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# The Training of Elementary Assistant Principals

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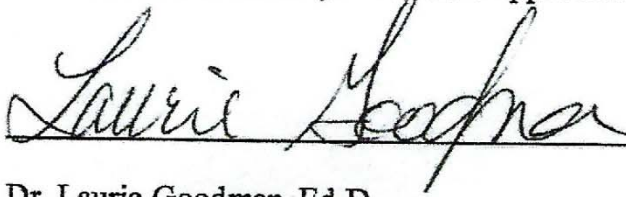
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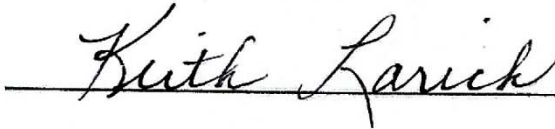
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The Transition from Teacher to Assistant Principal

by Nailya Jarocki

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by panel of experts. An additional purpose was to identify strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

**Methodology:** A classical Delphi method was utilized to collect perceptual data from a panel of California elementary school principals and administrators at county, district offices of education, and at the university level in California that met specific criteria regarding their education, years of experience, completion of formal training in mentoring, and involvement in formal coaching or mentoring of elementary assistant principals. For the purposes of this Delphi study, an electronic questionnaire was distributed in three rounds to assess the participants' perceptions of the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

**Findings:** In Round One, the expert panel members identified 30 professional development topics that were narrowed down in Round Two to the top ten professional development topics that are necessary for preparation of elementary assistant principals. The experts also named nine most important practices for preparation of elementary assistant principals. In Round Three, the panel suggested a wide range of strategies for

implementation of the most important practices that were grouped into eight categories and were presented as key findings of this study.

**Conclusions:** Based on the data and research findings, eight conclusions were drawn related to the training of elementary assistant principals.

**Recommendations:** There were five recommendations for further research covering these topic areas: (a) examination of experiences and perceptions of novice assistant principals regarding their leadership development before and after their leadership assignment; (b) replication of the study with a secondary panel of experts; (c) models for training and supports of aspiring elementary assistant principals at the school, district, and county office levels.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years ago, public school leadership was absent from most major reform

initiatives and agendas, focusing more on teachers and students and leaving a big gap in

the understanding that leadership is important to improving quality of education and

turning the nation's failing schools around (The Wallace Foundation, 2013; NASPP &

NAESP, 2013). Federal policies and initiatives, including the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act (formerly No Child Left Behind) and President Obama's Race to the Top

grant program, focused their attention on assessments as an instrument for establishing

teacher accountability and measuring student performance. Today, the need for effective

school leadership is recognized and linked to improved student achievement (Bodger,

2011; *Department for professional* employees, 2016; McDaniel, 2015; Jackson, 2007;

The Wallace Foundation, 2013; NASPP & NAESP, 2013). The Wallace Foundation

(2013) report and the report of Turnbull, Anderson, Riley, MacFarlane, & Aladjem

(2016) emphasize the same idea that educational leadership is second only to classroom

instruction among multiple individual variables that affect student learning.

Traditionally, the main figure at a school site that was responsible for creating

conditions under which combined variables led to improved student achievement was the

principal (Bodger, 20011; Carroll, 2015; Joseph, 2009; Joseph; 2014; McDaniel, 2015;

Lashway, 2000; The Wallace Foundation, 2013; NASPP & NAESP, 2013). However,

heightened demands from society concerning the quality of public education have also

increased the accountability for school principals. This increase in accountability then

triggered a change in leadership roles and illuminated the importance of assistant

principals (APs) within an administrative site team (Jackson, 2007; Miller, 2012; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Scott, 2011; Townsend, 2011; Vail, 2018).

For a long time, the assistant principal was "not in the broadest currents of educational research" (Hartzell, 1990). In the 1970s and 1980s, the limited number of studies that had assistant principals as the subject of their research focused mainly on defining and describing the roles and job functions of individuals holding that position. Later, the focus of the research on assistant principals shifted to perceptions of the job and the decline in job satisfaction of APs (Acosta, 2015; Glanz, 1994; Hartzell, 1990; Scott, 2011; Wright, 1994).

The studies conducted on school leadership agree that the principal and the assistant principal both serve as directors, leaders, and managers of an educational institution (Acosta, 2015; Phillips, 2007; Williams, 2003). They both are responsible for developing and supporting academic programs, setting academic goals and expectations for student performance, and for the quality of public education overall (Annous, 2005; Jackson, 2007; Vail, 2018). Nevertheless, "teachers generally agree that it is often the assistant principal to whom they look for help on a day-to-day basis" (Wright, 1994). According to Marshall and Hooley (2006), "The assistant principalship holds a critical position in education organizations for several reasons: First, it is a frequent entry-level position for administrative careers. Second, assistant principals maintain the norms and rules of the school culture." The literature on assistant principals tells us that by taking care of the daily operations of the school APs allow the principal to act as the instructional leader, and "with so much of how the school operates and maintains daily order dependent on the skills of the assistant principal, it is clear how important that role

is" (Williams, 2003). Twenty-first century school leaders face unprecedented challenges in their new roles, from ensuring high quality academic instruction in the era of the Common Core Standards and the demands of the global economy to creating a safe socio-emotional environment at school, which in turn demands a big-picture awareness of the school's role in society (Bodger, 2011; Miller, 2012; Williams, 2003). The new era in public education requires that individuals entering school leadership and, particularly, the assistant principalship positions, be well prepared in order to face the demands of the job and to have the desire and training to move forward into a principalship (Armstrong, 2012; Hohner, 2016; Jackson, 2007; Retelle, 2003; Scott, 2011; Vail, 2018).

Nevertheless, there is even less research available on the role and preparation of the elementary assistant principal. Even though elementary schools generally have only one assistant principal who is also second in command after the principal, the existing research points out that the role of the elementary assistant principal is usually that of a manager rather than school leader (Beltramo, 2014; Best, 2016; Bodger, 2011; Retelle, 2003). Unfortunately, aspiring teacher leaders that transition into the assistant principal jobs and the newly assigned assistant principals alike generally have gaps in knowledge about the actual administrative duties and find themselves underprepared for the demands of the job they are assigned (Hoffert, 2015).

**Background**

As public schools experience increasing pressure to improve student outcomes while simultaneously implementing demanding instructional reforms under the Common Core Standards, districts and schools also have had to grapple with the effects of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression (Allegretto, Jacobs, & Lucia, 2011;

Beltramo, 2014; Davidson, 2015; USA Today, 2013). Reports state that the US economy "fell off the cliff in 2008," causing districts and schools see their budgets frozen or decrease, limiting the number of staff in both classrooms and administrative offices (Allegretto, Jacobs, & Lucia, 2011; Beltramo, 2014). In May 2010, United States Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan estimated that school layoffs could total from 100,000 to 300,000 employees, creating "an educational catastrophe" (NEA, 2010).

Compounding the crisis is the fact that the beginning of this century was also characterized by a large number of retirements and documented shortages of public school administrators (Jackson, 2007; Scott, 2011). This trend is partially due to the fact that a significant portion of the administrator workforce from the baby boom generation has begun to retire, leaving unfilled gaps in public education administration (Hill, Ottem, & DeRoche, 2016; White, Fong, & Makkonen, 2010). Rising student enrollment has been an additional factor that contributed to the shortage of the administrators in some geographic areas (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). The data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2008 indicated that between years of 2006 and 2016, the demand for educational administrators was expected to grow by 12% primarily due to growth in enrollments.

According to the REL WEST report from 2010 and a later report from 2014, we do not have a national shortage of potential candidates with valid administrative services credentials, but we do have, however, evidence of a limited supply of qualified principal and assistant principal candidates for specific types of schools and certain districts (White, Fong & Makkonen, 2010; Fong, 2014). In California, most of such schools and districts are located in the Central Valley and the Inland Empire regions, where increased

administrative responsibilities, coupled with challenges of extra support that is needed by English language learner students and students from low-income households, could also be responsible for deterring some qualified candidates from pursuing vacant principal and assistant principal positions (White, Fong & Makkonen, 2010; Scott, 2011).

Generally, the majority of school administrators begin their educational careers as teachers before seeking administrative positions (Annous, 2005; Hohner, 2016). The literature demonstrates that assistant principal candidates get selected from a pool of educators showing success as classroom teachers, department chairs, counselors, and as administrative interns (Armstrong, 2010; Davidson, 2015; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Scott, 2011). Marshall (1992) explicitly states that the assistant principalship is frequently viewed as an entry-level position for most administrative careers. Armstrong (2015) explains that "for many teachers, the appointment to an administrative post is regarded as an important career achievement because of its association with upward professional mobility and increased organizational influence." Nevertheless, the educational research mostly focuses on strategies and techniques of recruitment, training, and on-going support for teachers and principals, completely overlooking the talent pool among teachers that desire to transition into an assistant principalship (Armstrong, 2012; Bloom & Krovetz, 2011; Marshall, 2006; Scott, 2011).

Historically, the position of assistant principal in the United States of America originated after 1900 mainly due to urbanization when school enrollment increased between 1895 and 1920 from 14 to 21.5 million students, leading to expansion of school staff and the school system becoming more complex (Glanz, 1994; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Marshal & Hooley (2006) state that the position of assistant principal "grew out of

need and expediency, rather than clear and thoughtful planning" (p. 2). Principals could not keep up with the administrative duties of the growing schools and were forced to establish positions of "head teachers" that eventually were named assistant principals and assumed responsibilities of instructional and evaluative matters, letting the principal be the general manager of the school (Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2001). Some literature on assistant principals refers to assistant principal's position as the "glue" that binds the schools together which "does accurately communicate the importance of an assistant principal (AP) to a school" (Glanz, 2001). Even though that position is often undervalued and unacknowledged, researchers agree that the assistant principalship holds a vital role to a school, instructional practices improvement, and students' and overall school's success (Glanz, 2001; Hartzell, 1990; Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

## Statement of the Research Problem

According to research by the Institute for Education Statistics, half of all principals are not continuing past their third year on the job of leading a school (NASSP, 2017). Compounding the problem is the fact that many school leaders are also retiring, transferring sites, or finding other opportunities in the field of education, and there are not enough qualified candidates to fill these positions. This has led to many school districts across the country reporting difficulties in filling principal vacancies and a shortage of adequately qualified applicants for these vacancies (NASPP, 2017).

The demand for employment of elementary, middle, and high school principals will grow 6 percent nationwide by the year 2022 due to population increases. This surge in demand will increase the need to identify and train teachers who have interest in assuming a leadership role. The position of an elementary assistant principal in a public

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school is not a well-defined entity and has received little attention in academic research (Armstrong, 2012; Beltramo, 2014; Best, 2016; Bodger, 2011; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Retelle, 2013; Wright, 1994). The transition from teaching into administration, and particularly into assistant principalship, is often dictated by the leadership goals of those that chose the path of becoming administrator in public education (Annous, 2005; Armstrong, 2012; Wright, 1994). However, multiple obstacles on that path can hinder an educators' ability to reach those leadership goals. Among those obstacles are a lack of relevant preparation and coordinated supports, and the absence of these elements, which are crucial for beginning administrators, make the transition path challenging (Armstrong, 2012; Beltramo, 2014; Cohen, 2008; Hartzell, 1990; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Tooms, Barnett & Shoho, 2012).

An assistant principalship is a position that has responsibilities that are poorly defined or often are evolving, which makes it difficult for transitioning teachers to achieve success without proper training and, more importantly, without on-going support (Tredway, Brill, & Hernandez, 2007).

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by a panel of experts. An additional purpose was to identify strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were selected to address the purpose of the study:

1.  What professional development topics do experts identify as important for
    preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

2.  What practices do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to
    become elementary assistant principals?

3.  How do the panel of experts rank the importance of these practices for
    preparing elementary assistant principals?

4.  What strategies do the expert panel recommend for implementing the most
    important practices?

**Significance of the Problem**

This study is significant to educational practitioners and educational policymakers
for a number of reasons. First of all, elementary assistant principals are essential to the
smooth operation of the schools and academic success of the students; therefore, it is
essential that candidates for the position of assistant principal, specifically teachers that
are preparing to become elementary assistant principals, have the appropriate knowledge
and training prior to stepping into the formal position of elementary assistant principal.

Second, this study provides those within central administration offices a greater
understanding of the best methods for implementing the most important practices for
preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals. Thus, the study will add to
the body of research on methods of leadership development and the key educational
leadership training delivery modes.

Third, an assistant principal's success is not only the assistant principal's responsibility, but also the principal's and the district leaders' responsibility and the goal. This study gives insight to public school principals, assistant principals, and university- and also district- and county-level administrative credential program supervisors about the kinds of supports assistant principals need to continue their growth as school leaders.

Finally, as the elementary assistant principal's position is traditionally viewed as a stepping stone and a training venue for future elementary principals, this study provides those within central administration offices and university- and also district- and county-level administrative credential program supervisors a greater understanding of the elementary assistant principal experience within that role and encourages them to provide resources, mentoring, and proper professional learning opportunities to increase the number of adequate principal candidates. If school systems perceive and value the role of the elementary assistant principal as a learning and preparation period for aspiring principals, the time in the position can be used to more effectively groom potential principal candidates. Developing a classroom teacher's leadership capabilities in order to help them make the transition to elementary-level assistant principalship, and then from assistant principalship into principalship, is important in preserving the cultural norms and expectations of school districts.

## Definitions

**Theoretical Definitions**

This study requires the use of specific vocabulary. To assist the reader, understandings of the following theoretical definitions for reference are below:

- *Andragogy.* "A set of core adult learning principles that apply to all adult learning situations" (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 2).

- *Delphi Technique.* "A widely used and accepted method for gathering data from respondents within their domain of expertise. The technique is designed as a group communication process which aims to achieve a convergence of opinion on a specific real-world issue" (Hsu, 2007).

- *Leadership.* "A process that involves influence with a group of people toward the realization of goals" (Amanchukwu, Jones Stanely, & Prince Ololube, 2015, p. 7).

