant principals are expected to manage so many responsibilities, then they must be prepared for and receive training in performing managerial duties. Experts have also recommended that assistant principals receive professional development that will build their capacity as instructional leaders (Drago-Severson & Avarena, 2011). Assistant principals must receive consistent professional development to increase their leadership skills and to become instructional leaders in their schools (Oliver, 2005).

To develop instructional leadership skills of assistant principals, instructional leadership must be defined. Based on Hallinger and Murphy's 1985 model, instructional leadership is defined by three dimensions: "*Defining the School's Mission*, *Managing the Instructional Program*, and *Promoting a Positive School Climate*" (Hallinger, 2005, p. 5). Based on studies of linking leadership to improved student learning, Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2011) identified similar core practices upon which leadership should be based. These core practices include: setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program. Instructional leadership is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and dispositions demonstrated by a school leader in these four core practices (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012).

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics and experiences of elementary assistant principals that contributed to their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders. The central research question of this study was: What characteristics and experiences contribute to elementary assistant principal perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders? There were six sub-questions:

1. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?

2. To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they feel ready to serve as instructional leaders defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?

3. Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?

4. For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?

5. Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?

6. Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

The researcher utilized a quantitative design to determine the relationship between assistant principal beliefs of readiness to assume the role of instructional leader and the variables of age, years of experience in the role, mentoring, and professional development they received in order to assume this role. In this research, the cause variables or independent variables were age and years of experience of assistant principals and assistant principal background experiences as

related to mentoring and professional growth opportunities. The effect variable or dependent variable was perception of readiness to become an instructional leader.

The data set that was analyzed for this study was originally collected for a mixed methods study conducted between October, 2013, and April, 2014, in the state of Alabama, with approval from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board. The conceptual framework for this study was based on work by Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) and their description of instructional leadership characterized by four essential components (i.e., setting direction, developing people, focusing on learning, improving the instructional program). This description was repeated throughout the survey instrument that was used in this study.

Data were collected from an online survey. The survey was designed by Browne-Ferrigno from the University of Kentucky, and Searby, from Auburn University, Alabama, as a part of a large two-state study of assistant principals. Content validity for survey items was grounded by two methods (Gall et al., 2010). The first method of validation was alignment with current literature on assistant principals by survey developers and based on concepts of instructional leadership (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012). Additionally, the survey was piloted with an expert panel of assistant and senior principals and further refined based on participant feedback. Cronbach's alpha was determined for two items from the survey. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed; they revealed an acceptable range from .65 to .75.

For this study, the researcher used a subset of the larger data set, extracting survey data that from K-6 elementary assistant principal respondents in the state of Alabama. The designed survey was sent to approximately 1,150 assistant principals across Alabama during the 2013-2014 school year. The subset of elementary principals included 118 responses. Survey

respondents included 84 females and 32 males. Two elementary assistant principals did not identify their gender; however, the researcher was not interested in gender as a variable in this study.
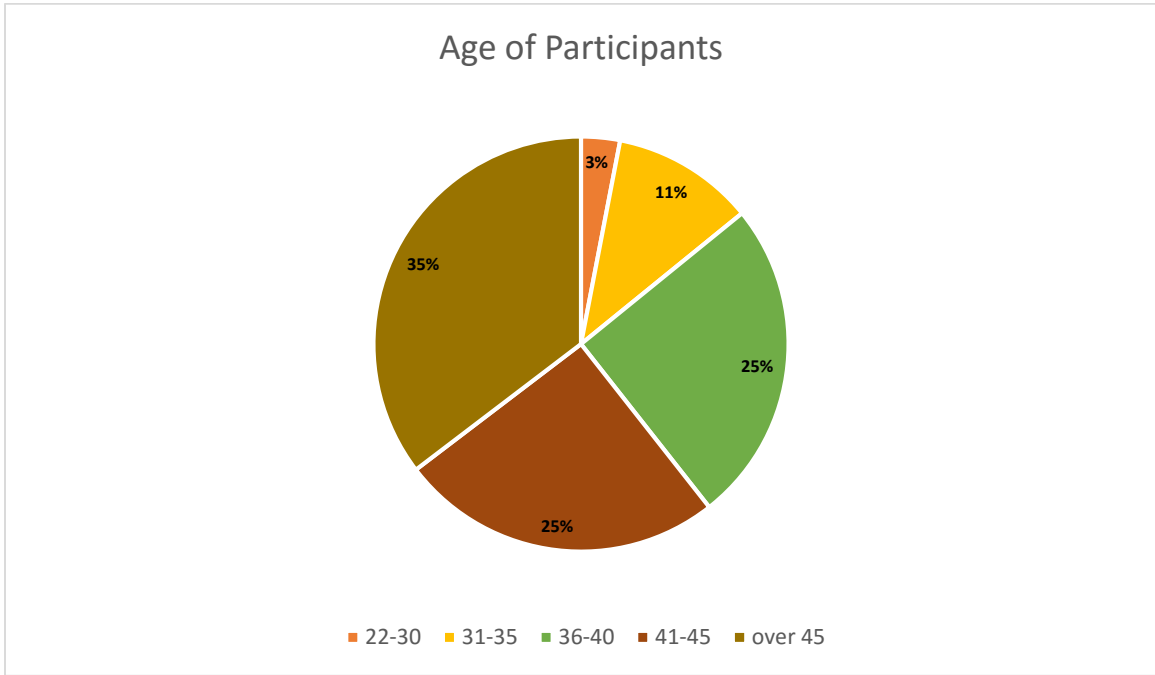
Figure 1. Age of participants who completed the survey.
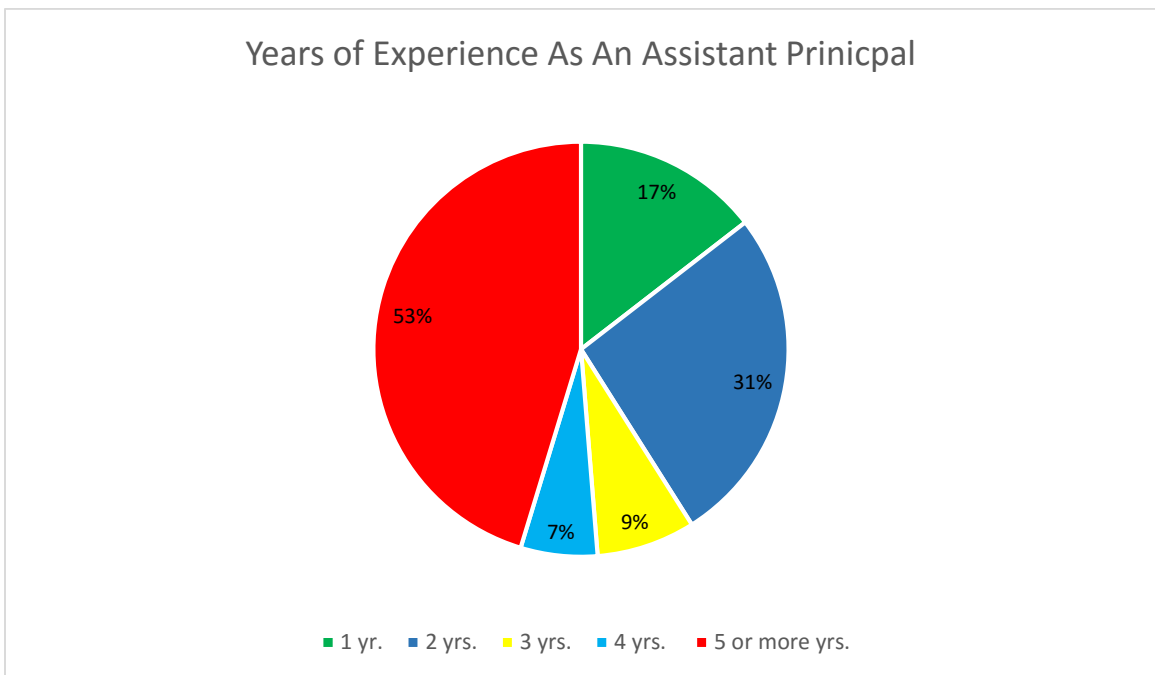
Figure2. Years of experience of participants who completed the survey

To answer the research questions from this study, data were analyzed using the following statistical analyses: Pearson Chi Square (x^2), Logistic Regression, and Analysis of Variance (One-Way ANOVA).

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

The role of school administrators as instructional school leaders continues to be an important research topic due to the need to improve student achievement and the success of schools. This research focused on one of those school leaders: the assistant principal. The following section discusses the researcher's interpretation of survey results. This information is presented based on the six research questions and includes comments on how study findings either confirmed or disconfirmed existing research on assistant principals.

In response to the first research question, "To what extent do elementary assistant principals report they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?" elementary principals in Alabama reported at high frequency that they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership. Specifically, 28 (24%) reported their entire job description was about instructional leadership, 50 (42%) reported over 50% of their duties involved instructional leadership, 24 (20%) reported that approximately 25%-50% of their duties involved instructional leadership, and 16 (14%) reported that less than 25% of their duties involved instructional leadership. None of the respondents reported that their duties did not involve instructional leadership.