**Operational Definitions**

For the purpose of this research, operational definitions of major variables and best practice terms are described below:

- *Administrative Services Preliminary Credential.* A five-year preliminary credential is the first credential issued after an individual meets basic credential requirements (State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CTC], 2017).

- *Administrative Services Clear Credential.* A clear credential is issued when all credential requirements have been completed (State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CTC], 2017).

- *Assistant principal.* The person one step below the principal in formal hierarchy that assists the principal in all administrative tasks (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 121; Swetkowski Giovanisci, 2012). The terms assistant principal and vice principal are used in the research literature interchangeably.

- *Assistant principalship.* The entry-level position and often the first

formal administrative position that an individual holds without previous

administrative experience (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 13).

- *California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL).* "A set of

  broad policy standards that are the foundation for administrator preparation,

  induction, development, professional learning and evaluation in California. Taken

  together, the CPSEL describe critical areas of leadership for administrators, offer

  a structure for developing and supporting education leaders throughout their

  careers, and identify what an administrator must know and be able to do in order

  to move into sustainable, effective practice" (Commission on Teaching Credential

  [CTC], 2014, p. 1).

- *Internship.* The position of a student or trainee who works in an organization,

  sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements

  for a qualification ("Lexico", n.d.).

- *Interns*. Students in the administrative credential program that "typically are

  assigned a school-based administrative supervisor (typically the principal where

  the intern works) and a university-based faculty supervisor" (Shoho, Barnett, &

  Martinez, 2012, p. 167).

- *ISLLC Standards*. "Model standards for school leaders that address broader

  leadership skills generated by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure

  Consortium" (Hager, 2012, p. 8).

- *Mentors and mentoring programs.* "Experienced educators or support groups

  assigned to newly hired professionals to assist with questions during the first few

  years of the educators' position. Mentoring implies a formal and informal

relationship in the workplace" (Jackson, 2007, p. 7).

- *Novice assistant principal.* An assistant principal in his/her first three years of service (Carroll, 2015). This term is interchangeable with the term *new assistant principal, beginning assistant principal, novice school leader* (Beam, Claxton, & Smith, 2016; Shoho, Barnett, & Tooms, 2012; Turnbull, Anderson, Riley, MacFarlane, & Aladjem, 2016; Santacrose, 2016).

- *Effective practices.* As used in this study, "effective practices" refer to organizational, administrative, instructional, or support activities engaged in by highly successful programs, as validated by research and literature sources.

- *Principal.* An individual holding the building level administrative position in which he/she supervises and facilitates the daily operations of the school and is characterized as the school leader (Cotton, 2003; Jackson, 2007).

- *Principalship.* The role of principal (Akinbode & Al Shuhumi, 2018).

- *Professional Developm*ent. For the purposes of this study, *professional development* is defined as "the advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in a particular profession, esp. through continued education" (Dictionary.com, 2014).

- *Protégé.* "One who is under the care and protection of an influential person for the furthering of his career" (Carroll, 2015).

- *Strategies.* As used in this study, "strategies" refer to a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal.

- *Topic.* As used in this study, *topic* means a focus of study in a professional development setting.

- *Training.* "A systematic development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job" (Crews, 2018).

- *Veteran assistant principal.* It is operationally defined as an assistant principal who has served as an assistant principal for 5 or more years and has yet to move into the role of principal (Vail, 2018).

## Delimitations

Delimitations of this study were chosen to clarify and narrow the focus of the study. The study was delimited to public school principals, university-, district-, and county-level administrative credential program supervisors meeting specific criteria for inclusion.

## Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters, a bibliography, and associated appendices. Chapter 2 focuses on reviewing the available literature related to the history and nature of assistant principalship, as well as preparation and support of teachers on the path to become assistant principals. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and design of the study are outlined, the instruments used to gather data, and the composition of the study panel. Chapter 4 features a presentation and analysis of study findings. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for further study. Following Chapter 5 are the bibliography and appendices.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II of this study reviews the professional literature and research related to the topic of the most important topics and practices for preparing teachers in becoming elementary assistant principals, including the best methods for implementing the most important topics and practices for preparation of teachers on their path to become elementary assistant principals. This chapter includes information on the origination of the assistant principal position, the role of the assistant principals and particularly elementary assistant principals in public schools in the United States of America (USA), and the development of licensure requirements and certification programs for educational leadership. It also focuses on past and present professional development (PD) models for assistant principals, including the research on the existing models of PD for assistant principals and data that affects decision making about PD practices and the content of training for assistant principals. Theories concerning andragogy (adult learning) are applied to the professional development practices in determining and facilitating PD practices for assistant principals. Finally, research related to the benefits of assistant principals' input on the needed professional development models and content areas is presented.

**The Emergence of the Assistant Principal Position**

For a long time, education in the United States of America was available only in a form of private tutoring, also known as homeschooling, and therefore it strictly took place in the homes of rich families that could afford to educate their children (Popa, 2016). However, when the new wave of immigrants reached the soil of the United States, they posed serious concerns about foreign faiths and alien customs to the predominantly

puritan immigrants that already resided in the country. That led to the opening of the first public schools in the US in the early 17th century, providing the society with institutions where children could learn particular norms and customs, preparing young people to embrace the republican traditions and to be good citizens (Popa, 2016; Warren, 1988). Initially, the American public schools had few students and usually one teacher that taught all ages of students and all subjects, but as cities began to grow with the influx of the new immigrants, so grew the student enrollment and the schools' size (Scott, 2011). Throughout the 19th century, local efforts brought about more public schools, culminating in the legislature that established compulsory attendance of public schools by children across the United States by 1918 (Baker, 2004; Warren, 1988).

At the beginning of the 19th century, the control over the first schools was assumed by the local ward boards that assigned city superintendents to manage the schools (Gillespie, 1961; Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2004). Due to urbanization accelerating its rate, cities began to grow more rapidly, and in the 19th century school enrollment increased between 1895 and 1920 from 14 to 21.5 million students, and the number of teachers accounted for more than 398,000 (Glanz, 1994; Glanz 2001). That expansion after the 1900 made the school system more complex, which necessitated the creation of a new administrative position of a principal (Glanz, 1994; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). These factors led to superintendents losing connection with daily operations of schools, and the principals became the managers of the local educational institutions, providing assistance to teachers in instruction, curriculum, and classroom management. However, between 1920 and 1930 the school system continued to expand, and so did the administrative duties of the principals, leaving the principals less time for classroom

supervision and curriculum development (Glanz, 1994; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). If earlier in the 19th century the principal had a position of a "head teacher", then after 1920 the principals were relieved of the teaching duties and became more of the school managers (Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2004; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). The idea of having assistants to the principal that could be used for completing tasks that are less administrative in nature were expressed in 1916 by Ellwood Cubberley, an educator and the pioneer of the American educational administration (Scott, 2011). As the list of principals' duties continued to grow, a new type of administrative position eventually emerged to take over daily classroom supervision.

According to some literature sources on assistant principals, the first time "head assistants" to principals was mentioned in the 1900s (Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2004; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Scott, 2011). These assistants were selected from the teaching staff for their instructional expertise and experience. Between 1920 and 1930, the new administrative positions that emerged in the 1930s were divided into two specifics groups based on their duties (Glanz, 2001). First position was named a "special supervisor" and did not require any formal training. That position was usually assigned to female teachers and had as its goal helping less experienced teachers with improvement of the subject matter proficiency. The second position had a title of a "general supervisor" and was usually assigned to male teachers who had to assist the principal of the building with logistical operations of the school and evaluative matters. However, as Glanz (1994) reported, gender bias eventually led to the disappearance of the separate special supervisor's position, and its responsibilities were included in the list of duties of the general supervisor, essentially making that person the primary assistant to the principal. It

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was by the 1940's that this position became known in the professional educational literature by the title of "assistant principal" (Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2001). Marshal & Hooley (2006) sum up the description of the process by stating that the position of assistant principal "grew out of need and expediency, rather than clear and thoughtful planning" (p. 2).

**The History of the Role of Assistant Principals**

As the position of assistant principal emerged during the process of rapid school system expansion, its definition and description of duties were never finalized (Glanz, 1994; Hoffert, 2015; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Workman, 2013). Howell (1989) argued that the position of assistant principal evolved in a haphazard manner based on the needs of the time and without any systematic planning and long-term vision, and that is the reason why it remained without any general objective or solid design. More recent research on assistant principals echoes this sentiment by stating that the new administrators transitioning into the roles of assistant principals often are "challenged by the vagaries and conflicts of their ill-defined middle management role" (Armstrong, 2010; Armstrong, 2014).

To provide a clear chronological line for the development of the assistant principal's role, Owen-Fitzgerald (2010) established four major time posts that illustrate how the role of the assistant principals evolved to match the requirements of the time. The first major time post, according to Owen-Fitzgerald (2010), appeared in the 1900s when the assistant principals emerged and took over the principals' role of handling the issues of student discipline and attendance. The second shift in the history of the AP's role occurred in the 1940s-1950s when the assistant principals acquired instructional

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leadership duties, and evaluating teachers became part of that job. Scott (2011) attributed the emphasis on instruction at that time to the aftermath of the World Wat II when the importance of education became a value of a democratic society. The third shift, according to Owen-Fitzgerald (2010), took place in the 1980s-1990s with the beginning of the era of accountability, increasing the role of the instructional leadership for the assistant principals. At that time, the Secretary of Education Terrel Bell established the National Commission of Excellence in Education in August of 1981 and prescribed as the goal of the Commission to examine the quality of education in the US (Ravitch, 1990). The currently occurring fourth shift in the job description of the assistant principal Owen-Fitzgerald (2010) attributed to the time when the data began to be used for analysis of the school's performance and for generating plans for improving student achievement. The author stated that this shift signified the beginning of the era when principals and the assistant principals became change agents (Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010).

Reaching the point of the need for assistant principals to become change agents and earning attention of academic research took decades. There was little written about the role and status of the assistant principal before 1953 (Gillespie, 1961). Several examples of research explain it due to the fact that assistant principals were usually selected by the principals from the teaching staff and did not carry much formal authority, which, consequently, did not earn that position much attention (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012; Glanz, 1994; Hohner, 2016; Marshall, 2006; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010).

Literature on assistant principals reports that the first nation-wide study of the role of the assistant principal was conducted by the National Association of Elementary

School Principals (NAESP) in 1923 and had a purpose of collecting descriptive data on what duties assistant principals had (Madden, 2008; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010). The report stated that the assistant principals had disciplinary and attendance duties. The next nation-wide study was conducted by NAESP in 1970 (Glanz, 1994). That research collected descriptive data on characteristics of assistant principals, their experience, training, functions, financial status, working conditions, and roles played by the assistant principals at schools. The authors of the early study, Austin and Brown (1970), made a conclusion that assistant principals predominantly dedicated their day to taking care of student discipline, lunch duties, parent conferences, and attendance rather than fulfilling a role of an educational leader.

The outcomes of this early study by Austin and Brown were further confirmed by a number of later studies conducted on assistant principal responsibilities (Peters, Gurley, Fifolt, Collins, & McNeese, 2015). In these studies, the teachers stated that assistant principals are the administrators whose help teachers seek with the issues of the daily school routines (Hartzell, 1990; Wright, 1994). Bordinger (1973) called these as "here-and-now" issues. This fact would explain the list of the duties that the assistant principals fulfill each day. Although such lists would vary from site to site, the surveys that were conducted among APs showed that most assistant principals deal with the issues of discipline, hold conferences with parents and students, work on extra-curricular activities, counsel students, monitor lunch and recess, and support the overall stability of the school (Glanz, 2004; Madden, 2008; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Santacrose, 2016; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010). The study conducted by Simpson (2000) listed student discipline, student activities, and student attendance as the three main duties assistant principals had

on their lists, and the APs that participated in that study had expressed frustration by being seen as only disciplinarians.

Scott (2011) provided further a list of studies that investigated the roles of the assistant principals across the United States. He found that similar patterns of duties occupied APs' days in Indiana, Texas, New Your City, Washington, and even internationally in Australia. Most APs commented that their real job duties were different from the ideal functions they would like to perform, and the APs stated that the ideal functions would make their positions more effective (Scott, 2011).

Furthermore, Glanz' study from 1992 conducted among 200 New York City assistant principals determined that more than 90% of respondents of the survey were not involved in instructional leadership, staff development, teacher training, and curriculum development, which resulted in the dissatisfaction that was expressed by nearly all participants of the study (Glanz, 1994). The assistant principals also commented that their duties typically included tasks that the principals did not want to fulfill and instead assigned to the APs (Celikten, 2001; Madden, 2008; Scott, 2011).

Overall, as Marshall and Hooley (2006) reported, after the reforms of 1980s, which introduced state testing, mandated homework, monitoring instruction, and staff development, the responsibilities of the assistant principals increased, yet their control over daily school functioning and long-term goals of schools decreased. With the inaction of NCLB legislation in 2002, assistant principals had to develop skills in data collection, item analysis, best teaching practices, and teacher evaluations based on tests. Assistant principals also had to learn how to communicate with the parents and community in regard to schools' standing on the testing scale in comparison to other schools and

motivate teachers to collaborate in the conditions of strict accountability. Nevertheless, at

the elementary school level, the assistant principals still were mostly viewed as

disciplinarians, which gave them no opportunities for influencing instructional practices

and increase academic performance (Best, 2016; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Vick, 2011).

An important statement was made by Koru (1993) that after studying assistant

principals' job description in Houston, Texas, concluded that the role of the assistant

principal reacted to various situations and times, therefore, it has been a subject to

continuous change (as cited in Scott, 2011). Overall, the duties and responsibilities of the

assistant principal are decided by the principal. As Celikten (2001) sums it up, the

assistant principal's role is to "do whatever is needed to help the principal maintain a safe

and orderly environment for instruction." This statement aligns with the description of

the nature of the assistant principalship provided by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics

(2004) as stated in the 2004-2005 Edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook:

"Assistant principals aid the principal in the overall administration of the school." This

demonstrates that the future and the learning experiences of the assistant principals and

those teachers that aspire to become assistant principals depend on the principal and the

principal's motivation, intentions, values, expertise and leadership abilities in supporting

the growth of the aspiring administrators, (Madden, 2008). That is especially important in

the era of rising rigor in certification of the new public school administrators and the need

for well-prepared administrators.