These responses surprised the researcher, especially that 24% of participants reported that their entire job description involved instructional leadership. Overall results demonstrated that 56% of respondents reported duties that were more than 50% instructional. These results contradict research findings of previous studies in which researchers identified assistant

principals' primary duties and responsibilities as managerial rather than related to instruction and curriculum (Abebe et al., 2010; Kwan & Walker, 2008; Niewenhuizen & Brooks, 2013). However, the results of this current study are closely aligned with those of a more recent in which assistant principals at the elementary and middle school levels reported at a high level that they were performing duties related to instruction and curriculum (Sun, 2011). This may indicate that the assistant principal role is changing.

The results of the second research question: "To what extent do elementary assistant principals report that they are ready to serve as instructional leaders as defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?" were also surprising to the researcher. Of the 118 elementary assistant principals who participated in this study, 70 (59%) reported they were very ready to serve as an instructional leader, 44 (38%) reported they were somewhat ready to serve as an instructional leader, one (.9%) elementary assistant principal reported he/she did not perceive him/herself as ready to serve as instructional leaders, and two (1.7%) reported that instructional leadership was not their responsibility in the school in which they worked.

These results refute study findings of Weller and Weller (2002) who determined that assistant principals frequently assume the role of manager and the principal assumes the role of leader. However, results were closely aligned with Oleszewski et al. (2012) who suggested that most assistant principals are eager for the opportunity to be instructional leaders and in fact, perceived themselves to be instructional leaders. Again, this may indicate that the contemporary role of assistant principal is undergoing transformation.

The third research question asked: "Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary assistant principals to assume the role

93

of instructional leader?" Neither age nor years of experience as an assistant principal had any significant relationship to readiness to assume the role instructional leader.

Twenty respondents (17%) were in their first year as elementary assistant principals, 17 (14%) were in their second year, and 10 respondents (9%) were in their third year. Participants with three years of experience or less totaled 57% of survey respondents. For this group to indicate that they felt ready to assume the role of instructional leader was very surprising to the researcher.

The researcher suggests that these less experienced assistant principals who reported that they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader were impacted by their experiences as a teacher. This speculation would align closely with Searby, Browne-Ferrigno, and Wang (in press) in which the authors noted that teacher leadership activities, such as chair or member of a school committee, may contribute to perceptions of readiness for instructional leadership by elementary and secondary assistant principals across the state of Alabama. Confirming this speculation would require separating the results of this research into elementary and secondary respondents (Searby et al., *in press*).

Additionally, respondents who had three years or less as assistant principals may have recently graduated from educational leadership programs that heavily emphasized instructional leadership in their coursework. This curriculum change was the result of the redesigned Educational Leadership programs in Alabama in 2007 (formerly: Educational Administration now called Instructional Leadership Programs).

The majority of survey respondents reported five or more years of experience and represented the oldest demographic category (over 45).Since the survey did not ask about career goals of assistant principals, the researcher could not conclude if these older, more experienced

elementary assistant principals had chosen to remain in their positions as *career* assistant

principals (Marshall et al., 1991). Results do, however, indicate that elementary principals are

performing the four functions of instructional leadership and are ready to assume the role of

instructional leader.

If these individuals had indeed decided to be career assistant principals, then results

would suggest that they perform tasks that are deemed important by the principal and they are

trusted by the principal to be decision-makers (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Since decision-

making is a critical component to the four functions of instructional leadership, career assistant

principals are likely to find great satisfaction with their jobs (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Similarly,

more than 60% of assistant principals in a separate study expressed satisfaction with their role as

assistant principal (Armstrong, 2009). Further research is necessary to discern potential

advantages and disadvantages of remaining in the role of assistant principal.

The results of the fourth research question: "For those who reported they were ready to

assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in

assisting their perception of readiness?" affirmed to the researcher the value of mentoring in

developing instructional leaders. Four of the five mentoring activities that were listed in the

survey were statistically significant when correlated with assistant principal perceptions of

readiness as instructional leaders. The only mentoring activity that did not demonstrate

significance was the formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by local university. One-

on-one mentoring by the assistant principal's current principal and mentoring initiated by

assistant principals and provided by experienced or senior administrators demonstrated the

strongest correlation to perceptions of readiness as instructional leaders.

Sherman and Crum (2008) stated: "Mentees gain leadership knowledge and skill through dialogue with mentors and opportunities to enact best practice" (p. 110). The results of this study support how valuable senior principals can be in mentoring assistant principals and underscore the notion that "the principal should really get to know the assistant principal" (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013, p. 154) in order to know what kind of mentoring the assistant principal needs.

These results also demonstrate the importance assistant principals placed on their relationships with senior principals and supported the appropriate use of matching strategies for mentors and mentees (Riley, 2009). In this study, assistant principals attributed their level of readiness to mentoring relationships which is consistent with the benefits of mentoring as expressed in the current research literature: more capable administrators, life-long learning, higher levels of motivation, improved self-esteem, and greater productivity (Daresh, 2007).

As previously noted, the only mentoring activity that did not show a significant correlation to readiness was formal or informal programs sponsored by local universities. This finding came as quite a surprise to the researcher whose own response to this question as well as responses of colleagues would be different. Results of this research question may indicate that university programs are not successfully developing formal and informal mentoring programs or assistant principals are not availing themselves to these opportunities.

The fifth research question asked: "Which professional growth opportunities did elementary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?" Of the nine professional growth opportunities listed in the survey, the only two professional growth opportunities that elementary assistant principals reported participating in that led them to perceive readiness were 'one-on-one mentoring for instructional

96

leadership by your current principal' and 'informal meetings among principals and assistant principals to discuss issues'.

Once again, these results confirm the importance of mentoring and the role of senior principals in developing assistant principals. Two professional growth opportunities that were not statistically significant were: 'district-sponsored professional development activities specifically for assistant principals' and 'district-paid professional conferences or meetings where attendance is expected or required'. The researcher suggests that one reason for district-sponsored professional development activities specifically for assistant principals not showing significance was due to the lack of professional development opportunities for assistant principals. The researcher further speculates that assistant principals may not have participated in professional conferences due to their management responsibilities and expectations for school coverage while senior principals attend professional conferences.

The fact that these two activities did not contribute to readiness confirms that professional development is frequently not organized for assistant principals. Armstrong (2009) study demonstrated that in-service training for assistant principals was not adequate. The author stated, "assistant principal training is haphazard and this has contributed to new assistant principals' transitional strain" (p. 125).

As a district school leader, the researcher can confirm that school districts have not created specific professional development for assistant principals. Further, school districts spend a great deal of funding on mandated conferences in which attendance is required or expected for teachers and principals. This is rarely the case for assistant principals. The results of this fifth research question suggest to the researcher that districts should identify the needs of assistant principals and provide professional development that is tailored to meet those needs.

Oliver (2005) noted that professional development should be offered continuously to assistant principals, and districts should avoid one-shot professional development sessions. By offering professional development on a continual basis, the school district would send a clear message that it is committed to developing assistant principals (Oliver, 2005). Notably, research findings have confirmed that the assistant principal position is the training ground for all other building and district administrative positions (Armstrong, 2009).

To further examine the professional development of assistant principals, a sixth research question was posed: "Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?" Responses to this question were not surprising. Assistant principals who identified themselves as "very ready" for the role of instructional leader participated in more professional development activities than those who considered themselves to be "not ready." These results are contrary to those of Hausman et al. (2002) who found that higher levels of professional development did not lead to greater success for assistant principals. However, Oleszewski et al. (2012) noted that when assistant principals receive more training in instructional leadership, they are likely to be more prepared to assume instructional leadership roles and evolve as instructional leaders.
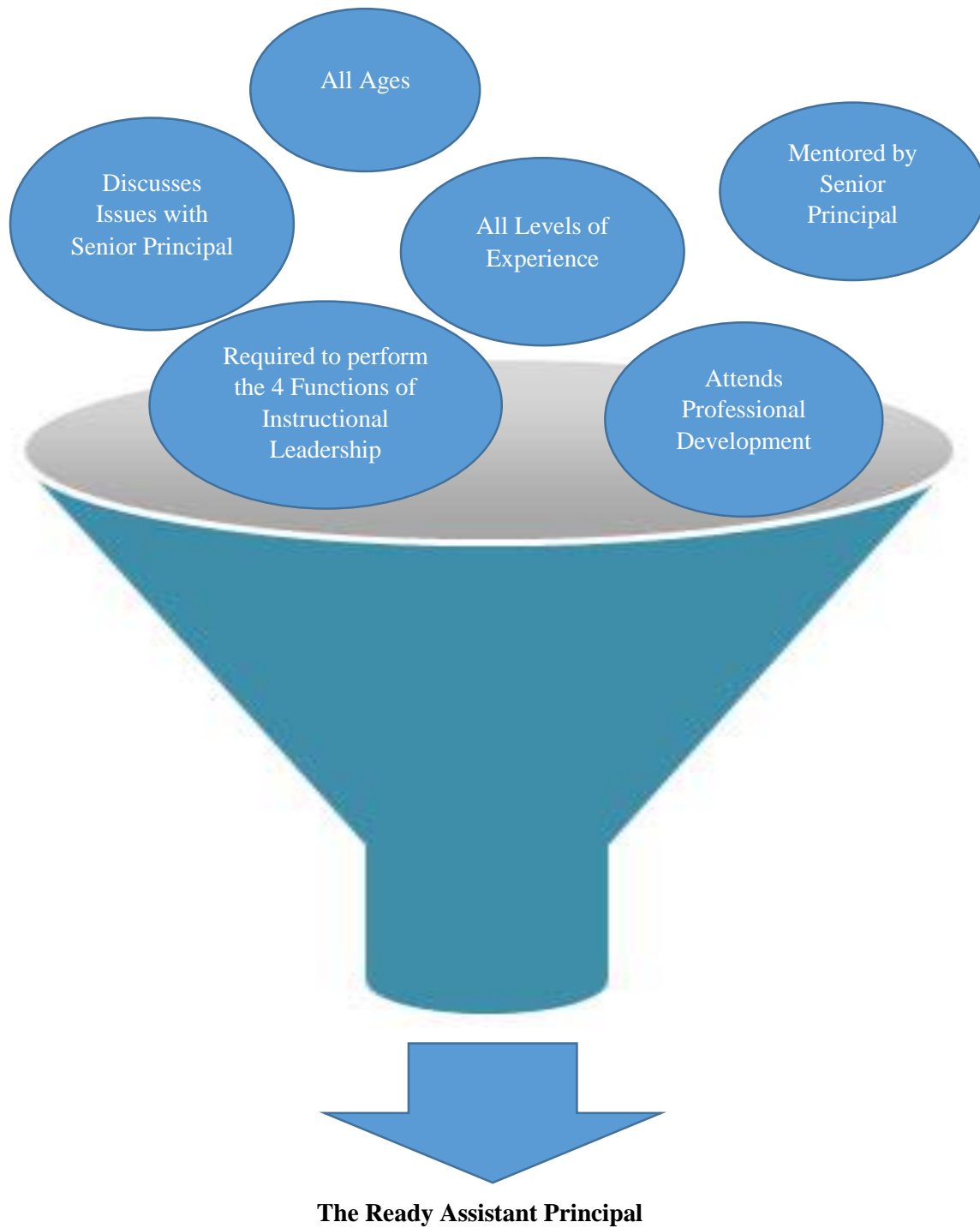
Figure 3. Characteristics and experiences of assistant principals who perceive themselves as ready to be instructional leaders.