### The History of Educational Leader Certification

A number of issues have led to a nation-wide increase in the need for public school

administrators. Among those reasons are the recent slow but steady recovery of the US

economy after the housing crisis of 2008, the retirement of baby-boomer generation of school administrators, and the growth of the student population in public schools nation-wide (Allegretto, Jacobs, & Lucia, 2011; Beltramo, 2014; Davidson, 2015; Jackson, 2007; Scott, 2011; USA Today, 2013). According to data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), the employment of elementary, middle, and high school principals is projected to grow eight percent between 2016 and 2026. The resulting increase in the number of open positions for school leaders, including postings for the entry-level job of assistant principal, has attracted many classroom teachers who aspire to become school leaders (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008; Hoffert, 2015; Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). This process of teachers becoming administrators has ample precedent in the American education system.

Historically, public school assistant principals came out of the ranks of teachers and did not need special training or any kind of certification; instead, they served as the primary 'assistants to the principal' (hence the title given to them in the 1940s and 1950s), and in such a role, they had little actual authority or autonomy (Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2001; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). At the initial creation of this middle management position in the 1920s-30s, the job of an assistant principal was associated with clerical chores, with emphasis on ensuring that the school has enough textbooks for the students, the classrooms have enough furniture, and the teachers have their supplies, or at most the assistant principal was recognized as a disciplinarian on campus (Glanz, 1994). However, that position slowly evolved together with the demands of the modern school and the heightened expectations for all school administrators, including assistant principals (Glanz, 1994; Glanz 2001; Marshall, 2006). These growing demands of the job

also changed the formal expectations for assistant principals' preparation, and by the 1960s, California assistant principals had to have a Standard Administrative Services Credential to qualify for their position (CTC, 2012). In other words, APs now have to be highly trained and must take the same steps toward certification as school principals (Kantor, 2015).

These steps have changed greatly over the past fifty years. However, before 1960, individuals wanting to become a K-12 administrator had to apply for a General Administrative Credential, for which one of the prerequisites was the possession of both elementary and secondary teaching credentials (CTC, 2012). With the change over to the Standard Credentials in the 1970s, Standard Administrative Credentials were authorized for specific positions (i.e., an assistant principal would get a Standard Administrative Credential for that particular position), and the holder only had to have the appropriate teaching credential for the level at which they were to function as an administrator (CTC, 2012). The Ryan Act of the 1984 provided a streamlined, two-tiered, single Administrative Services Credential for all levels, with the first tier focusing on site-level needs, while the second would differentiate its induction practices based on the position held by the new administrator (CTC, 2012).

In the two-tier credentialing system, initially competency can be demonstrated in three ways: by completing a two-year series of courses, by completing a CTC-approved one-year internship, or by successfully passing the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE) (University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education, n.d). The CPACE was instituted in 2011 in order to provide working teachers with a pathway towards an administrative career that did not involve the two-year

preliminary coursework (Fensterwald, 2012). It was later revised to include a video-based performance subtest in order to better assess the working knowledge of potential administrators (CPACE Update Info). Once one of these initial requirements has been successfully completed, new administrators can obtain administrative positions in K-12 public institutions. While in this position, they are authorized to perform the following actions in educational institutions catering to students from preschool to adult levels:

- Develop, coordinate, and assess instructional programs

- Evaluate certificated and classified personnel

- Provide students' discipline, including but not limited to, suspension and expulsion

- Provide certificated and classified employees discipline, including but not limited to, suspension, dismissal, and reinstatement

- Supervise certificated and classified personnel

- Manage school site, district, or county level fiscal services

- Recruit, employ, and assign certificated and classified personnel

- Develop, coordinate, and supervise student support services, including but not limited to extracurricular activities, pupil personnel services, health services, library services, and technology support services. (CTC, 2017)

Beyond these duties, new administrators are authorized to evaluate instructional services and certificated personnel, and also provide discipline services for students.

Once administrators with the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential begin working in an administrative position, they have five years to complete all credentialing

requirements in order to apply for their Clear Administrative Services Credential (CTC, 2017).

In California, rising accountability expectations for public education administrators necessitated the creation of The California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL), which became part of California's education leader preparation continuum in 2001 (CTC, 2014). They are now used in the certification process for California school administrators. The CPSEL broadly "identify what an administrator must know and be able to do in order to move into sustainable, effective practice" (CTC, 2014). The CPSEL were based on the national Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders, which were written in 1996 and adopted by 26 states (Bottoms, 2001). Then, in 2001, the new CPSEL were drafted in a collaboration of the California School Leadership Academy at WestEd, the Association of California School Administrators, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission), the California Department of Education (CDE), California public and private universities, and county offices of education, which led to adoption of the first set of CPSEL in 2001. In 2004, the California Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CTC) formally adopted the CPSEL into the program standards for administrative licensure (CTC, 2013). Since then, the CPSEL have been revised to fill gaps among the standards, and the refined CPSEL were approved by the California Commission on Teaching Credentialing in February 2014 (CTC, 2014). In their current form, they are now embedded in the current Administrative Clear Credential induction program standards, where they "provide a coherent system of development that promise to prepare, support and make stellar California's next decade of administrators, leaders who have a deep personal commitment to high expectations for

their work that is informed by professional standards" (*Administrative Services*

*Credentials Program Handbook*, 2016, p.13).

The CPSEL standards were crafted to support administrators with their professional

and personal practice, and, therefore, they attempt to address a large number of

significant areas of administrators' work and influence. These areas are organized into six

major broad categories that describe the responsibilities of an educational leader:

1. Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision

2. Instructional Leadership

3. Management and Learning Environment

4. Family and Community Engagement

5. Ethics and Integrity

6. External Context and Policy.  (CTC, 2014, p. 6)

As the CTC (2014) states, the six categories were identified and designed as the

major themes based on research and evidence-based practices across different states. That

also aligns them with the current California state policies and the national ISLLC

standards, which were updated in 2008 (CTC, 2014).

Each of these six standards contains three to four main focus areas for an

administrator's work and provide more details and clarification regarding expected leader

action within the standard.  For example, under the first standard, Development and

Implementation of a Shared Vision, one of the three areas of focus involves "developing

shared vision" (CPSEL Booklet, 2014). As the next structural step, the focus areas are

further divided into indicators. The indicators serve as examples of what actions steps an

educational leader could take to provide evidence for practicing that element in daily

leadership. The CPSEL booklet (CTC, 2014) in particular explains that the indicators can be "adapted in a variety of ways by state and local education leaders to guide and support administrator leaders from preparation through levels of increasingly accomplished practice." In the case of work on shared vision, indicator 1B-1 asks new administrators to "communicate the vision so the staff and school community understands it and uses it for decision-making" (CPSEL Booklet, 2014). In this way, the CPSEL indicators provide examples of the types of activities that new administrators should master in order to improve their professional practice.

This two-tiered credentialing system, informed by the CPSEL, was put in place in order to provide a solid foundation for the "preparation, induction, development, professional learning and evaluation of school administrators in California" and to build "a coherent leadership development system" in the modern educational world (CTC, 2014). Furthermore, it was intended to "cultivate and support school leaders" and provide them with the tools to "facilitate powerful instruction for all students and ongoing school improvement" by guiding them towards "effective management practices, a commitment to social justice and equity, ethical behavior, professional courage, and personal integrity" (CTC, 2013).

The new professional standards for educational leaders create opportunities for the existing school leadership to inspire staff to search for innovative approaches to promote student-centered learning. This makes the new national educational leadership standards significant for the teachers that aspire to become administrators because they emphasize that leadership can be demonstrated at all levels and not only by principals and assistant principals (NPBEA, 2015). Effective leadership can also include teachers, and,

therefore, the standards reflect the importance of cultivating leadership capacity of others (NPBEA, 2015). That approach aligns with the design of the California Administrative Services Credential Program, which is based on "a sound rationale informed by theory and research and principles of adult learning theory" (CTC, 2018).

With the adaption of the new credentialing system, the state of California is recognizing the complexity of the role of the assistant principal and the need for rigorous training that includes application of that learning to practice and mentoring by the experienced leaders to ensure that the emerging leaders are prepared for the demands of educational administration in the 21st century (Beam, Claxton, & Smith, 2016; Carroll, 2015; McDaniel, 2017; Soho, Barnett, & Martinez, 2012; Turnbull, Anderson, Riley, MacFarlane, & Aladjem, 2016). Understanding of how adults learn and acknowledging it as one of the means to advance professional learning for the emerging leaders allows to bring meaningful change to preparation of educational leaders of today and meet the needs of the aspiring leaders entering educational administration (Armstrong, 2015; McDaniel, 2017; Wang, Bain, Hope, & Hansman, 2016).

**The History and Principles of Andragogy**

"Education is an activity undertaken or initiated by one or more agents that is designed to effect changes in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals, groups, or communities" (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). The first systematic theoretical concepts of education and adult learning started to emerge in the middle of the 19th century (Klappan, 2002). Ideas on the role of the teacher and the learner varied in different education theories. In Europe and in America, the most common form of instruction was pedagogy (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990). Proponents of pedagogy supported it

for its teacher-directed approach, which was developed in Medieval European schools where religious training and general education were conducted by monks and nuns. Students in these schools were only boys, and they received training there according to a specific system of instruction that prepared these children "to be obedient, faithful, and efficient servants of the church" (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990). In its traditional sense, pedagogy is the art and science of teaching children. The word pedagogy is derived from the Greek word "paid," meaning child plus "agogos," meaning leading (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990). In this concept of teaching and learning, the teacher makes decisions about what, when, and how something will be learned. That teacher-directed instruction declares that the learner is an empty vessel that needs to be filled with knowledge, and the learner assumes a submissive role requiring complete obedience to the teacher and the teacher's choice of instruction (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

For a long time, this pedagogical model was applied both to the teaching of children and adults, not making a difference in how these two groups learn. The first concepts of adult learning emerged only after World War I and began to crystallize into a formal framework in the second half of the 20th century (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005; McDaniel, 2017). The need for a more active role of a learner in the learning process was dictated by the changes in the society, economy, communication, information technology, and the science of education that overall opened new possibilities for initiative, individual capacities and abilities, independence, and competence (Zmeyov, 1998). Suggestions about giving the learner a more active role in the education process can be found in the works of educators, psychologists, and philosophers around the world. Ideas on pragmatic learning and general adult education

were expressed by the American psychologist J. Dewey, the Russian educators K. D. Ushinsky and N. K. Krupskaya, the German researcher F. Pogeller, the Yugoslavs B. Samolovcev and D. Savicevic, the Dutchman T. ten Have, and the Polish researcher L. Turos (McDaniel, 2017; Zmeyov, 1998).

However, the fundamental ideas of andragogy as a theory of adult learning were formulated independently in the 1970's by the American researchers Malcolm Knowles and R. M. Smith and by British researcher Peter Jarvis when they challenged the previous assumption that children and adults learn in the same way (Zmeyov, 1998). They disagreed with the pedagogical emphasis on the knowledge that needed to be passed onto the learner and on the instructor as a transmitter of that information, as that approach ignored the learner as an essential part of the learning process (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Moreover, the practices used in the formal adult education system that began to develop in the 1970's in Russia and in other parts of the world to improve the literacy level in adults demonstrated that pedagogy as a teaching approach that was developed for children was not efficient with the grown-up learners (Zmeyov, 1998). It was evident that there was a need for a new framework for teaching adults that would match their unique needs and acknowledge their already existing experience. Andragogy became that new framework that addressed "the art and science of teaching adults" (Forrest & Peterson, 2006, p. 114).

The term andragogy dates as far back as 1833, when it was coined by a German teacher, Kapp, and popularization of andragogy and its development into a learning theory are credited to the most cited and most well-known works that were written much later by Malcolm Knowles (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990; McDaniel, 2017). The term

*andragogy,* which can also be spelled as *androgogy,* comes from "the Greek word 'aner', with the stem 'andra' meaning 'man'… or 'adult', and 'agogos' meaning 'leader of'" (Holmes & Abington-Cooper, 2000, p. 51). Knowles (1980, p. 43) in his work defined the term as "the art and science of helping adults learn." Knowles's popularization of andragogy came mostly as a reaction to pedagogy, which he regarded as not fitting to adult education.

The most essential disagreement that Knowles had with the pedagogical framework was in regard to the role of the adult learner. Knowles argued that pedagogical model cannot be equally applied to the teaching of children and adults because it did not account for maturation and its influence on motivation for learning (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990). In his theory, Knowles (1984) explained that as adults mature, they become more independent and responsible for their choices and actions, choosing to learn and seeking knowledge in order to solve immediate problems in their lives. The "tabula rasa" model of learning presented in pedagogy did not take these factors in consideration while teaching adults, which often led to dissatisfaction and resentment among adult learners (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990; "Pioneers in our field," 2016).

Fundamental andragogical assumptions present the adult learner as a problem-solver, self-directed in gathering life experience and learning in order to fulfill his societal role (Ntombella, 2015). Due to this active role of an adult learner, Knowles (2005) defined the goal of adult education to be more of self-actualization that engaged the adult's emotional, psychological, and intellectual being, the whole self. In this paradigm, the role of the educator of adult learners shifts more toward assisting adults

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with their development and reaching their full potential, thus becoming more of a facilitator guiding self-directed learners Conner, Dev, & Krause, 2018).