Implications

Study findings add to the thin knowledge base about the roles and responsibilities of elementary assistant principals across the state of Alabama. Because of the increased focus on instructional leadership for administrators, there was a need to determine if the traditional roles of assistant principals as managers and helpers had changed to include instructional duties in schools? Traditionally, assistant principals have been seen as individuals who take care of "books, behinds, and buses" (Good, 2008, p. 46). However, the results of this study demonstrate that assistant principals *are* required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership. Study findings suggest that the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals have changed. Therefore, the researcher proposes implications for practice for various stakeholder groups.

Senior Principals

The first significant implication of this study is for senior principals. In most cases, the senior principal assigns duties for the assistant principal, and duties may span strictly managerial responsibilities to those that are highly instructionally-oriented. It was encouraging to note that respondents in this study largely perceived themselves to be involved in instructional leadership activities. This is important because soon assistant principals will have performance evaluations that are comparable to senior principals, with instructional leadership for improved student achievement being the highest priority on those evaluations. Therefore, senior principals should be promoting assistant principal success in instructional leadership by providing opportunities for conducting teacher evaluations, leading data meetings, leading grade-level planning meetings, conducting professional development meetings, and leading faculty meetings.

Central Office Administrators

Study findings may also serve as literature to help school district central office administrators design formal mentoring programs for assistant principals. Elementary assistant principals who participated in mentoring reported a high level of impact on their readiness to serve as instructional leaders. These findings should help school district leaders develop a better understanding on what senior principals should be doing as they prepare assistant principals for the role of instructional leader. By designing cohesive mentoring programs in which mentees and mentors are properly matched, assistant principals will not have to initiate mentoring relationships by themselves. Assistant principals need this support from senior principals to become successful instructional leaders (Clayton et al., 2013).

State Administrative Associations

This research can support state administrative associations. Study findings demonstrated that attending these meetings was not significant in elementary assistant principals' perceptions of readiness to assume the role of instructional leader. Training from administrative associations must move away from one-day orientation sessions and towards ongoing, continuous development in the area of instructional leadership. Associations should survey their members to discover what specific professional development topics are needed from its members and then commit to offering ongoing professional development sessions that would be more beneficial for its members and other stakeholders.

School Districts

Study findings may provide knowledge for school districts of professional development strategies that are intentional and meaningful to assistant principals. With an enhanced understanding of principal readiness, school district can offer relevant and creative opportunities

for aspiring assistant principals that will lead them to be prepared as instructional leaders. Oliver stated, "Professional development must be provided for assistant principals on a continuous basis; one shot sessions without substantive content or application need to be avoided" (p. 97).

Moorman and Nusche (2007) discovered that many school leadership professional development activities were ongoing rather than episodic and aimed at improving student learning outcomes. The focus of district-led professional development should reflect: best teaching practices as related to instruction, examining and learning curriculum as it relates to state standards, the best of use technology in and out of classrooms, communicating with parents, practicing the safest emergency procedures, managing fiscal responsibilities as they relate to budgeting and expenditures, and dealing with personnel when it comes to reprimands. These types of professional development will help future leaders know what actions are expected of them as effective instructional leaders.

University Educational Leadership Programs

Study findings can be used to inform university educational leadership programs in preparing assistant principals for the role of instructional leader. As noted by Oleszewski et al., 2012, "Most leadership preparation programs focus on the principalship, yet for many aspiring school leaders, their first administrative position is likely to be an assistant prinicpalship" (p. 120).

Educational leadership programs are continuously searching for better ways to improve their training for future administrators. University leadership preparation programs can use the findings from this current research study to design programs that better prepare future administrators for the role of instructional leader. University leadership program faculty

members need to prepare future administrators, for contemporary instructional demands in elementary schools.

Curriculum has changed greatly since the adoption of the Common Core Standards; university educational faculty members should spend time with local school districts to discuss strategies and methods to properly implement standards. Curriculum implementation is a consistent issue that frequently requires change for teachers. This change process can be a heavy burden for administrators. University leadership programs should focus attention on teaching future administrators how to initiate change among teachers who are most resistant. The partnership between university leadership programs and districts can help future instructional leaders learn how to implement curriculum and initiate change that is beneficial to all students.

Assistant Principals

The final implication of this research is for assistant principals themselves. Assistant principals need to be fully aware of their own mentoring needs and seek out a mentor or mentors in a formal mentoring relationship to learn the role of an instructional leader. Assistant principals must identify their professional development needs and attend professional development activities that are matched to their career plans.

Assistant principals should observe classroom instruction as frequently as possible to establish a baseline understanding of good teaching in order to effectively evaluate teachers. Assistant principals should stay current with professional research to develop a deep understanding of current trends and best practices in the field of education. Finally, assistant principals should network with other assistant principals as a way to learn about how others balance their managerial responsibilities and instructional leadership responsibilities.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that participants comprised a convenience sample based on individuals who opted to complete the survey after receiving an email invitation. Further, participants were limited to the state of Alabama. Additionally, it was not possible to target regions of the state participants or types and sizes of school districts. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to elementary assistant principals beyond those who participated in this study. Also, the researcher chose to report data on elementary assistant principals only; secondary assistant principals were not included in this current study.

The second possible limitation of this study may be related to one of the survey questions: "To what extent do you feel ready to serve as an instructional leader?" Less than 4% of respondents indicated that they were not ready for this role or that the question was not applicable to them. The researcher proposes that many of the individuals who responded "somewhat ready" may have meant "not ready" but did not choose this option due to embarrassment or stress implicit in not being ready for the role of instructional leader. Many respondents may have viewed this study as an evaluation of their performance and therefore inflated their survey response. Surveys based on self-report are subject to the possibility of over-inflation of performance or perception.

A third limitation is that only the quantitative data of the larger data set were analyzed among elementary assistant principal respondents. Additional insights may have been gained by analyzing open-ended responses within the survey. Open-ended responses may have clarified questions or added participant voices to the study.

The fourth limitation was that the majority of respondents were experienced veteran assistant principals. While there were a number of less experienced assistant principals, the large

number of veterans skewed participant demographics. Nevertheless, the variables of age and years of experience were not significantly correlated to the readiness of assistant principals as instructional leaders.

The fifth limitation is rooted in the survey design as related to years of experience of assistant principals. The researcher suggests that this question did not have enough separation in terms of years of experience. The item was broken down by years 1, 2, 3, 4, and five or more. It may have been preferable for the question to have larger intervals in years such as: 1, 2-4, 5-10, 11-15, 16-20, and more than 20. Dividing this item into multiple levels may have produced different results as related to perceptions of readiness.

The final limitation to the study is related to the survey instrument. The survey asked, "To what extent does your current position as an assistant principal require you to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?" In this research, 56% of respondents reported that over 50% of their duties required instructional leadership. Again, assistant principals may have viewed this study as an evaluation of their performance and inflated their responses to this survey item.

Recommendations for Future Research

There have been a limited number of research studies on the characteristics and experiences that contribute to elementary assistant principal perceptions of readiness for the role of instructional leader. This research contributes valuable findings regarding the ways in which mentoring and professional development growth opportunities affect assistant principals' instructional leadership skills. Despite implications for elementary assistant principals, elementary principals, district central office administration, and university educational leadership

programs, additional studies should be conducted. The following are recommendations for future research:

Future researchers are encouraged to expand this study to a larger sample size that includes assistant principals in the state of Alabama as well as assistant principals in neighboring states and beyond. While Alabama elementary assistant principals offer valuable insights regarding perceptions of readiness as instructional leaders, a larger sample would substantiate this research.