Knowles (2005) differentiated andragogy from pedagogy by proposing these six principles that explain how and why adults learn:

1. The learner's need to know.

2. The learner's self-concept.

3. The role of the learner's prior experiences.

4. Readiness to learn.

5. Orientation to learning.

6. Motivation to learn.

The learner's need to know and the learner's self-concept stem from the need of the adults to be in charge of their lives and in control of their learning, which translates into the need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of instruction (Crews, 2018). This leading role of the learner differentiates the adult learning process from the education for children and highlights the role of maturation in the adult's learning. Ntombela (2015) explained that "self-concept assumes that an adult is no longer dependent upon someone, but is mature enough to discern and decide upon learning goals and needs." Adulthood is characterized by researchers as a time in the maturation process when a person realizes the need to be independent and becomes in self-perception and in the perception by others self-directing in setting goals, making decisions, facing their consequences, and in the defining the meaning of one's own life (Gehring, 2000; Newton, 1977). As the definition of andragogy itself suggests, adults strive to be the leading force in their own life and life choices, including choices in learning, with them

aiming for a more complete fulfillment of their own potential, and so the education of adults had to account for these desires to be more effective in teaching them (Zmeyov, 1998). Gehring (2000) emphasized the need of adults to be treated with respect as unique individuals, as they tend to resent situations where they are treated like children, and so the learning in the form of talking down to children that is predominant in pedagogy is met by the adults with resistance and resentment because it does not fit the adults' self-concept of autonomous individuals. The education of adults had to build a new paradigm where the adult as the learner is the force directing the learning in cooperative activities with the instructor as facilitator and is included in "the planning, realization, evaluation, and correction of the learning process" (Zmeyov, 1998).

The principle of learner's prior experiences stems from the understanding that adults come into the learning environment with a wide spectrum of exposure in different areas of life that they use as a learning resource (Knowles, 2005; Ntmobela, 2015). Experiential knowledge from being community members, parents, spouses, providers, employees, and students must be accounted for in the process of designing content, structures, and modalities of learning for adults because they seek specific knowledge and skills they will need for the fulfillment of their life goals. Gehring (2000) emphasized these implications for development programs for adults, which need to recognize that adults already have a lot of knowledge to derive from their experiences, and they learn best when provided opportunities to apply new knowledge to the past experiences, as new learning takes on meaning on the foundations of the already existing rich prior experience.

The readiness principle explains the ability of adults to face learning due to roles they have already assumed in the society. This principle sets another major difference between the learning and teaching of adults and children. Children learn best what is developmentally appropriate for them to learn at a certain stage of their lives, and the learning process is designed as a continuum of developmental tasks, so that it leads them from one phase of development and learning to the next one (Gerhing, 2000). Adults, though, learn what they select as what they "need to know" based on their current stage of life, professional growth need, social relations, and societal placement because when the timing and conditions are right, adults seek specific knowledge and skills that will help them become more effective at that time of their life and in the role that they play (Gehring, 2000; Zemke & Zemke, 1995; Zmeyov, 1998).

In this regard, the principle of readiness overlaps with the principle of orientation. Ntombela (2015) interprets orientation as the expectation of matured adults to learn something that they can readily apply to problems they wish to solve. As adults become the subject of their own socio-economic and personal development, they seek to reach higher levels of competence in the professional, social, and personal domains, and so they apply their problem-solving mindset to locate and learn knowledge and skills they can apply immediately to their situations in order to improve in any or all of these areas and to cope with life-changing events (Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Zemke & Zemke, 1995; Zmeyov, 1998). To account for this need for immediate application of the new knowledge and skills to their lives, adult learning must include practical collaborative learning activities and instructors that don't teach subject matter, but rather help the adult

to learn, asking the questions, "What are you hoping to get out of this course?" (Gehring, 2000; Zmeyov, 1998).

The final principal of motivation states that motivation for adults is largely intrinsic (Knowles, 2005). As the adult learners bring their life experience and readiness to learn into the learning process, as they are interested in finding immediate application to their problem-solving situation, when they learn adults operate from the internal motivation to find immediate relevance in the learning subject that will impact their professional performance, increase job satisfaction, or improve their overall quality of life (Crews, 2018). This demonstrates a major difference in learning of children and adults: even though children learn in sequence according to the developmental tasks they can face at a certain age, they may not be ready to connect their current learning with success with the later tasks; whereas adults being focused on real-world application of their learning and on improvement of the professional, social, or personal situations seek the immediate application and usefulness of their new knowledge, which directly affects their motivation during the learning process (Crews, 2018; Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Gehring, 2000; Zmeyov, 1998). Including the adult learners in decision-making about the content, process, and sequence of their learning process significantly increases internal motivation and efficacy of the adult learners (Crews, 2018; Gehring, 2000; Zemke & Zemke, 1995).

As literature on the topic of andragogy suggests, the andragogical principles of learning currently are widely used not only in general adult education. Teaching an adult in the context of his or her anthroposphere, which accounts for the objectives of life importance to the individual, is now being practiced in the business world while

providing leadership professional development training to middle-level management in organizations (Crews, 2018; Zmeyov, 1998).  Lifelong learning is now not just a positive concept, but a necessity for occupations in many fields, and andragogy expands the knowledge on how to empower the growth and continuous learning of adults in the modern world of rapid changes (Zmeyov, 1998).

**Preparation of Middle Management in the Non-Educational World**

A major cultural shift has been occurring in leadership roles outside of education, especially concerning growth and continuing learning of the middle-level leadership. This shift within modern organizations was enforced by the challenges of globalization, advances of technology, development of the global workforce, and reduction of the workforce due to the economic downturn in the first decade of the 21st century (Baron & Parent, 2015; Clark, 2016; Davidson, 2015; Warhurst, 2012). If the educational research has been trying to identify the role and responsibilities of the assistant principals in education, the "age of austerity" drew closer attention to the middle management in other fields, trying to describe the identity of the middle-level managers and their leadership development needs (Clements, 2013; Warhurst, 2012). Local governments recognize that quality leadership at the middle level in public sector, higher education, non-profit and in the business sector is essential for survival of the organizations (Inman, 2009; Clements, 2013; Crews, 2018; Wang, Bain, Hope, & Hansman, 2016; Warhurst, 2012). Crews (2018) also pointed out that the need for organizations to recognize and develop building capacity from within emerged as a new trend from the leadership deficit that was created by the retirement of managers from the baby-boomer generation. However, the new leadership requirements bring up a different perception on the middle-level leadership,

recognizing that middle-level leaders are not simply managers, but rather "active supporters of learning, organizational development and human resource development" (Clark, 2016).

Clark (2016) noted that since the peak of the recession in 2010, organizations worldwide are still recovering from the economic downturn, and that dictates the need for responsible organizational development to maintain positive business transactions and the growth of productivity. With limited economic resources, organizations shifted their focus from development and coaching at the executive level to the development and training of the front-line employees and middle managers, developing not only management skills, but also leadership identities among these middle-level managers. Warhurst (2012) describes this change as "leadership leap[ing] ahead of management," and the organizations are now looking for the new forms and models of professional development for middle management.

Just as the role of the assistant principals in education is changing, the role of the middle manager in organizations is evolving, and middle managers are now being asked to assume more leadership responsibilities in addition to their traditional managerial job descriptions (Clements, 2013; Warhurst, 2012). This change of middle managers becoming an organization's front-line leader requires development of new leadership skills; however, there is no clear understanding among the senior level executives what specific leadership skills should become the focus of the new era training, and what forms of training, what activities and practices of middle management preparation should be utilized (Clements, 2013; Crews, 2018; Inman, 2009).

The interest in middle management development has increased; however, the research findings indicate that formal professional development for middle-level leaders has been uncommon and often took place as the training for specific managerial tasks on-the-job (Clements, 2013; Inman; 2009). As Inman (2009) explained it, most of what leaders do is "learned, self-taught and acquired throughout their life history." Additionally, researchers also note that the concept of the middle-level position has not been clear in terms of leadership (Crews, 2018; Inman, 2009). The result in some fields, as Crews (2018) states, has led to the situation when promising mid-level managers, "frustrated at the lack of professional development and mentoring, are not staying around long enough to move up." Crew's (2018) research indicated that many managers in the non-profit sector chose to leave their managerial positions due to lack of support, lack of mentoring, and no assistance with growth and development. Based on the statistics from the Corporate Executive Board (CEB), another trend also indicates that employees that originally had leadership aspirations stay in their mid-level managers' positions 30% longer due to failure to receive professional development and growth opportunities in their organizations (Crews, 2018).

Nevertheless, existing research on organizational management training has discovered that currently organizations would like to focus on developing specific leadership skills, such as authenticity, promotion of healthy organizational culture, valuing human capital, taking responsibility, creation of alignment, organization of senior level support, and relationship building (Clements, 2013). Baron and Parent's (2015) findings on middle management training in authentic leadership recommend that leadership development programs should focus on fostering "change at cognitive,

attitudinal, and behavioral levels." They also found that participants of these training

programs prefer preparation practices and activities when they are provided an

environment of experimentation, where trainees can "test their new knowledge, emotions,

and behaviors" before they have to apply them into their real-life jobs and professional

organization environments. In fact, it was noted that participants find the training more

effective when the learning environment permits and encourages exploration, and when it

fosters a culture that challenges, yet supports venturing into new areas of leadership

behaviors and attitudes in a safe learning environment. Baron and Parent (2015)

commented that this type of environment supports development of confidence in leaders

and trust in all participants of the organizations. As for the training content and

techniques, the researchers recommend using positive reframing that involves the

practice of looking at situations from the point of view of other participants and

organization members and also using encouragement, anticipation, and multiple practice

opportunities for skills that have yet to be mastered (Baron & Parent, 2015). Among other

effective techniques, the authors suggested using discussions with other training

participants where the trainees get opportunities to confront and clarify ideas, find

deeper-level solutions when addressing organizational and also personal problems,

increase self-awareness and awareness of the leaders' reactions to others, and refinement

of action plans (Baron & Parent, 2015). The underlying idea in such types of training is

the creation of an environment of experimentation while practicing empathy, support, and

encouragement of others. Baron and Parent (2015) state that "such support can be

enhanced by small-group activities fostering the development of relationships, by peer

coaching, and by other forms of peer support."

The research on the future of the professional development and preparation of the mid-level managers demonstrates that there is a need to bring the informal processes of learning into the organized and meaningful context of formal professional development, where training initiatives can be brought into the future leaders' real world and, thus, become more effective, relevant, and productive to the participants (Clark, 2016; Inman, 2009). The authors on development for middle-level leaders name a few of such forms of training and professional growth support. The most frequently mentioned among those formats of middle-level managers' development are formal mentoring systems, formation of networks, guided critical reflection and practice, opportunities for collective articulation, and sharing practices (Inman, 2009; Warhurst, 2012).

In contrast, formal management preparation programs at university levels focus on teaching about generic leadership skills and do not respond to the individual development needs (Inman, 2009). The generic approach of formal leadership training programs assumes that all aspiring leaders have the same concerns, interests, and motivations. However, authors of research on development for middle-level leaders argue that effective training and leadership development cannot be achieved through generic training, but rather should be built on contextual learning and personal leadership development planning, answering the questions not about what leaders do, but how leaders should develop and grow in order to lead, matching individual needs and skills with the preparation programs (Inman, 2009; Warhurst, 2012). Such contextualized learning can also be supported through exposure to leadership situations early in the careers of those mid-level managers, which provides them with opportunities to better understand the role, process, and knowledge of leadership before the aspiring leaders are

formally appointed to leadership positions (Inman, 2009). Induction and shadowing were named among the formats of early exposure to leadership in terms of helping to understand how the leadership roles fit into the overall organization's structure. In addition, British researchers also emphasized the value of combining "on-the-job" and "off-the-job" learning through networking both within and outside of their own organizations, observation, and engagement in a variety of projects with opportunities to reflect on experiences and exchange ideas, especially with the senior colleagues (Inman, 2009).

The organizational management researchers recognize the importance of the middle-level managers and the need to build their individual leadership skills as essential for building a strong leadership pipeline. As the business environment experiences dramatic changes, all operation rules are being reviewed and adjusted to the complexity of the new world, and genuine leadership is in high demand because it brings confidence, hope, and optimism into organizations, which becomes especially valuable in the era of redefining leadership at the middle managers' level (Baron & Parent, 2015; Clements, 2013). The researchers state that the positive, genuine leadership cannot be imitated or reproduced, and, therefore, new training programs and for preparation of the middle-level managers and their professional development should be created, and that could assist in making organizations stronger and healthier (Baron & Parent, 2015; Clements, 2013). While current leadership development in the world outside of education is situated in context and is in the end a product of life- and career-long practice, Inman (2009) argues that there needs to be a "more conscious effort to plan and prepare those who may aspire to leadership positions." Hanover Research (2012) describes an Individual Development

Plan (IDP) as one of such solutions when "high potential individuals receive challenging job experiences " and go through succession planning with job rotations, task force experience, and so called "fix-it assignments" (Hannover Research, 2012, p. 16). The candidates in such job rotations may be not fully qualified for those assignments, but the purpose of these "stretch assignments"  is to provide learning experience and to see whether these potential leaders have "what it takes to succeed at higher levels of the organization" (Hanover Research, 2012). The challenge is to merge the informal processes of learning gained throughout a leader's career with formal training and professional development to create structures of meaningful preparation of the mid-level managers that would be effective for the participants of these programs, providing "relevance, value for money and return on their investment" for learners and employers (Inman, 2009; Clements, 2013; Warhurst, 2012).

### Preparation of Assistant Principals

The rapid changes are also affecting expectations from the school leadership, requiring assistant principals to be well prepared for the next step in their career path, becoming principals, and to have a desire to continue learning and training for that role along the way (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Vail, 2018). It has now been recognized by the educational leadership researchers that the assistant principals play a critical role in the schools because their position is the entry level into administration and the first learning point for aspiring school leaders (Glanz, 2004; Hohner, 2016; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Sanatacrose, 2016; Scott, 2011).

**Lack of Specific Preparation Programs for Assistant Principals**

As it was noted earlier, candidates for the assistant principal position must go through extensive coursework and certification to qualify for the job. However, the research also indicates that the preparation that future assistant principals receive in lieu of administrative certification is not different from the certification for principalship, even though the job itself, the scope of responsibilities, the level of authority, and the organizational influence are very different from those in the job of the principal (Armstrong, 2014; Hohner, 2016; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Scott, 2011).

In 1984, the University Council for Education Administration (UCEA) surveyed universities that belonged to this group, asking whether they provided courses specifically for the assistant principalship in their educational administration programs. The results showed that not one university had such specific courses or addressed topics of interest for the aspiring assistant principals (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). A later survey conducted by Marshall, Mitchell, and Gross (1994) gathered responses in 50 states from 42 NASSP assistant principals and discovered that only 29 percent of the respondents could name programs or policies that addressed improvement of assistant principalship. Marshall & Hooley (2006) conclude, "Clearly, state certification policies regarding assistant principals have not addressed the issue of specific training or requirements for the position" (p. 81).

Research on educational leadership and the preparation of assistant principals demonstrates that most learning for APs usually occurs on the job, and these opportunities differ from state to state (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Madden, 2008).

Madden (2008) states that most assistant principals learn on the job through an apprenticeship, even though there is no such term or position in the educational administration preparation. Nevertheless, Madden (2008) agrees that the assistant principals training should be hands-on and closely simulate those tasks and problems that APs face on their job.

In most cases, new assistant principals get to participate in workshops of professional development events geared toward particular skills or concerns. Internship opportunities are becoming more common, but their quality can be affected by the principals who decide whether to assign duties and projects to the interning APs or just allow them to be substitutes for a day for the APs that are already assigned to the site (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Just as in the real professional world, the scope of the training experiences of the interns gets selected by the principals that usually assign the scope of the responsibilities to their regular assistant principals (Armstrong, 2014; Glanz, 1994; Hartzell, 1990; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Phillips; 2007; Scott, 2011).

In California, researchers investigating training opportunities for assistant principals have noted that elements of high quality preparation and professional development of school leaders do exist, but they mostly pertain to the principals' preparation and training (Scott, 2011; Sutcher, 2018). The university programs that teachers aspiring to become school leaders choose do not provide adequate training because their content and assignments are disconnected from the immediate needs of the jobs of the assistant principals (McDaniel, 2017). A state-level leadership succession initiative from the Delaware Department of Education also demonstrated that there is a

"disconnect between university credentialing programs and district needs" (Hannover Research, 2012, p. 14)

One possible explanation for this trend could be that the job of the assistant principal is viewed as the training ground for the principalship (Marshall, 2006; Hohner, 2016; Wong, 2009). It is generally expected that assistant principals would move onto principalship within just a few years of their entry-level administrative experience (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Due to this view on the assistant principal's role as a transitory position, the body of research on preparation and training opportunities for assistant principals is rather limited (Hartzell, 1990; Hoffert, 2015; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010). Armstrong (2011) supported the notion of the assistant principalship being viewed simply as a stepping stone to the next phase in the administrative journey. She argued that "as a result, new assistant principals and their school districts are seldom prepared for the depth and breadth of this administrative passage and its challenges for those in the process of transition" (Armstrong, 2011). It is also not helping to solve this problem that "no other role in school leadership is so fraught with ambiguity and role complexity as that of the assistant principal" (Williamson & Hudson, 2002).

**Areas of Previous Research on Preparation of Assistant Principals**

The body of literature on assistant principals' preparation demonstrates that for a long time the focus of the research stayed primarily in two areas: (a) transition and organizational socialization of the new assistant principals and (b) the assistant principalship as a descriptive overview of the position and the duties (Armstrong, 2004; Armstrong, 2015; Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2001; Grodzki, 2010; Hartzell, 1990; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). These two areas of research organize the knowledge on what the novice

assistant principals go through once they assume their first formal leadership role and what hardships they experience on the new path.

The research on transition demonstrates that when aspiring leaders make a decision to move up on the path of leadership, their transition experience can be divided into stages: an ending that signals the beginning of the transition, a neutral zone that is characterized by experiencing feelings of loss and emptiness, and a stage of new beginnings that signifies the time when professional and personal life of a new leader develops its new patterns and finally forms a more clear direction (Armstrong, 2004). A significant idea that comes through this work emphasizes that even when the aspiring leaders make a voluntary decision to undergo a big change in their professional career, it is still experienced as a loss, and even a positive change can be experienced as a loss that is accompanied by mourning, grief, and feelings of "disequilibrium" (Armstrong, 2004). In any organization, Armstrong (2004) states that people going through the transition stages become subject to a "grinding down process" that is characterized by the experiences of going through impossible tasks, humiliation, and tests. During this process, the newcomers learn about the rules of the new group that they joined, acquire new skills, and become "reincorporated" after successfully completing the specified rituals and demonstrating being "worthy of the new status" (Armstrong, 2004). In another of her works, Armstrong (2010) also emphasized that the assistant principals that acquired their formal administrative positions in the last decade experienced additional socialization challenges and more severe adjustment process due to the fact that their learning curve coincided with rapid organizational reforms that have become "legal obligations for enforcement."

Another aspect of the research on transition demonstrates that the transition process has a specific adjustment cycle, with its own phases that are valuable for training purposes of the future leaders. These phases include preparation, encounter, adjustment, and stabilization (Nicholson & West, 1989, as cited in Armstrong, 2004). However, these authors state that the organizational transition phases unfortunately are often neglected, even though they could become "opportunities in terms of their potentially developmental outcomes for individuals and organizations, since most organizations act as if their responsibility begins and ends with the recruitment process" (Armstrong, 2004).

Moreover, the transition and socialization researchers argue that the majority of the studies on transition in school leadership focus on transition to principlaship and, therefore, generalize principals' transition and socialization experiences to the processes of assistant principals (Armstrong, 2004; Grodzki, 2010; Hohner, 2016). However, this generalization is incorrect and misleading, as APs do not possess the same level of power and privileges as principals; thus, the outcomes of the socialization process are significantly different for assistant principals (Armstrong, 2004; Hohner, 2016).

**Forms of Recommended Assistant Principal Preparation**

Marshall and Hooley (2006) emphasized that "formal and informal training experiences help assistant principals anticipate the administrative roles, make appropriate career decisions, manage the tasks, and create an array of coping strategies for managing dilemmas of their job" (p. 83). The authors recommend that the training for assistant principals should include university programs that are focused specifically on the needs of the assistant principals and specifics of site-based management. These university

programs must teach future assistant principals how to prioritize responsibilities, manage time effectively, and assess and develop their skills (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012). Such preparation should not consist of checklists for managing and completing tasks, but rather include simulations, role-playing, and learning about handling school-community relations. Marshall and Hooley (2006) state an importance of creating such learning opportunities especially for those teachers that begin to "form an orientation to the administrative role" (p. 132).

In their report from 2012, Hanover Research named key components of planning and implementing educational leadership development programming, among which are (a) distributed leadership approach to succession management, (b) planning educational leadership development, and (c) training teachers for specific leadership roles. The succession management approach suggests that districts and schools must have a concept of leadership development planning as a wide-scope frame of the district- and school-based leadership succession planning. That approach must be built on identification of teachers with leadership potential, career-oriented leadership development, and increased opportunities for practice of leadership skills (Hannover Research, 2012). The next key finding, distributed leadership, is closely connected to the succession management, as that leadership model can provide teachers with on-the-job experience of practicing administrative responsibilities, project management and problem solving that will select strong candidates for the educational leadership pipeline. However, the emphasis in this approach is placed on schools and districts having educational leadership development framework for their organizations. As the report from Hannover Research (2012) states, "strategic, ongoing training may be framed by a school- or district-wide succession plan,

independent development plans, a performance continuum, or a combination of these."

As for the best key educational leadership training delivery models, Hannover Research

(2012) identified the following options:

- Internships/Residencies

- Independent Development Plan (IDPs)

- Performance Evaluation (by Administrator, Self, or Peer(s))

- Coaching/Mentoring

- Professional Learning Communities

- Cohort Groupings

- Interactive Workshops and Discussion Groups

- University-Based Courses

- Summer Institutes

- Job-Embedded Training Modules, Assignments, Experiences, etc.

- Direct Instruction (Readings, Lectures, Conferences, Seminars, etc.)

- Online Resources (Webinars, Toolkits, Discussion Boards, etc.). (p. 5)

**Professional Development of Assistant Principals**

A common form of on-going training of assistant principals on-the-job is

professional development. As Pate (2015) states, prior to the 1960s, professional

development for educators in the United States was offered in a format of day-long in-

service sessions that occurred only a few times a year; however, the literature on

professional development for assistant principals is scarce, and therefore the research on

the professional development needs of assistant principals is still an important topic in

educational research field. A study conducted by Retelle (2003) demonstrated that in

most districts principals are "expected to train and mentor assistant principals. However, the principals performed these roles in varying degrees." The researcher explained that it meant that the site principals viewed the assigned site duties of the assistant principals more important than their growth and development; therefore, often principals did not allow their APs to attend the professional development events. The study concluded that it was essential that "the professional development of assistant principals not be left to chance or sporadic activities" (Retelle, 2003).

Among the formats of delivery of professional development, Pate (2015) listed the top eight most frequently used formats of training: case study, consultation approach, coaching, learning communities, lesson study approach, mentoring, reflective supervision, and use of a technical assistant. All of these formats serve to fulfill the same goal, helping professionals that are "interested in honing their strengths and reflecting on their weaknesses" (Pate, 2015). Hanover Research (2012) adds that ongoing professional development of potential leaders must be framed around principles of andragogy, linking on-the-job experiences with self-reflection, and must be aligned with educational leadership standards and state licensing standards. As a particularly useful format of providing school leaders with professional and personal support, Hannover Research (2012) names the cohort model, listing participants' buy-in and opportunities for the application of the new knowledge as factors contributing to the success of his leadership development model.

The extensive report from Hanover Research (2012) outlined the key features of best educational leadership development programs. According to their findings, the first aspect is creation of Individual Development Plans (IDPs). After potential leaders are

identified, it is necessary to develop intentional, planned work experience and challenging assignments, coaching, and educational courses and seminars. As it is emphasized in the report, as part of IDPs, high potential individuals should receive "stretch assignments" similar to the practice in the business world "as a test of an employee's mettle" (Hannover Research, 2012). Second effective feature in teacher leadership development is implementation of a Performance Continuum (Hannover Research, 2012). Performance Continuum aligns educational quality standards with research-based descriptions of effective practices and may be used to facilitate self-reflection and guide discussions with mentors. Another key feature named by the Hannover Research (2012) was also echoed in a report by California County Superintendents Educational Services association (2016) that suggested considering various training providers, starting with school district training opportunities, state options, local universities, and third-party organizations. The Hanover Research (2012) report names successful school district  comprehensive professional development initiatives that took place in New Your City District #2, San Diego, California, and St. Paul, Minnesota. These districts developed strategic reform plans that involved training on coaching and evaluation and launched standardized mentorship programs. Successful state-funded academies that were named in the report included The Missouri Leadership Program, Leadership Institute for School Improvement in Georgia, and the Principal Executive Program in North Carolina that offered workshops, institutes, networking opportunities, coaching, and internship programs (Hannover Research, 2012). As suggested in the report, the local universities can offer pre-service leadership preparation programs and thus "reduce the need for corrective on-the-job training," consult school

districts on professional development, and offer "individualized on-site graduate-level courses for local districts" (Hannover Research, 2012). As for the third-party organizations, the report suggests using nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies for internships, summer institutes, workshops, and training opportunities (Hannover Research, 2012).

However, the report also emphasized that districts should use long-known direct instruction approach  (lectures, discussions, and readings) sparingly, as the "sit and get" approach is not the most effective delivery method in leadership development (Hanover Research, 2012).

**Mentoring and Assistant Principal Academies**

Preparation of assistant principals through mentoring and coaching has received attention in educational research as a form of leadership development. According to literature on professional development, mentoring as a form of professional development existed for thousands of years, but only in the 20th century it has gained academic merit (Malone, 2001; Scott, 2011). Walker and Stott (1994) studied administrative mentoring and defined it as a process that is characterized by a "senior person (the mentor) undertaking to support and guide a less experienced colleague's (the protégé) personal, professional, and career development." A later definition by Jackson (2007) described mentors as "experienced educators or support groups assigned to newly hired professionals to assist with questions during the first few years of the educators' position. Mentoring implies a formal and informal relationship in the workplace." Multiple authors stated the importance of mentoring relationships for development of knowledge and skills of novice assistant principals through receiving feedback from the mentors (Carrol, 2015;

Goldbeck, 2004; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Wilhelm, 2014).

Some mentorships are offered as part of Assistant Principal Academies in North Carolina

and Indiana where novice assistant principals receive training in understanding the role of

the assistant principals and socialization into the administrative world (Goldbeck, 2004;

Scott, 2011).

　　　　Nevertheless, there is also research that does not support the notion of mentorship

being the best source of professional development and support for beginning

administrators. Some authors argue that mentoring is not the most effective means of

transfer of knowledge in a formal program because as part of the informal mentoring

relationship it occurs ad hoc and sporadically, lacking focus and systemic

implementation, and not meeting specific needs of the participating novice assistant

principals (Hall, 2008; Malone, 2001; Swetkowski Giovanisci, 2012).

　　　　The report of Hanover Research (2012), on the other hand, names coaching as one

of the best practices for teacher leadership training. If set as regularly scheduled meetings

that include feedback and reflection on the Individual Development Plan (IDP), these

discussions focus on individual's professional growth instead of "pressing issues facing

the school community" (Hannover Research, 2012, p. 5).