This current research could also be expanded by conducting case studies of informal mentoring relationships between elementary assistant principals. Study findings indicated that mentoring relationships are essential in developing assistant principals. Qualitative data from case studies would produce deeper understanding of peer mentoring and its effectiveness in helping assistant principals develop their instructional leadership skills. Case studies would illuminate findings from quantitative research and give voice to elementary principals in mentoring relationships.

A qualitative study could also be conducted with senior principals to determine what they do to intentionally mentor assistant principals. These data would help principals understand their important role in preparing assistant principals for top administrative roles in a school. Case studies or structured interviews could be expanded to explore first year principals to see how mentoring by senior principals assisted them in their former roles as assistant principals.

Case studies and interviews would provide valuable information for central office administration. Frequently district administrators do not hear the voices in the field; data from case studies and interviews would provide much needed evidence of what leaders in the "trenches" are experiencing. This information could inform mentoring programs for new

administrators. Additionally, this information could be provided to university leadership programs as well as the Alabama State Department of Education.

Future investigators may also wish to explore professional development needs of assistant principals as instructional leaders. Qualitative data may help district central office administrators differentiate professional development opportunities based on real needs of elementary assistant principals.

In this current study, 53% of participants reported five or more years of experience, and 35% of participants were over the age of 45. Additionally, 59% of study participants reported that they were very ready to assume the role of instructional leader. Due to the scope of this study, it was not clear if Alabama elementary assistant principals were satisfied with their current role and chose to remain as career assistant principals. Similarly, it could not be determined how many experienced/ready assistant principals desired to advance to the principal position. Quantitative and mixed methods studies of all assistant principals in Alabama and beyond could be conducted to investigate these questions. Further research studies would provide valuable data that could inform and expand Marshall's (1991) career adjustment model for assistant principals.

Another valuable study that could be conducted would be a longitudinal investigation of assistant principals' effect on student achievement. One goal of all educational leadership studies should be to positively influence student achievement. In this study, assistant principals reported performing instructional leadership roles and readiness to assume the role of instructional leader. Therefore, future studies of elementary assistant principals should identify which instructional leadership skills make the greatest impact on student achievement. Findings from this type of research could be applied to Leithwood and Seashore-Louis' (2012) framework and further clarify the four functions of instructional leadership.

Finally, consideration should be given to making the findings of this research more generalizable. Generalizability was a major limitation of this study based on the research setting and small sample size. Future researchers should expand this topic beyond Alabama.

Researcher's Positionality and Learning Experiences

The researcher of this study currently serves as assistant superintendent for elementary curriculum in a large rural school district that consists of seven elementary schools. Prior to this position, the researcher worked in a neighboring central office as an elementary coordinator and elementary principal for 10 years. As principal, the researcher did not work beside an assistant principal. Therefore, prior to his current position, he has never worked with or served as an assistant principal.

At the beginning of this research, the lack of researcher experience and knowledge about the elementary assistant principalship could have been, and most likely was, a limitation to this research. However, after completing the literature review and research study, the researcher now believes his knowledge of assistant principal roles and responsibilities is greatly enhanced. The researcher has attained a great deal of new knowledge as well as an appreciation for what assistant principals actually do. The researcher learned how valuable assistant principals can be in managing *and* leading elementary schools. This enhanced understanding of the assistant principal role and their responsibilities has led the researcher to utilize his position to ensure assistant principals are operating as instructional leaders in schools to the greatest extent possible.

As the researcher conducted this study, he investigated how his system's leadership team viewed the role of assistant principal. This investigation started with the superintendent. The researcher discovered that the superintendent served as an assistant principal in two elementary

schools early in his career. Based on these experiences, the superintendent expressed the belief that assistant principals must be provided opportunities to serve as instructional leaders. Further, the system must expect assistant principals to perform instructional leadership responsibilities. The researcher was most encouraged by this sentiment and moved to the next group of leaders on the leadership team, elementary principals.

The researcher met informally with each of the seven elementary principals at various times early in the school year and conducted walk-throughs with them in their schools. During these walk-throughs, the researcher asked questions about how these principals viewed their assistant principals' role and how assistant principals could help the principal. From these conversations, the researcher heard one common theme: assistant principals were desperately needed in conducting the system's new evaluation plan. The system had just implemented a new evaluation system for teachers, and each principal stated there would be no way to evaluate all of the teachers without the aid from assistant principals. The researcher seized the opportunity and implemented a professional development session for these seven elementary assistant principals as well as secondary assistant principals.

This training was conducted in mid-August of the 2015-2016 school year which set the tone for how assistant principals were to be utilized in the district. In addition to training assistant principals on the system's evaluation tool, the researcher and a colleague presented the four functions of instructional leadership by Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012).

The presenters asked assistant principals to identify which of the four functions they felt they most needed support in performing. The researcher did not collect formal data from these assistant principals, but the topics of these conversations brought attention to how assistant principals can and must be supported. This initial training led to four other district meetings with

109

just assistant principals. After training on the evaluation system, the district made the decision that assistant principals would be required to perform observations and evaluations of teachers.

This requirement has provided opportunities for assistant principals to: set direction, develop people, focus on learning, and most of all, and improve the instructional program. The researcher has learned that assistant principals are now leading data, grade-level, and RTI meetings, as well as faculty meetings. This research study provided the researcher the impetus for changing how assistant principals are now utilized in his local school district.

Another significant benefit of this study for the researcher was the opportunity to learn more about the process of mentoring. As a result of this research, the researcher has been able to work with the system's principals and emphasize the valuable role they play in mentoring assistant principals. Principals and the researcher agreed that principals are essential to the career development of assistant principals.

Since this research began, the researcher's district hired four new principals, three of whom were first time principals and all of whom were former assistant principals. The district also hired five new assistant principals; all five of these individuals are first time assistant principals. These new hires have quickly learned the personal and professional value of mentoring. In fact, the researcher has been asked to serve as a mentor to one the assistant principals. The researcher understands from the findings of this study that his school district needs to seek ways to ensure that mentoring for district assistant principals is both intentional and formalized. The district's administrative team has initiated discussions about how a formal mentoring program for assistant principals can be implemented or accomplished in a systematic way for all assistant principals.

Finally, based on the research process, the researcher has learned how valuable it is to make time and provide assistant principals opportunities to meet among themselves to discuss issues they experience as assistant principals. Protected time for assistant principal conversations was established by the district based directly on the findings of this research. As previously noted, assistant principals reported that informal conversations with their peers were a major factor that led to their perception of readiness. Feedback from these informal meetings has been overwhelmingly positive, and assistant principals have expressed gratitude for these opportunities.

Overall, the researcher believes that conducting this research has allowed him to quickly process insights from study findings and transfer them to practical application in his district. These insights have challenged the researcher to provide opportunities for the target audience, assistant principals. The researcher will continue to seek opportunities to support assistant principals in their growth as instructional leaders.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The results of this study revealed that Alabama elementary assistant principals perceived themselves to be ready to assume the roles of instructional leaders and were already required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership. The researcher identified activities that promote readiness and activities that best prepare assistant principals for the role of instructional leader. Results of this study will contribute to the literature base of educational leadership regarding elementary assistant principals becoming instructional leaders. Additionally, research findings suggest actions that universities and school districts can take to better prepare elementary assistant principals in acquiring confidence in the instructional leader role. The research revealed how vital mentoring is in developing assistant principal readiness to become

instructional leaders as well as the value of professional growth opportunities in developing assistant principals for this role.

This study makes important contributions to the empirical research on assistant principals as instructional leaders. Noteworthy empirical data support the conclusions. More importantly, the researcher gained insights on significant areas for further research and implications for assistant principal instructional leadership. As schools continue to search for answers to improve student achievement this research points to the important role of assistant principal in helping schools move forward. Schools can no longer allow assistant principals to be forgotten leaders; schools must commit to creating clear pathways for assistant principals to achieve their fullest potential as instructional leaders (Armstrong, 2009).

REFERENCES

Abebe, S., Lindsey, L., Bonner, M., & Heck, S. (2010). Assistant principals in Indiana as Change

Leaders: The need for professional development. *Journal for the Liberal Arts and*

Sciences, *14*(2), 67-73.

Armstrong, D. (2004). Constructing moral pathways in the transition from teaching to

administration. *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration, 3*(1), 1-8.

Armstrong, D. E. (2009). *Administrative passages: Navigating the transition from teacher to*

assistant principal (Vol. 4). New York, NY: Springer Science & Business Media.

Armstrong, D. E. (2010). Rites of passage: Coercion, compliance, and complicity in the

socialization of new vice-principals. *Teachers College Record, 111*(12), 1-21.

Ashforth, B. E. (2001). *Role transitions in organizational life: An identity-based perspective.*

Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bauer, J. C., & Simmons, P. (2000). Role ambiguity: A review and integration of the

literature. *Journal of Modern Business*, *3*, 41-47.

Bloom, G., & Krovetz, M. (2001). A step into the principalship. *Leadership, 30*(3), 12-13.

Brock, B. L., & Grady, M. L. (2004). *Launching our first principalship: A guide for beginning*

Principals. Thousand Oaks, CA: CorwinPress.

Browne-Ferrigno, T., Searby, L., & Wang, C. H. (in press). The profile of the "ready" Assistant

Principal as Instructional Leader in Alabama. *Journal of Leadership and Policy.*

Busch, S. D., MacNeil, A. J., & Baraniuk, M. S. (2012). Critical advice from practicing assistant

    principals for assistant principal preparation programs. In A. R. Shoho, B. G. Barnett, &

    A. K. Tooms (Eds.), *Examining the assistant principalship: New puzzles and perennial*

    challenges for the 21st century (pp. 35-57). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing,

    Inc.