　　　　California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (2016)

describes mentoring as an effective part of an administrative induction program. The

report lists qualities of an effective mentor that include "character, competence,

experience, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and an understanding of the

setting and context in which a mentee works" (CCSESA, 2016). Moreover, the report

states that type and intensity of training and support provided to mentors play a key role

in the quality of the induction program. The report suggests that to encourage and sustain effective mentorship it is necessary to provide ongoing support to the mentors and include flexible scheduling to compensate for the time that mentors invest in their work. The data provided in the report illuminates the fact that administrator induction programs are "somewhat newer and less well established" than teacher induction programs, as only 16 states required "some form of professional support" for first-time school principals as of 2010-2011, and only three required induction or mentoring for first- and second-year school administrators (CCSESA, 2016). California is one of the states that established administrative services credentialing standards and created a multi-step credentialing program for administrators that includes a job-embedded, in-service induction model for the clear credential program phase (CCSESA, 2016; CTC, 2017). The program is coaching-based and requires candidates to participate in self- and mentor assessments, mentor observations, meetings with the mentor to reflect on growth and practices that must align with the district focus (CCSESA, 2016; CTC, 2017).

However, according to Linda Darling Hammond and the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005), it is important to coordinate pre-service programs with in-service models, as that approach minimizes the need to add requirements during induction and eliminates the unnecessary stress when administrators are already overwhelmed and need support and assistance with daily job expectations.

**Internship**

Internship as a form of preparation of novice educational administrators has been in practice for over 50 years, after it was borrowed from the field of medicine to provide

on-the-job experience to the aspirants that were near completion of their administrative credential program (Shoho, Barnett, & Martinez, 2012). If mentorship is offered as an in-service professional development option, internship is a pre-service preparation and induction option for aspiring assistant principals (Shoho, Barnett, & Martinez, 2012; Scott, 2011). Internship is now offered by universities' schools of education, such as Fresno Pacific University and California State University, San Bernardino, as an administrative services internship program that prepares candidates to work as paid school administrators while enrolled in the administrative services program; however, to become an internship candidate, an educator must be requested by a school district (Fresno Pacific University, n.d.; CSUSB, n.d.). It has been noted that a full-time on-the-job training in a form of internships is valuable for the aspirants that are deciding whether to continue on the path of educational administration because it offers intensive experience of practicing skills that are necessary for the assistant principals in real life, and there is an example of a successful partnership between the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) that supports full-time paid residencies (Shoho, Barnett, & Martinez, 2012). However, the cost associated with supporting full-time paid job-embedded internship is rather high, and that factor makes the school districts shy away from this option of training the aspiring school leaders due to a high rate of turnover of school leaders (Hohner, 2016; Shoho, Barnett, & Martinez, 2012).

**Content of AP Preparation**

Although the body of literature on the duties of assistant principals demonstrates that the list of their responsibilities is endless and varied, the studies that investigated the content of professional development for assistant principals outlined the most desired

themes. Most authors agree that instructional leadership has become the number one training need for the novice assistant principals (Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2013; Hohner, 2016; Scott, 2011; Oliver, 2005; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Vail, 2018; Vick, 2011). Another topic named as important was student discipline (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012; Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2013; Scott, 2011). Other topics that also made the lists include growing responsibility to act as a change agent, networking skills, development of institutional perspective and political skills, facilitation of a smooth process of entry, transition, and role adjustment (Armstrong, 2009; Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2013; Scott, 2011).

All of these topics were named as helpful in preparing assistant principals to be effective in their job. As authors of research on assistant principals state, high-achieving schools have strong and competent leaders; therefore, professional development of school administration and of assistant principals in particular plays a critical role in school achievement (Pate, 2015; The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

### Preparation of Teachers Transitioning into Assistant Principalship

As the job of the assistant principal is not clearly defined, and the lists of responsibilities of APs differ from site to site, it is quite difficult for teacher leaders that aspire to become assistant principals prepare for this demanding job and achieve success with ever-evolving role of the AP (Barnett, 2012; Hoffert, 2015; Marshal & Hooley, 2006; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010). Moreover, teachers transitioning to assistant principalship have to go through difficult socialization tasks that are accompanied with challenges of changing their identities and acquiring new qualities that they did not possess while

holding the teaching assignments (Armstrong, 2004; Armstrong, 2015; Grodzki, 2010; Williamson & Hudson, 2002).

Marshall (1992) identified several tasks that teachers have to accomplish during their transition to assistant principalship. These tasks are associated with a wide array of changes: making the decision to leave the teaching job, separation from the teachers' group, developing a positive outlook toward the administrative group in the district, selecting an entry-level option, observing and selecting administrators' qualities teachers deem important, choosing an informal mentor or a role model, learning to maintain a "calm exterior" while experiencing a culture shock, developing superior-subordinate relationships with the former teacher-colleagues, learning to interpret policies, protecting their area of responsibility against competing APs, and learning and managing every-day responsibilities of supervision, discipline, and record keeping.

It has been well documented that the ambiguity of the job definition and the multitude of responsibilities of the assistant principalship create high level of stress for the new appointees (Armstrong, 2004; Armstrong, 2015; Hofert, 2015; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). A significant consequence of a failure to clearly define the assistant principal's role leads to inability to provide the aspiring leaders with a well-outlined preparation program and, subsequently, that leads to a failure to provide the aspirants with effective training programs and on-going support for the new leaders when they assume the new roles (Howell, 1989; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Phillips; 2007; Scott, 2011).

A report published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in 2001 demonstrated comparison between educational administrative practices with administrative practices in other fields:

> Unlike the common practice of the corporate world and the military, where there are systematic and continuous initiatives to grow and develop a management cadre that can take on greater and greater responsibilities and succeed at each step along the way, education makes no such careful investment of resources in its future leaders. Rather it sends a signal to its freshly minted novice managers that once they have been assigned their first administrative position, serious attention to their professional development have concluded. (p. 5)

Without extensive and adequate preparation, it is difficult for new assistant principals to be successful during the transition from teacher to administrator (Hofert, 2015).

**Internships**.

A review of literature reveals that internships are one of the venues for preparation of teachers aspiring to become assistant principals. Even though the standards and experiences for internships are different across the country, the researchers agree that the best option is a format when the interns are relieved from the teaching responsibilities and assigned a full-time formal leadership experience in an administrative position under the supervision of the principal (Barnett, Copland, & Shoho, 2009; Carr, Chenoweth, & Ruhl, 2003).

There are a number of successful internship examples in the US. North Carolina offers to teachers that aspire and have high probability to become administrators a master's of school administration program that is followed by a year of administrative

internship, providing a valuable combination of a special university coursework with support and training from the local districts (Goldbeck, 2004; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). California offers its own experience of "grow your own" approach in Santa Cruz County, where they have only two or three applicants for the assistant principals' positions that also had a narrow range of duties for new APs, which allows such a program to provide more focused preparation through the creation of partnerships with universities, develop mentor/apprentice connections, organize regular reviews of the program and the preparation process with the participants, offer more varied tasks to the assistant principals, and organize additional professional development events and opportunities for the APs in training (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

A different approach was taken in the Capistrano School District where the district leadership developed the Teaching Assistant Principal Program which provided the teachers aspiring to become assistant principals with leadership opportunities in developing curriculum coordination of intervention programs, and working with the parents (Lovely, 2001). A similar Assistant Principal Preparation Program was developed by Miami-Dade County Public School system where leadership capacity of teachers is developed through a competency-based focus that utilizes ten leadership standards of the Florida's Principal Leadership Standards (Hanover Research, 2012). The program offers activities both online and face-to-face, providing participants with opportunities for self-assessment, job shadowing, and field experience.

One Southern California district had experience with offering a School Leadership Initiative pilot that lasted three years and trained aspiring administrators in rural school districts (Zellner, Jinkins, Gideon, Doughty, & McNamara, 2002). The

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outcome of the pilot indicated that the aspiring assistant principals needed to be engaged in a variety of the organizational administration issues, be able to reflect on their practices, and have a mentor or other support during their transitional phase of leadership development. One possible venue for this important support involved the use of mentors.

**Mentorship.**

Mentorship has also been used as a preparation format for the teachers that aspire to become administrators similarly to mentorship of assistant principals that already hold the formal administrative position. A body of research has found multiple topics to be addressed by the mentorship support of aspiring administrators. An earlier example brings results from a study conducted by Marshall, Mitchell, and Gross in 1994. It demonstrated that the 42 assistant principals that participated in the survey suggested specific topics that could improve mentorship as a way of preparation for assistant principalship. These problems fell in the following areas:

- Managing community relations,

- Discipline management,

- Staff evaluation,

- Program evaluation,

- Instructional management,

- Legal issues,

- Handling emergencies,

- Drug education,

- Computers,

- Facilities and fiscal management,

- Bus scheduling,

- Fund-raising, and

- Extracurricular supervision. (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 84)

Mentorship has been named as extremely valuable by the novice assistant principals that had a short transition period and did not feel that their pre-service preparation was enough (Hoffert, 2015). In addition, the research has indicated that as teachers transition from teaching into administration they have to separate themselves from the formal teacher colleagues, and that socialization phase creates sense of isolation; therefore, mentorship can be helpful in overcoming the feeling of isolation and help develop supportive relationships within the mentor-mentee paradigm (Armstrong, 2015; Grodzki, 2010; Hohner, 2016).

**Reflection opportunities.**

Multiple studies on the initial experiences of the teachers that engage in the transition into administration or begin their work in the new role of an assistant principal demonstrated that these teachers need to be provided with opportunities to address and discuss their challenges in a safe environment. The aspiring assistant principals need opportunities to reflect on their progress and practice, improve skills in guiding collaboration, learn more about curriculum and instruction in order to be real instructional leaders, and be able to find their professional learning communities where they can receive feedback of the peers going through similar experiences (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). As participants of the study conducted by Rintoul and Goulais (2010) explained, self-reflection can be a great decision-making tool, as it helps the novice administrators recognize their mistakes and improve decision-making for the future.

It is evident from the literature that professional development for aspiring

educational administrators is a vital preparation and support mechanism that assists

teachers transitioning into assistant principalship in becoming effective leaders and

confident professionals.

## Leadership Capacity Development

Confidence and knowledge about being a leader come to aspiring assistant

principals first from their experience of working and learning side-by-side with their

school principals (DeVillier, 2009; Chirichello, 2004; Huggins, Klar, Hammonds, &

Buskey, 2017; McDaniel, 2017; Workman, 2013). Examples of a similar training format

exist in areas other than education as well. McDaniel (2017) brings up examples of the

training that doctors and residents receive at a teaching hospital in the television show

"Grey's Anatomy." The doctors at the hospital provide opportunities for the residency

trainees to participate side-by-side with them in surgeries as observers and surgical

assistants, which creates varied practical experience for the future doctors. That example

aligns with the principles of andragogy, which explain that adults need to be empowered

in their learning by being involved in selecting the content, format and activities for their

learning experiences and be given immediate application of learning in the field where

they are motivated to grow as professionals. McDaniel (2017) informs that the practice of

incorporating adult learning theories has been documented in preparing not only medical

professionals, but also corporate executive managers and educational leaders, and that

practice aligns with leadership capacity development strategies.

Other researchers, however, have concluded that the practices of andragogy and

leadership capacity development are not represented enough in educational professional

development and leadership preparation. Marshall and Hooley (2006) in their book *The Assistant Principal: Leadership Choices and Challenges* address the issue of the traditional model of management in schools where the assumption is that "administrators manage and teachers do not" (p. 125). The authors state that decision making, both short-term and long-term, and division of tasks can be approached from a team standpoint in order to empower teachers that aspire to be leaders. Such shared leadership and leadership capacity building could be useful in transforming the assistant principalship by creating a more comprehensive ground for the training of teachers that aspire to become administrators. More current research demonstrates that distributed leadership has a potential to capitalize on the skills and expertise of teachers and assistant principals, giving a possibility to every member of an organization to take on a leadership role and "become key players in the movement to reform and improve school" (Hannover Research, 2012; Vail, 2016). Identifying and purposefully tapping those teachers that have demonstrated leadership qualities and then providing them with the opportunities to practice leadership with the administrative team could serve as an approach to establish career-long development for aspiring assistant principals (Scott, 2011).

However, as research proves, there are certain organizational structures that must be set to ensure that leadership capacity development is successful (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). These structures include time set for planning where administrators and the aspiring leaders collaborate, learn together, and practice to share in the planning process when the administrative team releases control over to the team. This means that principals can play a big role in initiating and sustaining leadership capacity building,

which in turn can enhance organizational capacity overall (Chirichello, 2004; Huggins, Klar, Hammonds, & Buskey, 2017).

## Areas of Training Needs for Assistant Principals

From the previously reviewed literature on preparation of assistant principals, it is evident that teachers that transition from their classroom into assistant principalship have wide areas of training needs that must be addressed in order to make their transition successful and lasting. Unfortunately, the statistical data on teachers becoming school administrators in the state of California demonstrates that not all of the teachers that earn certificates of eligibility convert them into preliminary administrative credentials within the required five years simply because they remain in their teaching positions (Sutcher, Podolsky, Kini, & Shields, 2018). The reasons for this change hide in the overwhelming list of duties and lack of preparation that novice assistant principals receive for their job (Armstrong, 2015; Hohner, 2016; Sutcher et al., 2018). These needs must be addressed, and the body of research on the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principals demonstrated a few themes as important concerns for the novice assistant principals:

- The ideal competences and the duties of the assistant principals are different from the real jobs that APs fulfill each day.
- Assistant principals are not involved in all aspects of the school administration.
- Preparation programs for assistant principals need to change to better prepare APs to succeed in their positions.
- Professional development programs for novice assistant principals need to be built on their needs and be grounded in adult learning theory

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(Armstrong, 2015; Barnett, 2012; Hoffert, 2015; Marshall & Hooley,

2006; McDaniel, 2017; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Scott, 2011).

In his work on exploring the transition from classroom teacher to assistant

principal, Hohner (2016) underlined additional themes that are specific for teacher-

leaders aspiring to become APs:

- Many classroom teachers are inclined to take leadership positions but are
  hesitant to move into an administrative role because of the significant
  change in their role and identity.

- There is a definite transition and socialization process between teaching
  and becoming a vice-principal.

- School leadership often focuses on the school principal and not the
  realities of new vice-principals.

- New vice-principals are often underutilized in their new role and many are
  not prepared for the leadership role.