Celikten, M. (2001). The instructional leadership tasks of high school assistant

    principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *39*(1), 67-76.

Chao, G. T. (2007). Mentoring and organizational socialization. In B. R. Ragins, & K. E. Kram

    (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 179-

    196). Los Angeles: Sage.

Clayton, J. K., Sanzo, K. L., & Myran, S. (2013). Understanding mentoring in leadership

    development perspectives of district administrators and aspiring leaders. *Journal of*

    Research on Leadership Education, *8*(1), 77-96.

Cobb, K. (2008). *The Blackwell guide to theology and popular culture*. New York: John Wiley

    & Sons.

Conway, J. A. (1990). Organizational rites as culture markers of schools. *Urban*

    Education, *25*(2), 195-206.

Cornell, K. S. (2003). *Job satisfaction of public elementary school assistant principals in the*

    inland empire. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of La Verne, La Verne,

    CA.

Cranston, N., Tromans, C., & Reugebrink, M. (2004). Forgotten leaders: What do we know

    about the deputy principalship in secondary schools? *International Journal of Leadership*

    in Education, *7*(3), 225-242.

Crosby, F. J. (1999). The developing literature on developmental relationships. In A. J. Murrell,

    F. J. Crosby, & R. J. Ely (Eds.), *Mentoring dilemmas: Developmental relationships*

    within multicultural organizations (pp. 3-20). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Crow, G. M., & Matthews, L. J. (1998). *Finding one's way: How mentoring can lead to dynamic*

    leadership. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Daresh, J. (2004). Mentoring school leaders: Professional promise or predictable

    problems? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *40*(4), 495-517.

Daresh, J. (2007). Mentoring for beginning principals: Revisiting the past or preparing for the

    future? *Mid-Western Educational Researcher, 20*(4), 21-27.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). Excellent teachers deserve excellent leaders. In *Education*

    leadership. A bridge to school reform. New York: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved

    from www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-

    research/Pages/Bridge-to-School-Reform.aspx.

Drago-Severson, E., & Aravena, J. L. (2011). The power of connectivity: Multilayered program

    grooms assistant principals' leadership skills. *Journal of Staff Development*, *32*(2), 50-53.

Duncan, H. E., & Stock, M. J. (2010). Mentoring and coaching rural school leaders: What do

    they need? *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *18*(3), 293-311.

Ehrich, L. C., Hansford, B., & Tennent, L. (2004). Formal mentoring programs in education and

    other professions: A review of the literature. *Educational Administration*

    Quarterly, *40*(4), 518-540.

Elsbree, W. S. (1939). *The American teacher: Evolution of a profession in a democracy*. New

    York: American Book Company.

Fishbein, S., & Osterman, K. (2001). *Crossing over: Learning the roles and rules of the teacher-administrator relationship.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 463276)

Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2010). *Applying educational research: How to read, do, and use research to solve problems of practice* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Gannep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage*. London: Routledge & Paul.

Gerke, W. (2004). More than a disciplinarian. *Principal Leadership*, *5*(3), 39-41.

Glanz, J. (1989). The Snoopervisor. *Learning, 89*, 36-37.

Glanz, J. (1991). *Bureaucracy and professionalism: The evolution of public school supervision*. Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press.

Glanz, J. (1994). Redefining the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals. *Clearing House*, *67,* 283-287.

Glanz, J. (1994a). Dilemmas of assistant principals in their supervisory role: Reflections of an assistant principal. *Journal of School Leadership, 4*(5), 577-593.

Glanz, J. (1994b). Redefining the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals. *Clearing House, 65*(5), 283.

Glanz, J. (1994c). Where did the assistant principalship begin? Where is it headed? *NASSP Bulletin, 78*(564), 35-39.

Glanz, J. (2004). *Assistant principal's handbook: Strategies for success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. E., & McKee, A. (2002). *The new leaders: Transforming the art of leadership into the science of results*. London: Little, Brown.

Good, R. (2008). Sharing the secrets. *Principal Leadership*, *8*(8), 46-50.

Greenfield, W. D. (1985). The moral socialization of school administrators: Informal role learning outcomes. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *21*(4), 99-119.

Gronn, P., & Lacey, K. (2010). Cloning their own: Aspirant principals and the school-based selection game. *Australian Journal of Education, 50*(2), 102-121

Gurley, D. K., Anast-May, L., & Lee, H. T. (2013). Developing instructional leaders through Assistant Principals' Academy: A partnership for success. *Education and Urban Society*, *47*(2), 207-241.

Hall, B. F. (2008). Job satisfaction experienced by career assistant principals in the state of Georgia (Doctoral dissertation). Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.

Georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1278&cont xt=etd

Hall, P. (2008). Building bridges. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *89*(6), 449-453.

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *4*(3), 221-239.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2011). Exploring the journey of school improvement: Classifying and analyzing patterns of change in school improvement processes and learning outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 22*(1)*,* 149-173.

Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1987). Assessing and developing principal instructional leadership. *Educational Leadership*, *45*(1), 54-61.

Hansford, B., & Ehrich, L. C. (2006). The principalship: How significant is

    mentoring? *Journal of Educational Administration*, *44*(1), 36-52.

Hart, A. W. (1993). *Principal succession: Establishing leadership in schools*. Albany, NY:

    Suny Press

Harvey, M. J. (1994). The deputy principalship: Retrospect and prospect. *The International*

    Journal of Educational Management, *8*(3), 15-25.

Hausman, C., Nebeker, A., McCreary, J., & Donaldson, G., Jr. (2002). The work life of the

    assistant principal. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *40*(2), 136-157.

Hess, F. M., & Kelly, A. P. (2005). The accidental principal: What doesn't get taught at ed

    schools. *Education Next*, *5*(3), 34-41.

Hilliard, A. T., & Newsome, S. S. (2013). Value added: Best practices for the utilization of

    assistant principals' skills and knowledge in schools. *Journal of College Teaching &*

    Learning (TLC), *10*(2), 153-158.

Johnson, R. (2000). Other duties as assigned: Four rules for surviving the assistant

    principalship. *NASSP Bulletin*, *84*(612), 85-87.

Kaplan, L. S., & Owings, W. A. (1999). Assistant principals: The case for shared

    instructional leadership. *NASSP Bulletin*, *83*(605), 80-94.

Kartal, S. (2009). Organizational socialization of secondary school principals in Turkish

    public schools. *Eğitim Araştırmaları-Eurasian Journal of Educational*

    Research, *37*, 128-143.

Keesor, C. A. (2005). Administrative visibility and its effect on classroom

    behavior. *NASSP Bulletin*, *89*(643), 64-73.

Kwan, P. (2009). The vice-principal experience as a preparation for the principalship. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *47*(2), 191-205.

Kwan, P. (2011). Examining the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relation between responsibilities and career aspiration of vice-principals. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *50*(5), 349-361.

Kwan, P., & Walker, A. (2008). Vice-principalship in Hong Kong: Aspirations, competencies, and satisfaction. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *19*(1), 73-97.

Lashway, L. (2003). *Inducting school leaders*. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED479074).

Leithwood, K. (2011). School leadership, evidence-based decision making, and large-scale student assessment. In C. F. Weber, & J. L. Lupart (Eds.), *Leading student assessment* (pp. 17-39). New York, NY: Weber.

Leithwood, K. (2012). *The Ontario leadership framework 2012. With a discussion of the research foundations*. Institute for Education Leadership. Retrieved from iel.immix.ca/storage/6/1345688978/Final_Research_Report_-_EN.PDF.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2008). Linking leadership to student learning: The contributions of leader efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 496-528.

Leithwood, K., & Seashore-Louis, K. (2012). *Linking leadership to student learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning: A review of research for the Learning from Leadership Project*. New York: The Wallace Foundation

Levinson, D. (1978). *Seasons of a man's life*. New York: Knopf.

Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., & Anderson, S. E. (2010). Learning from

    leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning. *Center for Applied*

    Research and Educational Improvement/University of Minnesota and Ontario

    Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, *42*, 50.

MacCorkle, M. L. (2004). Factors that influence the career stability of assistant principals.

    (Doctoral dissertation). Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

Marshal, C. (1992). *The assistant principal: Leadership process and challenges*. Newbury Park,

    CA: Corwin Press.

Marshall, C., & Hooley, R. (2006). *The assistant principalship: Leadership choices*

    and challenges. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Marshall, K. (1996). How I confronted HSPS (hyperactive superficial principal syndrome) and

    began to deal with the heart of the matter. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *77*(5), 336-345.

Marshall, C., Mitchell, B., Gross, R., & Scott, D. (1992). The assistant principalship: A

    career position or a stepping-stone to the principalship? *NASSP Bulletin*, *76*(540),

    80-88.

Martin, T.P. (2003). What to expect and how to prepare for the assistant principalship in middle

    level schools: A brief overview. In Transition: *Journal of the New York State Middle*

    School Association, 20, 1, 17.

Matthews, P., Moorman, H., & Nusche, D. (2007). *School leadership development strategies:*

    Building leadership capacity in Victoria, Australia: A case study report for the OECD

    Improving School Leadership. Retrieved from

    http://www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership

Mendels, P. (2012). The effective principal. *Journal of Staff Development*, *33*(1), 54-58.

Mertz, N.T. (2000, November), *Contextualizing the role of the assistant principal*. Paper

    presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational

    Administration, Albuquerque, NM.

Mertz, N. T. (2004). What's a mentor, anyway? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *40*(4),

    541-560.

Mertz, N. T. (2006). The organizational socialization of assistant principals. *Journal of School*

    Leadership, 16(6), 644-675.

Mitchell, C., & Castle, J. B. (2005). The instructional role of elementary school principals.

    Canadian Journal of Education, 28(3), 409-433.

Morse, J. M. (2006). Deconstructing the mantra of mentorship: In conversation with

    Phyllis Noerager Stern. *Health Care for Women International*, *27*(6), 548-558.

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2003). Assistant & Deputy Heads: Key leadership issues and

    challenges. *Management in Education*, *17*(1), 6-8.

Naicker, I., Chikoko, V., & Mthiyane, S. E. (2014). Does mentorship add value to in-service

    leadership development for school principals? Evidence from South

    Africa. *Anthropologist*, *17*(2), 421-431.

Niewenhuizen, L., & Brooks, J. S. (2013).The assistant principal's duties, training, and

    challenges from a color-blind to a critical race perspective. In J. S. Brooks & N. W.

    Arnold *Anti-racist school leadership: Toward equity in education for America's*

    students (pp. 185-210). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Normore, A. H. (2003). *Professional and organizational socialization processes of school*

    *administrators: A literature revie*w. Paper presented at the Hawaii International

    Conference on Education, Honolulu, HI.

Oleszewski, A., Shoho, A., & Barnett, B. (2012). The development of assistant principals: A literature review. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *50*(3), 264-286.

Oliver, R. (2005). Assistant principal professional growth and development: A matter that cannot be left to chance. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development*, *17*, 89-100.

Orland-Barak, L., & Hasin, R. (2010). Exemplary mentors' perspectives towards mentoring across mentoring contexts: Lessons from collective case studies. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(3), 427-437.

Owen-Fitzgerald, V. (2010). *Effective components of professional development for assistant principals*. (Doctoral dissertation). California State University, Fullerton, CA.

Pellicer, L. O., Anderson, L. W., Keefe, J. W., Kelley, E.A ., & McCleary L. E. (1988). *High school leaders and their schools. Volume I: A national profile*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Porter, J. J. (1996). What is the role of the middle level assistant principal, and how should it change? *NASSP Bulletin, 80*(578), 25-30.

Porter, A. C., Murphy, J., Goldring, E., Elliott, S. N., Polikoff, M. S., & May, H. (2008). *Vanderbilt assessment of leadership in education: Technical manual, Version 1.0*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

Portin, B. S., Knapp, M. S., Feldman, S., Dareff, S., Russell, F., Samuelson, C., & Yeh, T. L. (2009). *Leadership for learning improvement in urban schools*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy, University of Washington.

Retelle, E. (2010). Mentoring experiences of first-year assistant principals. *EAF Journal*, *21*(2), 61.

Ribbins, P. (1997). Heads on deputy headship: Impossible roles for invisible role holders? *Educational Management and Administration*, *25*(3), 295-308.

Riley, P. (2009). The development and testing of a time-limited mentoring model for experienced school leaders. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *17*(3), 233-249.

Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership type. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(5), 635-674.

Ross, M. E., & Shannon, D. M. (2008). *Applied quantitative methods in education*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Scott, V. M. (2011). *An examination of expected versus actual tasks of public school secondary assistant principals throughout Indiana*. (Doctoral dissertation). Ball State University, Muncie, IN. Retrieved from http://cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/handle/123456789/195148

Sherman, W. H., & Crum, K. S. (2008). Facilitating high achievement: High schools principals' reflections on their successful leadership practices. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *46*(5), 562-580.

Shoho, A. R., & Barnett, B. G. (2010). The realities of new principals: Challenges, joys, and sorrows. *Journal of School Leadership*, *20*(5), 561-596.

Simkin, L., Charner, I., Saltares, E. & Suss, L. (2010). *Emerging education issues: Findings from The Wallace Foundation survey*. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation.

Smith, A. A. (2007). Mentoring for experienced school principals: Professional learning in a safe place. *Mentoring & Tutoring*, *15*(3), 277-291.

Spaulding, F. E. (1955). *School superintendents in action in five cities*. Ringe, NH: Richard R. Smith Publishers.

Sun, A. (2011), Sharing instructional leadership as assistant principals in an accountability-oriented environment. In Shoho, A. R., Barnett, B., & Tooms, A. K. (Eds.)*, Examining the assistant principalship: New puzzles and perennial challenges for the 21st century.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age Press.

Townsend, T., Acker-Hocevar, M., Ballenger, J., & Place, A. W. (2013). Voices from the field: What have we learned about instructional leadership? *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *12*(1), 12-40.

Van Sell, M., Brief, A. P., & Schuler, R. S. (1981). Role conflict and role ambiguity: Integration of the literature and directions for future research. *Human Relations*, *34*(1), 43-71.

Wadsen, D. (1988). *The mentoring handbook*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University.

Wahlstrom, K. (2012). An up-close view of instructional leadership: A grounded analysis. In K. Leithwood & K. Louis, (Eds.), *Linking leadership to student learning.* San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Watson, K. (2005). How are assistant heads affecting primary school management and how do their opinions, attitudes and beliefs affect their work? *Management in Education, 19*(4), 7-24.

The Wallace Foundation. (2012, January). *The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning*. New York: Author. Retrieved from www.wallacefundation.org/knowlege-center/school-leadership/effective-principal-

leadership/Pages/The-School-Principal-as-Leader-Guiding-Schools-to-Better-teaching-

and-Learning.aspx

Weller, L. D., & Weller, S. J. (2002). *The assistant principal: Essentials for effective school*

leadership. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Appendix 1

Assistant Principal Survey

Survey Questions

<u>**Demographic Information**</u>

1. What is your age group?
    ___22-30
    ___31-35
    ___36-40
    ___41-45
    ___Over 45

2. What is your gender?
    ___Female
    ___Male

3. How many years did you serve as a full-time teacher in K-12 school?
    ___0-5
    ___6-10
    ___11-15
    ___16-20
    ___More than 20

4. In what size district did you work as a teacher? *Mark all that apply*
    ___Large urban district (total resident population of 250,000 or more)
    ___Midsize urban district (total resident population between 100,000 and 250,000)
    ___Small city district (total resident population less than 100,000)
    ___Predominately rural district (i.e., located approximately 25 miles from an urban or city center)
    ___Remote rural district (i.e., located more than 100 miles from an urban or city center)

5. If you were prepared as an **elementary teacher**, at what grade level(s) did you teach? What grade level or subject discipline did you teach before becoming an administrator? *Mark all that apply*
    ___All elementary grades (e.g., taught all core academic courses in self-contained classroom)
    ___All elementary grades (e.g., taught elective or special courses such as art, music, heath/PE)
    ___Preschool
    ___Primary (Grades K-2)
    ___Intermediate (Grade 3-5)
    ___Other *Please describe* _____
    ___Not applicable. I never worked as an elementary school teacher

6. If you worked as an elementary school teacher, In what subject area(s) did you teach? *Mark all that apply*
    ___English/language arts/reading
    ___Foreign language
    ___Humanities/arts
    ___Mathematics
    ___Health/physical education
    ___Science
    ___Social studies
    ___Special education

___Other *Please describe* _____

___Not applicable: I never worked as an elementary school teacher

7. If you worked as a **secondary teacher**, in what type of school(s) did you teach? *Mark all that apply*

___Middle school

___Junior high school

___High school

___Other *Please describe* _____

___Not applicable: I never worked as a secondary school teacher

8. If you worked as a secondary school teacher, in what subject area(s) did you teach?

___Business/career and technical education

___English/language arts/reading

___Foreign language

___Humanities/arts

___Mathematics

___Health/physical education

___Science

___Social studies

___Special education

___Other *Please describe* _____

Teacher Leadership Experiences

9. Listed below are types of leadership activities in which teachers often engage. Please identify all TEACHER LEADERSHIP activities in which you engaged *BEFORE* becoming an assistant principal. Mark all that apply.

___Chair/member of building leadership team or school-based decision making council (including personnel hiring team)

___Chair/member of school committee (e.g., accreditation, curricular mapping, school improvement, textbook selection)

___Chair/member of district committee or task force (e.g., budget, calendar development, textbook selection

___Chair/member of statewide committee or taskforce sponsored by state agency

___Chair/member of committee or taskforce sponsored by educator-oriented professional organization

___Officer or executive board member for educator-oriented professional organization

___Coach/sponsor of co-curricular or extracurricular activity (e.g., academic sponsor, athletic coach)

___Department chair or grade level chair

___Facilitator of staff/professional development activities

___Instructional peer coach (e.g., mentor for experienced teacher)

___Mentor teacher to a new teacher

___ Mentor to an aspiring teacher (i.e., preparation-program sponsored practicum or internship)

___National Board Certified teacher

___ Principal designee (i.e., stand in when principal was absent)

___Union representative

___Not applicable. I did not engage in teacher leadership activities before becoming an assistant principal

10. If you engaged in leadership activities listed in Question 9 prior to becoming an administrator, did those experiences help your practice as an assistant principal?

    ___Yes

    ___No

    ___Not applicable (I did not engage in any leadership activities listed in Question 9)

11. If you responded "Yes" to Question 10, please explain how or why engaging in teacher-leadership activities have helped you in your professional practice as an assistant principal.