- New vice-principals have difficulty balancing their new professional role
  and their personal lives. (Hohner, 2016, p. 2)

**Coping with Burnout and Building Networks.**

While transitioning into assistant principlaship, teachers undergo a great amount

of stress that results in burnout (Beltramo, 2014; Cohen, 2008; Jackson, 2007;

Santacrose, 2016; Scott, 2011). Several participants of an earlier survey by Marshall,

Mitchell, and Gross (1994) mentioned that there is a need for preparation of assistant

principals in regard to how to cope with burnout, and how to handle the realization of low

incentive of the AP job and lack of opportunities to promote or be rewarded. More

current researchers suggest developing networks and positive relationships to help with overcoming these negative feelings (Armstrong, 2012; Hoffert, 2015; Huggins et al., 2017). Networking with peer assistant principals can be beneficial to the novice administrators because it allows them in a safe environment to share information that can be helpful in the future, connect with each other, understand commonalities in their experiences, and support each other, simply becoming a survival necessity to the teachers that just transitioned into administration and feel isolated and confused (Armstrong, 2009; Hohner, 2016). These authors also suggest developing positive relationships with the staff at school, students, and support staff. Such networks help assistant principals learn the political, social, cultural landscape of the school and the district, and also train to fit into their new communities (Armstrong, 2012; Hoffert, 2015; Huggins et al., 2017).

**Mentoring Relationships and Other Forms of Support**.

Additional findings of the study by Fusarelli (2008) illuminated the need for teachers to receive training in interactions with their supervisors and co-administrators. Armstrong (2015) in her research on the transition from teacher to assistant principal also found that the sense of isolation and overload during the early stages of transition force the novice assistant principals to seek "new avenues of support" to fulfill their individual professional needs. The novice assistant principals seek mentorships by more experienced assistant principals and interactions with fellow assistant principals.

Many authors agree that there is an urgent need for early and on-going support for aspiring and novice assistant principals. Even though the research indicates that mentoring and supports are available to some aspiring assistant principals, accessing it in a timely manner is seen as a factor that can lessen the stress of transition and socialization

for the new school assistant principals (Armstrong, 2015). Among other areas of early

supports named the need to provide the aspiring assistant principals with accurate

information about the AP's job, the assistance to interpret things and events in their new

job environment, and opportunities to develop relationships built on trust with others in

order to talk, reflect, and test reality (Hartzell, 1995; Hohner, 2016; Hoffert, 2015; Vail,

2018; Workman, 2013).

One possible source of this support is the new administrator's site principal. Some

research findings indicated the need for new assistant principals to develop mentoring

relationships with their site principals as the first-hand mentors (Armstrong, 2015;

Hohner, 2016). Site principals and their mentorship can be a significant factor in the

process of growth and development of the new APs because through dialoguing with the

principals and working with them as a team, assistant principals create their personal

growth plans, develop a better understanding of their job expectations, and find their own

place within the school. The assistant principals need to be taught not only how to

perform daily routines and technical tasks, but also "how to navigate their relationship

with the principal in order to access power and fulfill their leadership aspirations"

(Armstrong, 2015).  The novice assistant principals need to learn how to navigate

political dynamics of their work environments within their administrative teams and build

effective and lasting relationships.

In addition to receiving support from the principals, authors on transition from

teaching to the assistant principalship argue that novice assistant principals need feedback

and advice through formal and informal mentoring and support from superintendents and

other principals, leaders that went through the transition process in their time and

understand the process complexity (Armstrong, 2014; Hohner, 2016). These mentoring

relationships help the APs find "someone who takes time to answer questions, model

appropriate administrative behaviours, explain policies and procedures, demonstrate

practices and provide growth-promotion feedback" (Armstrong, 2014). However, the

researchers also emphasize that novice assistant principals must be paired with principals

that can be empathetic enough to be able to provide emotional support and build trust

with the beginning assistant principals while sharing their experience (Hohner, 2016;

Armstrong, 2014). As for the other forms of support and early training opportunities,

researchers named job shadowing, apprenticeship, and internships among the most

desired forms of trainings. Armstrong (2015) also mentions the need to train the novice

assistant principals in understanding the physical, cognitive, socio-emotional challenges

of the transition from teaching into assistant principalship, which could assist the

aspirants in navigating the challenging transition times with minimal losses and help

school districts retain new administrators, positively addressing the current reality of "the

shrinking pools of qualified administrative candidates."

**Clear and Safe Structure of Support.**

Another area of need of teachers transitioning into assistant principalship is a

clear structure and safe environment of support. Some researchers identified that the

process of mentor assignment is not always clear, leaving the aspirants to reach out to a

mentor on their own, and usually selecting someone who does not evaluate their

performance (Retelle, 2003; Swetkowski Giovanisci, 2012).

In the discussion on the importance of mentoring for novice assistant principals,

Scott (2011) also makes an important argument that creates a distinction between

mentoring and internship. The author explains that while both internships and mentorships require a protégé to be paired with a mentor, the environment in which they work differs. "During the internship, the mentor and a protégé work together in the same building. The opposite holds true for the mentorship. The mentor and protégé work together, but in completely different buildings" (Scott, 2011).

According to several authors, these experiences must be well structured and possibly include mentors from outside the district, as it is important to match the novice assistant principals with the right mentor in order to have safe and effective learning environment, where aspirants are allowed to make mistakes and grow in the process of preparation for assistant principalship (Hoffert, 2015; Retelle, 2003; Scott, 2011).

**The Use of Andragogy in Preparation of Assistant Principals.**

Tooms, Barnett, and Shoho (2012) raise a question about what should be the focus of preparation of assistant principals to equip them with skills and knowledge for the job and the environment of the assistant principalship. They argue that since the universities and credentialing programs provide training for the administration in general, then maybe it is fitting to create preparation programs for a specific job, responding to the specific needs from the field. The authors bring up a point they found in the literature on preparation of assistant principals in the Unites States that demonstrates that novice assistant principals "report being ill-prepared for the role and harboring mistaken preconceptions about the job that are in part fostered by the very preparation courses" (Tooms, Barnett, & Shoho, 2012). McDaniel (2017) goes further in his research and states that the learning of assistant principals should incorporate the principles of andragogy: the adults, the future APs, need to know why they are learning a certain skill

or concept, should be able to use their experiences, apply the new learning to their real-life professional situations, and should be given responsibility for their learning.

The opportunities to learn based on the principles of andragogy require the knowledge how adults learn the best, but unfortunately facilitators of adult education may have little to no understanding of how adults learn (Conner, Dev, & Krause, 2018; McDaniel, 2017). Similar findings have been made by the researchers on extension learning. As Conner, Dev, & Krause (2018) argue, extension programs should be encouraged to use new teaching models that attend to the preferences of their adult learner population. Thus, the professional development training designers and facilitators should modify the traditional content model to follow an andragogical approach. Knowles (2005) recommended that the instructor or facilitator needs to involve the learner by establishing a climate conducive to learning, create a mechanism for mutual planning, diagnose the needs of the learner, formulate program objectives that meet those needs, design a pattern of learning experiences, conduct the learning with suitable techniques, and evaluate the learning outcomes together with the learning while diagnosing the future needs and planning steps for their fulfillment. Conner, Dev, & Krause (2018) add that it is necessary to utilize an andragogy-focused needs assessment prior to professional development planning for adult learners. This approach enables professional development facilitators to identify the needs of their  trainees, which aligns with the specific aspects of andragogy (the need to know, the learner's self-concept, the role of the learner's experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation) and through that aligns with the assertion that adult learners should be the ones to decide what they need to learn for their professional growth (Conner, Dev &

Krause, 2018; Knowles, 2005). Most importantly, Conner, Dev, & Krause (2018) emphasize, there should be transparency used "throughout the development and implementation of the training, reinforcing the need behind the process element of diagnosing the needs for learning."

As stated by research, novice leaders do not have time to learn slowly under the close supervision and support of the district-level leaders. The era of NCLB and ESSA acts forces the district-level leaders to look for quick results in raising student achievement, and that urgent need makes the districts today look for educational administrators that are ready to operate and show results from day one on the job (Hohner, 2016; McDaniel, 2017). In this environment, the solution that Armstrong (2015) offers echoes the andragogical approach to training adult learners while developing aspiring leaders. Armstrong (2015) states, "Bringing vice-principals' voices out of the shadows of administration can inform preparation programs, school districts, and policymakers regarding appropriate formative and developmental support for new administrators" (p. 119). Inevitably, the new assistant principals will become the cadre of leadership that will be creating formative training experiences of the next generation of educational leaders, and the way the novice assistant principals learn, adjust, and adapt today will be influencing how they socialize other new leadership aspirants into school administration in the future. "Listening to and responding to new vice-principals' voices will provide valuable information regarding how (or how not) to prepare and support new leaders to meet the changing demands of school administration" (Armstrong, 2015).

**Summary**

The assistant principal's position has not been the focus of attention of educational research for a long time, even though the position's origin goes back to the beginning of the 19th century (Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2004; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Even less is known about the role of the elementary assistant principal, as literature regarding elementary assistant principals is almost non-existent (Best, 2016; Vick, 2011). The position of assistant principal (AP) emerged during the process of rapid school system expansion; therefore, its definition and description of duties were never finalized (Glanz, 1994; Hoffert, 2015; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Workman, 2013). Most researchers that investigated the role of assistant principals indicated that assistant principals predominantly took care of student discipline, conferences with parents, student supervision during lunch and recess, and very little of instructional leadership (Glanz, 1994; Glanz, 2004; Koru, 1993; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Santacrose, 2016; Scott, 2011; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010). However, this middle management position eventually acquired responsibilities of teacher supervision and evaluation, which led to the birth of administrative credential certification process (CTC, 2012; Kantor, 2015). In California, a two-tiered credentialing system, informed by the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL), was put in place in order to provide a solid foundation for the "preparation, induction, development, professional learning and evaluation of school administrators in California" and to build "a coherent leadership development system" in the modern educational world (CTC, 2014). Nevertheless, novice assistant principals report to the educational research professionals that the preparation they receive in a format of pre-service training does not match the realities of

the job, and the in-service training does not address their specific needs, especially at the elementary level (Armstrong, 2014; Best, 2016; Glanz, 1994; Hartzell, 1990; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Phillips; 2007; Scott, 2011). The current research on professional development provides multiple formats for the training of aspiring leaders; however, it does not clearly differentiate between mentoring and internships in the educational setting (Scott, 2011). One of the ways to make preparation and support of assistant principals more meaningful and relevant is by incorporating theories of adult learning, andragogy, to the content and format of professional development of APs (Armstrong, 2015; Knowles, 2015; McDaniel, 2017). The andragogical approach is being applied in the training of mid-level management in the fields outside of education (Clements, 2013; Crews, 2018; Inman, 2009). The andragogical philosophy is common for on-the-job training formats and supports leadership capacity development among the aspiring leaders (McDaniel, 2017; Scott, 2011). As the need for well prepared and highly qualified assistant principals is growing, the voices of the teachers transitioning to elementary assistant principalship  should be heard when district leadership creates professional development opportunities for the novice administrators, and their opinion on how to improve administrative preparation programs and ongoing professional development and support should be acknowledged and used if the society would like to prepare and support new leaders that are able to meet challenges and demands of the school administration in the future (Armstrong, 2015; Conner, Dev, & Krause, 2018; Knowles, 2005; McDaniel, 2017; Tooms, Barnett, &Shoho, 2012).

This literature review chapter outlined research on the matters of the most important topics and practices for preparing teachers in becoming elementary assistant

principals. It included information on the origin of the assistant principal position, the

role of the assistant principals in public schools in the United States of America (USA),

and the development of licensure requirements and certification programs for educational

leadership. It also focused on past and present professional development (PD) models for

assistant principals and the content of training for assistant principals. Chapter II

discussed theories concerning andragogy and their application to the professional

development practices for assistant principals. Finally, research related to the benefits of

assistant principals' input on the needed professional development models and content

areas was presented.

     Chapter III outlines the methodology to be used in this study. In chapter IV, the

results of the Delphi study are presented, along with an analysis of its findings. Chapter V

will feature a summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The research on transition theory and organizational socialization suggests that when an educator undergoes transition to a leadership position, such as from a classroom teacher to an assistant principal, the first year on the job is pivotal. The first year is the time when the new leader develops attitudes to match demands and expectations of the new position, and the repertoire of responses and skills acquired during that year will have significant influence on later behavior patterns, leadership capabilities, and overall future of that person as a leader (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Hartzell, 1990). The position of an elementary assistant principal in public school is not a well-defined entity and has received little attention in academic research. Transition from teaching into administration, and particularly into an elementary assistant principalship, is often dictated by the leadership goals of those that chose the path of becoming an administrator in public education. However, multiple obstacles on that path hinder educators' ability to reach those leadership goals. It is no longer sufficient to prepare the elementary assistant principals solely for the role of a disciplinarian in the school hierarchy, as the demarcation line between the roles of principal and assistant principal blends, and the elementary assistant principals must develop skills of instructional leaders and be able to create the climate of success in their school (Best, 2016; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Vick, 2011). Lack of relevant preparation and coordinated supports make that transition path challenging (Armstrong, 2012; Cohen, 2008; Hartzell, 1990; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Tooms, Barnett, & Shoho, 2012). This study seeks to understand what professional development topics and practices can be identified as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

**Overview**

Chapter III provides a narrative structure for the research design and the methods used to conduct this study. This chapter presents the purpose of the study and research questions, the research design, a description of the population and sample, the criteria used for selection, a description of the panel size, an explanation of the data collection and data analysis process, instrument validation through field test, and, finally, it addresses the study limitations.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by a panel of experts. An additional purpose was to identify strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were selected to address the purpose of the study:

1. What professional development topics do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

2. What practices do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

3. How do the panel of experts rank the importance of these practices for preparing elementary assistant principals?

4. What strategies do the expert panel recommend for implementing the most important practices?

## Research Design

The study used a non-experimental, descriptive research design. It applied a Delphi technique to find consensus of opinions among a panel of experts. Using the Delphi technique in a qualitative research design allows for obtaining descriptive data through a "philosophical orientation called *phenomenology*, which focuses on people's experience from their perspective" (Roberts, 2010).