<u>Assistant Principal Experience</u>

12. How many years of experience do you have as an assistant principal? (including this current year)

    ___1

    ___2

    ___3

    ___4

    ___5 or more

13. In what type of school do you <u>currently</u> serve as an assistant principal?

    ___Preschool/Kindergarten

    ___Elementary school

    ___Middle school

    ___Junior high school

    ___High school

    ___Other *Please describe* _____

14. In what size district did you currently work as an assistant principal?

    ___Large urban district (total resident population over 250,000)

    ___Midsize urban district (total resident population between 100,000 and 250,000)

    ___Small city district (total resident population less than 100,000)

    ___Predominately rural district (i.e., located approximately 25 miles from an urban center)

    ___Remote rural district (i.e., located more than 100 miles from an urban center)

15. What type of preservice leadership preparation program did you complete?

    ___Totally face-to-face

    ___Hybrid (face-to-face with online learning activities, virtual meetings, some online courses)

    ___Totally online

16. What degree did you earn through that leadership preparation program?

    ___Master's (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)

    ___Specialist in Education (EdS)

    ___Doctor of Education (EdD)

    ___No degree (i.e., certification or licensure only)

17. In what state did you complete your preservice leadership preparation program?

    ___Alabama

    ___Other state *Please specify* _____

18. When did you complete your preservice principal preparation program?
___Prior to 2000
___2009
___2010
___2012
___2013

19. In what year did you assume your first position as an assistant principal?
___Prior to 2003
___2003
___2004
___2005
___2006
___2007
___2008
___2009
___2010
___2011
___2012
___2013

20. Did your preservice preparation include a full-time internship? *"Full-time internship" is defined here as at least one semester release from all teaching responsibilities to serve as principal intern working under guidance of a school principal.*
___Yes
___No

Instructional Leadership
The questions about instructional leadership in the remainder of the survey are based on the operational definition presented below. This operational definition was informed by a review of diverse sources within the school-leadership literature.

Instructional leadership is a combination of knowledge, skills, and dispositions demonstrated by the school leader and characterized by her or his active engagement in

(a) *Setting direction* (i.e., building and sustaining a shared vision for student achievement, fostering acceptance of group goals, articulating high performance expectations, staying aware of external influences),

(b) *Developing people* (i.e., expanding knowledge about what constitutes quality teaching, providing formal and informal professional development for staff, being available),

(c) *Focusing on learning* (i.e., discussing instructional strategies and student learning with teachers, using observation and assessment data to initiate reflective conversations with teachers about achievement goals, using data to inform decisions about the instructional program, conducting action research to improve professional practice and student performance), and

(d) *Improving the instructional program* (i.e., designing a system of collaboration and support for teachers through professional learning communities, monitoring classrooms regularly, providing essential instructional materials and resources).

21. Recall the courses you completed in your university-based preservice leadership preparation program: How would you characterize your preparation program's emphasis on *instructional leadership as defined above?*
    ___ All courses emphasized instructional leadership.
    ___ Some courses emphasized instructional leadership.
    ___ Instructional leadership was mentioned in courses, but not regularly emphasized.
    ___ Instructional leadership was not emphasized in my leadership preparation courses.

22. To what extent does your current position as an assistant principal require you to perform the four functions of an instructional leader?
    ___My entire job description is about instructional leadership.
    ___Over 50% of my duties involve instructional leadership.
    ___ Approximately 25-50% of my duties involve instructional leadership.
    ___ Less than 25% of my duties involve instructional leadership.
    ___ My duties do not involve instructional leadership.

23. How often do you engage in these activities as an assistant?

	Never	Occasionally	Monthly	Biweekly	Once weekly	Twice weekly	Daily
Complete administrative duties (e.g., attending district or state meetings, report writing, class scheduling, budgeting)							
Communicate or engage with parents or community members—other than to address student issues							
Conduct informal classroom observation (i.e., walk through)							
Conduct formal classroom observation linked to teacher supervision or evaluation							
Conduct formal teacher evaluation (i.e., complete required evaluation documents, conduct teacher conference)							
Facilitate or observe professional development activities for teachers or staff members							

Handle student supervision issues (e.g., discipline or behavior)								
Lead student services meeting (e.g., identification of special needs, development of individualized program, assessment of student progress)								
Participate in student services meetings conducted by others (e.g., academic intervention, behavior modification)								
Lead grade level or department meetings involving teachers								
Participate in or observe grade level or department meetings involving teachers								
Supervise or mentor new teacher(s)								
Supervise accountability testing, analyze student learning data, or monitor student achievement								
Supervise athletic or extracurricular activities								
Supervise building functions (e.g., facilities, transportation, safety regulations and drills)								
Engage in professional activities focused on improving your performance as an instructional leader (e.g., attending conferences, reading professional material, searching Internet for new information)								

24. When you are formally evaluated on your performance as an administrator, what percentage of your evaluation is based on your instructional leadership performance?

   ___25%

   ___50%

   ___75%

   ___I do not know

   ___I am not sure because my school is piloting Alabama's new administrator evaluation system this year

   ___Instructional leadership is not an element of my performance evaluation.

25. In the school where you currently work, **who spends the most time** on the functions defined in our operational definition of instructional leadership?

	Principal	Me	Other AP	Academic dean	Curriculum specialist	Guidance counselor	Psychologist	Teacher leaders	All leaders in school
Setting direction (i.e., building and sustaining a shared vision for student achievement, fostering acceptance of group goals, articulating high performance expectations, staying aware of external influences)									
Developing people (i.e., expanding knowledge about what constitutes quality teaching, providing formal and informal professional development for staff, being available)									
Focusing on learning (i.e., discussing instructional strategies and student learning with teachers, using observation and assessment data to initiate reflective conversations with teachers about achievement goals, using data to inform decisions about the instructional program, conducting action research to improve professional practice and student performance),									
Improving the instructional program (i.e., designing a system of collaboration and support for teachers through professional learning communities, monitoring classrooms regularly, providing essential instructional materials and resources).									

26. In the school where you currently work**, *who is most responsible*** for the functions defined in our operational definition of instructional leadership?

133

	Principal	Me	Other AP	Academic dean	Curriculum specialist	Guidance counselor	Psychologist	Teacher leaders	All leaders in school
Setting direction (i.e., building and sustaining a shared vision for student achievement, fostering acceptance of group goals, articulating high performance expectations, staying aware of external influences)									
Developing people (i.e., expanding knowledge about what constitutes quality teaching, providing formal and informal professional development for staff, being available)									
Focusing on learning (i.e., discussing instructional strategies and student learning with teachers, using observation and assessment data to initiate reflective conversations with teachers about achievement goals, using data to inform decisions about the instructional program, conducting action research to improve professional practice and student performance),									
Improving the instructional program (i.e., designing a system of collaboration and support for teachers through professional learning communities, monitoring classrooms regularly, providing essential instructional materials and resources).									

27. In the school where you currently work*, **whom do you think should be responsible*** for the functions defined in our operational definition of instructional leadership?

134

	Principal	Me	Other AP	Academic dean	Curriculum specialist	Guidance counselor	Psychologist	Teacher leaders	All leaders in school
Setting direction (i.e., building and sustaining a shared vision for student achievement, fostering acceptance of group goals, articulating high performance expectations, staying aware of external influences)									
Developing people (i.e., expanding knowledge about what constitutes quality teaching, providing formal and informal professional development for staff, being available)									
Focusing on learning (i.e., discussing instructional strategies and student learning with teachers, using observation and assessment data to initiate reflective conversations with teachers about achievement goals, using data to inform decisions about the instructional program, conducting action research to improve professional practice and student performance),									
Improving the instructional program (i.e., designing a system of collaboration and support for teachers through professional learning communities, monitoring classrooms regularly, providing essential instructional materials and resources).									

Mentoring for Instructional Leadership

28. Among the professional growth opportunities for developing instructional leadership listed below, identity either "Yes, I have had opportunity to participate" or "No, I have not had opportunity to participate" by checking the appropriate box.

Yes	No	Activity
		District-assigned formal mentoring program for assistant principals

		District-sponsored professional development activities specifically for assistant principals
		District-paid professional conferences or meetings where attendance is expected or required
		Programs provided by state administrator association (e.g., academies, conferences)
		One-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by your current principal.
		Informal meetings among principals and assistant principals to discuss issues.
		Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by local university.
		Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by state agency (e.g., CLAS, KASA).
		Mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that you initiated (i.e., you sought help).

29. Using the table below, indicate how effective the professional growth activities have been for you using the following scale:

   0=Not applicable, 1=Not effective, 2= Somewhat effective, 3=Effective, 4=Very effective

0	1	2	3	4	Activity
					District-assigned formal mentor for assistant principals
					District-sponsored professional development activities specifically for assistant principals
					District-paid professional conferences or meetings where attendance is expected or required
					Programs provided by state administrator association (e.g., academies, conferences)
					One-on-one mentoring for instructional leadership by your current principal.
					Informal meetings among principals and assistant principals to discuss issues.
					Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by local university.
					Formal or informal mentoring program sponsored by state agency (e.g., CLAS, KASA).
					Mentoring provided by experienced or senior administrators that you initiated (i.e., you sought help).

30. To what extent do you feel ready to serve as an instructional leader?
    ___Very ready
    ___Somewhat ready
    ___Not ready
    ___Not applicable: I am not responsible for instructional leadership in the school where I work.

Professional Experiences

31. In your current position as an assistant principal, what are the top three challenges you face in performing as an instructional leader?

32. In what ways do you attend to your own professional development as an instructional leader?

33. Read the each function of our operational definition for instructional leadership. Indicate whether or not you need additional mentoring or coaching in order to feel ready to be an instructional leader?

	I do NOT need mentoring	Not sure	Yes, I need mentoring in this area
Setting direction (i.e., building and sustaining a shared vision for student achievement, fostering acceptance of group goals, articulating high performance expectations, staying aware of external influences)			
Developing people (i.e., expanding knowledge about what constitutes quality teaching, providing formal and informal professional development for staff, being available)			
Focusing on learning (i.e., discussing instructional strategies and student learning with teachers, using observation and assessment data to initiate reflective conversations with teachers about achievement goals, using data to inform decisions about the instructional program, conducting action research to improve professional practice and student performance),			
Improving the instructional program (i.e., designing a system of collaboration and support for teachers through professional learning communities, monitoring classrooms regularly, providing essential instructional materials and resources).			

34. How often do you initiate ***engagement with other assistant principals*** outside formal professional development structures to discuss instructional leadership?
    ___Never
    ___Occasionally
    ___Monthly
    ___Biweekly
    ___Once weekly
    ___Twice weekly
    ___Daily

35. Reflecting back on your leadership preparation throughout your career as a K-12 educator, recall the various experiences you had (e.g., teacher leadership, university-based preparation program, internship, formal mentoring, informal mentoring, personal professional development). Which of those experiences *most significantly* prepared you for instructional-leadership responsibilities as an assistant principal?

36. Using your response to Question 35, please offer recommendation(s) for improving the preparation of assistant principals for instructional leadership.

37. Please share anything else about your professional practice as an assistant principal or instructional leader that is relevant to this study, but was not asked on this survey.

Seeking Volunteers for Group Interviews

Thank you for completing this online survey. The second phase of this study will be a series of small-group interviews with other assistant principals in your state. If you are willing to participate in a focus group, please provide your electronic-mail address in the space provided.

Below is the professor that will be contacting you about participating in focus groups: Dr. Linda Searby (ljs0007@auburn.edu)

Appendix 2

Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
REQUEST FOR EXEMPT CATEGORY RESEARCH

For Information or help completing this form, contact: **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE**, 115 Ramsay Hall
Phone: 334-844-5966   e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu **Web Address:** http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm

Revised 2/1/2014 **Submit completed form to IRBsubmit@auburn.edu or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.**
Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.
Project activities may not begin until you have received approval from the Auburn University IRB.

1. **PROJECT PERSONNEL & TRAINING**

    PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI):
    Name Robert Bradley Hunter   Title   Student   Dept./School Educational FLT/Edu.
    Address 808 Forrestdale Ct. Opelika, Al 36801   AU Email rbh0009@tigermail.edu
    Phone 334-707-5645   Dept. Head Sherida Downer

    FACULTY ADVISOR (if applicable):
    Name Dr. Linda Searby   Title   Associate Professor   Dept./School Educational FLT/Edu.
    Address 4075 Haley Center Auburn Univ, AL 36849
    Phone 205-907-6285   AU Email ljs0007@auburn.edu

    KEY PERSONNEL: List Key Personnel (other than PI and FA). Additional personnel may be listed in an attachment.

Name	Title	Institution	Responsibilities

    KEY PERSONNEL TRAINING: Have all Key Personnel completed CITI Human Research Training (including elective modules related to this research) within the last 3 years?   ☑ YES   ☐ NO
    TRAINING CERTIFICATES: Please attach CITI completion certificates for all Key Personnel.

2. **PROJECT INFORMATION**

    Title: Factors, Characteristics, and Experiences That Contribute to Elementary Assistant Principals' Perceptions of Readiness to Serve As Instructional Leaders

    Source of Funding: ☑ Investigator   ☐ Internal   ☐ External

    List External Agency & Grant Number:

    List any contractors, sub-contractors, or other entities associate with this project.

    List any other IRBs associated with this project (including those involved with reviewing, deferring, or determinations).
    13-259EP1308 The Mentoring Needs of Assistant Principals as Instructional Leaders (Dr. Linda Searby)

FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY		
DATE RECEIVED IN ORC:_____by_____	APPROVAL #	**The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from**
DATE OF IRB REVIEW:_____by_____	APPROVAL CATEGO	
DATE OF ORC REVIEW:_____by_____	INTERVAL FOR	**12/09/15 to 12/08/18**
DATE OF APPROVAL: _____by_____		**Protocol # 15-512 EX 1512**
COMMENTS:		

1 of 3

3. PROJECT SUMMARY
   a. Does the research involve any special populations?

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Minors (under age 19)

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Pregnant women, fetuses, or any products of conception

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Prisoners or Wards

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Individuals with compromised autonomy and/or decisional capacity

   b. Does the research pose more than minimal risk to participants?   [ ] YES   [✔] NO

   Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. 42 CFR 46.102(i)

   c. Does the study involve any of the following?

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Procedures subject to FDA Regulation Ex. Drugs, biological products, medical devices, etc.

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Use of school records of identifiable students or information from instructors about specific students

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Protected health or medical information when there is a direct or indirect link that could identify the participant

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Collection of sensitive aspects of the participant's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior or use of alcohol

   [ ] YES [✔] NO   Deception of participants

If you checked "YES" to any response in Question #3 STOP. It is likely that your study does not meet the "EXEMPT" requirements. Please complete a PROTOCOL FORM for Expedited or Full Board Review.
You may contact IRB Administration for more information. (Phone: 334-844-5966 or Email: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu)

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION
   a. Subject Population (Describe, include age, special population characteristics, etc.)

   Elementary Assistant Principals from the state of Alabama

   b. Describe, step by step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants.
      [✔] N/A (Existing data will be used)

   participants provided consent under the original protocol (Auburn IRB #13-259EP1308)

c. **Brief summary of project.** (Include the research question(s) and a brief description of the methodology, including recruitment and how data will be collected and protected.)

The data set being analyzed for this study was originally collected for a mixed methods study conducted between October, 2013, and April, 2014 in the State of Alabama, with approval from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board - Protocol # 13-259EP1308. An email was sent to superintendents across the state of Alabama to obtain permission to survey assistant principals from their district, and asking them to forward the solicitation email to assistant principals. Data were collected through a survey sent to Alabama elementary and secondary assistant principals through the web service www.surveymonkey.com and the data from participants have been de-identified. The research questions for this study are:
 1. To what extent do elementary /secondary assistant principals report they are required to perform the four functions of instructional leadership?
2. To what extent do elementary / secondary assistant principals report they feel ready to serve as instructional leaders defined by the four functions of instructional leadership?
3.Which variable, age or years of experience, carries more weight in the perception of readiness of elementary /secondary assistant principals to assume the role of instructional leader?
4.For those who reported they were ready to assume the role of instructional leader, which mentoring activities were most effective in assisting their perception of readiness?
5.Which professional growth opportunities did elementary /secondary assistant principals participate in that led them to report readiness to serve as an instructional leader?
6.Did the number of professional growth opportunities participated in by elementary / secondary assistant principals affect their perceptions of readiness to serve as instructional leaders?

d. **Waivers.** Check any waivers that apply and describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

- [✔] Waiver of Consent (Including existing de-identified data)
- [ ] Waiver of Documentation of Consent (Use of Information Letter)
- [ ] Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)

This project will used an existing de-identified data set and a letter is attached to this protocol giving permission.

e. **Attachments.** Please attach Informed Consents, Information Letters, data collection instrument(s), advertisements/recruiting materials, or permission letters/site authorizations as appropriate.

Signature of Investigator	Robert Bradley Hunter *Digitally signed by Robert Bradley Hunter Date: 2015.12.05 14:50:13 -06'00'*	Date 12-5-15
Signature of Faculty Advisor	Linda J. Searby *Digitally signed by Linda J. Searby DN: cn=Linda J. Searby, o=Auburn University, ou=Auburn EFLT, email=ljs0007@auburn.edu, c=US Date: 2015.12.05 14:25:00 -06'00'*	Date 12-5-15
Signature of Department Head	Sherida Downer *Digitally signed by Sherida Downer DN: cn=Sherida Downer, o=Auburn University College of Education, ou=Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology, email=downesm@auburn.edu, c=US Date: 2015.12.06 08:01:07 -06'00'*	Date 12-6-2015

Appendix 3

Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval for Data Set

Auburn University

Auburn University, Alabama 36849-5221

Educational Foundations   Telephone: (334) 844-4460
Leadership and Technology   Fax: (334) 844-3072
4036 Haley Center

Date: December 4, 2015
To: the Institutional Review Board at Auburn University
From: Dr. Linda Searby, EFLT
RE: Permission to Use Existing Data Base

I hereby grant Ph.D. Doctoral Candidates, Vohn Enloe and R. Bradley Hunter, to utilize data which I collected as the sole investigator in 2013-2014 under IRB approval from Auburn University (Protocol # 13-259EP1308). The candidates are in the Educational Leadership Ph.D. Program and I am serving as their dissertation chair.

This data is from a survey of assistant principals in Alabama, and has been de-identified and downloaded into SPSS. The data includes both statistical data and narrative data from open ended questions on the survey.

The individuals using the data will acknowledge the source of the data, which includes giving attribution to me as the original data collector.

If you have further questions, please contact me at 205-907-6285 or at ljs0007@auburn.edu