Hsu and Sanford (2007) characterize the Delphi technique as "a widely used and accepted method for achieving convergence of opinion concerning real-world knowledge solicited from experts within certain topics" (p.1). Yousuf (2007) suggests that the Delphi technique can be used in "situations where policies, plans, or ideas have to be based on informed judgement" (p.1). The Delphi technique is valuable in the education field because it allows educational experts to communicate effectively and identify trends and needs that relate to a specific area of education while building consensus as an essential component of any policy-making process (Rayens & Hahn, 2000; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Yousouf, 2007). According to research, the Delphi method works especially well when the goal is to improve our understanding of problems, opportunities, solutions, or to develop forecast, which could lead to better planning and more effective managerial decision-making (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). The Delphi technique in this study was used to gather data on kinds of topics and practices that experts identify as important for preparing and supporting teachers to become assistant principals.

Based on suggestions from Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson (1975), the Delphi technique is appropriate to use when research seeks to achieve these five objectives:

1. To determine or develop a range of possible program alternatives;

2. To expand or expose underlying assumptions or information leading to different judgements;

3. To seek out information which may generate a consensus on the part of the respondent group;

4. To correlate informed judgements on a topic spanning a wide range of disciplines, and;

5. To educate the respondent group as to the diversity and interrelated aspects of the topic. (p. 11)

Moreover, the Delphi technique is a fitting instrument for this study because it also meets the criteria that were described by Dalkey et al. (1972), as the Delphi technique is (a) a forecasting methodology that will generate expert opinion on a given subject that (b) allows the research to benefit from using informed subjective judgements and (c) permits the experts to play an active role in the development of the study.

In the Delphi technique, expert panel members respond to a series of questionnaires anonymously and independently from other panel members, and the questionnaires are followed by feedback from the researcher (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Rowe, 1999; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Tersine & Riggs, 1976). Helmer, who is credited for developing the Delphi technique for the RAND Corporation in the 1940s, states that the Delphi technique is the simplest form of collecting expert opinion, as it

eliminates committee activity among the panel members and enforces anonymity (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). The anonymity of participation in the expert panel and of the answers of each panel member prevent prominent participants that are common in any group process, from enforcing their opinion on other experts by means of intimidation, coercion, or manipulation, which reduces the halo effect and helps panelists provide carefully selected responses (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Dalkey, Rourke, Lewis, & Snyder, 1972; Sommerville, 2008). Another essential component of the Delphi process is the controlled feedback. Researchers agree that the feedback provided to each respondent after each round of questionnaires allows participants to reconsider their opinion in light of the knowledge collected in the previous rounds and supports the process of reaching consensus (Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Rayerns & Hahn, 2000; Yousuf, 2007). Research on Delphi indicates that the number of questionnaire rounds may vary, but minimum of three rounds is necessary to achieve a reasonable consensus of opinion among panelists (Tersine & Riggs, 1976; Yousuf, 2007).
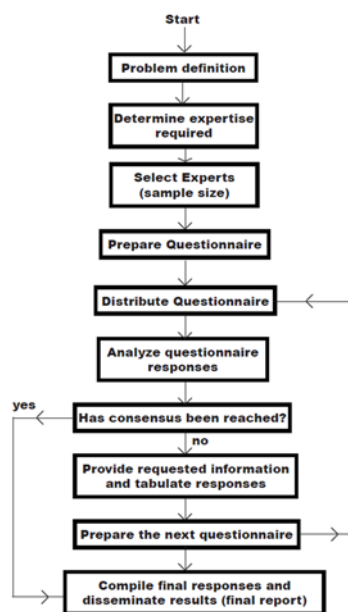


*Figure 1. Delphi Technique. Adapted from Tersine & Riggs, 1976.*

This study utilized the three-round Delphi model and used a Delphi panel of a minimum of 15 experts that participated in three rounds of questionnaires where the panelists initially identified important topics and practices for preparing and supporting teachers to become assistant principals, then rated the identified practices using a 6-point Likert Scale for their importance, and finally described the best methods for implementing the most important practices for preparing teachers to become assistant principals.

## Population

McMillan & Schumacher (2010) define population as the entire "group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research." The population for this study included all elementary school principals in California. The characteristics of this population include direct involvement in formal coaching or mentoring of elementary assistant principals in California. In July 2018, California Department of Education (2018) reported 868 school districts with 5,873 elementary schools in the state.  Each elementary school will typically have one principal; therefore, the number of principals in this study is 5,873.

### Target Population

Roberts (2010) stated, "Ideally, an entire population would be used to gather information.  However, this is usually not feasible as most groups of interest are either too large or are too scattered geographically" (p. 149).  A target population is the entire set of individuals chosen from the overall population for which the study data are to be

used to make inferences (Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).  The target population defines the population to which the findings of a survey are meant to be generalized.  It is important that target population characteristics are clearly identified for the purposes of the research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The target population for this study comprised of the California elementary school principals that have an assistant principal, particularly at the elementary schools located in the five counties - San Bernardino, Fresno, Tulare, Kern, and Sacramento. These five counties were purposefully selected also because between 2007 and 2017 these areas experienced a high number of retirements and documented shortages of public school administrators along with an increase in student enrollment, which raised the projected need for new administrators (Hill et al., 2016; Jackson, 2007; Scott, 2011; White, Fong, & Makkonen, 2010).

### Sample

Researchers use a sample from a desired population, as it is not feasible to conduct a study of an entire population (Patton, 2015). A sample is the group of subjects from whom the data are collected (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Sampling is the process that researchers utilize for selecting a group of people from which to sample from the entire target population.

To create the sample for this study, a purposeful sampling method was used. This research sought to collect expertise of the panelists regarding the most important topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals and, additionally, in regard to the best methods for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers on their path to becoming elementary assistant principals.

The common characteristic in a Delphi study is the panel members' expertise; therefore, selection of the expert panel is crucial for a study's success (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2007; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Yousouf, 2007).

The sample in this study had to be a panel of experts selected for their ability to answer research questions and for being informed about the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). For this particular study, the criteria were developed in order to ensure the expertise of the Delphi panel (see Table 1). Research on Delphi technique determined that there is no optimal size for a panel; however, having a sufficient number of representative experts is found to be more important (Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Sommerville, 2008; Weatherman & Swenson, 1974). A representative panel of 15 experts is stated to be adequate to yield sufficient results in heterogenous or homogenous sample, and therefore the minimum panel size was set at 15 experts (Delbecq et al., 1975; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). The final number of experts participating throughout the entire study was 29.

The researcher contacted district assistant superintendents overseeing elementary schools in the selected California counties seeking support in identifying the panelists matching the criteria necessary for this study. Additionally, participants were solicited through direct correspondence with the administrative credential program supervisors. The set of characteristics used to select the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Criteria for inclusion in the Delphi Study*

| Principals | Administrative Credential Program Supervisors (at university/county programs or anointed by district offices to work with the university/ county program) |
|---|---|
| Valid California Administrative Credential | Valid California Administrative Credential |
| Minimum three years of elementary principalship | Minimum three years of administrative credential program supervision work |
|  | Experience in teaching administrative credential coursework |
| Formal relationship with elementary assistant principals in a coaching/support role | Formal relationship with administrative credential program participants in a coaching/support role |
| Completed formal training in mentoring | Completed formal training in mentoring |
| Expressed interest in participating in all three rounds of the Delphi study | Expressed interest in participating in all three rounds of the Delphi study |
| Master's Degree or higher | Master's Degree or higher |

When Brandman Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was gained, the

researcher contacted the recommended panelists by phone or email to invite them to

participate in the study. In this invitation, potential participants were provided with a

letter of informed consent, the participants safeguards, information regarding the purpose

of the study, directions for accessing the Google Forms, the timeline of the study, and the

field test form that with the request to the panelists to complete demographic information

(see Appendices A, B, and C).

**Instrumentation**

Consistent with the theory on Delphi technique, the instrument used in this study

collected the most reliable consensus of a group of experts in an electronic format of a

three-round survey process (Donohoe, Stellefson, & Tennant, 2012; Skumolski, Hartman,

& Krahn, 2007; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2007). As Denohoe et al. (2012) stated, "compared

with the traditional pen-and-pencil approach to data collection, the e-Delphi offers unparalleled convenience, time and cost savings, and data management advantages." This study utilized electronic Google Forms as a survey instrument for collecting data, which allowed the researcher to provide efficient and secure surveys along with the secure feedback to the participants and researcher (Donohoe, Stellefson, & Tennant, 2012; Skumolski et al., 2007).

In the first questionnaire, the expert panelists received two open-ended questions that asked panelists to name the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

The results from this round were aggregated and used to construct the round two survey questions, where participants were asked to rank the importance of each item in the list of professional development topics and in the list of practices using a Likert scale and also to provide rationale for their decisions (Rayens & Hahn, 2000; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Yousouf, 2007).

Responses to the questionnaire from the second round were used to construct the final instrument for round three. Using this instrument, the expert panel participants were asked to describe the best methods for implementing the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals. If sufficient consensus was not yet reached as a result of the third round, a fourth and final round of surveys would be implemented (Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2007; Yousuf, 2007). Following the final round, the researcher verified, generalized, and documented the results, and then reported these in the form of a doctoral dissertation (Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Skulmoski et al., 2007).

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**Instrument Field Tests/Validity**

As indicated in the studies on the Delphi technique, an instrument or the persons used to collect data might affect the results (Dodge & Clark, 1977; Hallowell, 2009; McMillan & Schumacher, 2012; Sommerville, 2008). To increase the reliability and validity of the survey instruments, prior to the first round of questioning, a field test in the same format as described in the research design was administered to three experts. These experts met the same criteria as the purposeful sampling for this research. The researcher gathered feedback about the structure and language in the proposed survey questions, and the instrumentation was augmented based on the recommendations from the field test participants.

Another way to increase the validity of a qualitative research design is by finding "agreement on descriptive data" that was collected on the topic of study by multiple researchers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Thus, the validity of the presented study was supported by a literature matrix that was constructed in the process of an extensive literature review. Simultaneously, content validity was established through a thorough literature review in Chapter II supported by the literature matrix.

**Data Collection**

As suggested by Day and Bobeva (2005), the Delphi model is comprised of three stages: exploration, distillation, and utilization. In the exploration stage, the researcher establishes criteria for selection of the panel, designs the data collection and analysis instruments, and pilots the field study. During distillation, the second stage, surveys are administered, and data collected through a number of Delphi rounds to see if the expert panelists have reached consensus. Finally, the third stage, utilization, includes analysis of

the Delphi study results, dissemination of the final report of the study, and utilization of the experience from the conducted Delphi study (Day & Bobeva, 2005).

The Delphi technique is used to find a group consensus among an anonymous group of experts and avoid the challenges of face-to-face focus groups (Hallowell, 2009; Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Rowe & Wright, 1999; Sommerville, 2008; Yousuf, 2007). To ensure that the requirements of Brandman University IRB were met and to provide the panelists with the safeguards, the following conditions were established in order to ensure anonymity of the participants: the participants were not aware of the identities of the other panelists and responses from the panelists were not labeled with a credit to a specific person.

The researcher contacted district superintendents and county-level educational leaders seeking permission to identify the panelists matching the criteria necessary for this study. With the approval of the district administrators and county leaders, the researcher distributed through emails and electronic newsletters the invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Participation on the panel was limited to only those that met the criteria. When at least five participants from each category were identified, the researcher sent an email to introduce the purpose and processes of the study and to request consent for participation. The email also outlined confidentiality procedures and the use of responses upon conclusion of the study. When informed consent was confirmed by receipt of a signed form (see Appendix B), panelists were sent an electronic link to access the Round One of the surveys (see Appendix C). This electronic link led participants to a site containing an introduction to the process,

instructions on how to complete the survey, relevant definitions and terms, and a deadline

for survey completion. This information was included in each round of the survey.

For this study, three rounds of surveys were conducted. After the approval of the

Brandman University IRB, the data was collected according to the proposed process (see

Table 2).

Table 2

*Delphi Study Schedule*

| Round | Description of Activity | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| Prior to Round 1 | Email to provide informed consent, timeline for the study, expectations for participation, and a test form using Google Forms | April 1 - April 7, 2019 |
| Round 1 | Email with description of study's purpose, participation expectations, directions for accessing Round 1 input Google form, examples of responses (for purpose of illustration) | April 8 - April 18, 2019 |
| Round 2 | Email with directions for completing the Round 2 input Google Form for ranking the strategies as having the most influence identified in Round 1 | April 20 - April 30, 2019 |
| Round 3 | Email with directions for completing Round 3 Input Google Form, directions for keeping or changing individual rankings provided in Round 2, provide each expert the median response of all participants to each Round 2 item, provide experts opportunity to make additional comments about any item from the rankings, phone interview with each expert panelist regarding their final responses | May 1 – May 11, 2019 |

**Data Analysis**

The data collected in this Delphi study were analyzed in three phases. The

instruments used in this study collected qualitative data in each round of the surveys, and

the qualitative data from each round were used to develop questions for the subsequent round. The data from the rounds two and three of the surveys used descriptive statistics, which were presented in Chapter IV of this study. The data presented consisted of (a) the activities and practices that received the highest mean and median score, (b) the interquartile range (IQR) of the panelists' responses for the degree of the importance of the activities and the percentage of the scores that appeared within the interquartile range, and (c) the distribution of ratings from the top ranked items and the lowest ranked items. Rayens and Hahn (2000) define the interquartile range as the absolute value of the difference between the 75th and 25th percentiles, where smaller values indicate higher degrees of consensus. For the purpose of this study, it was determined that consensus was achieved when the interquartile range (IQR) was two or less.

Panelists' responses in Round 1 were collected and then categorized, creating a list of activities and practices. The researcher asked for clarification of any ambiguous responses. The finalized list of revised Round 1 items was emailed to the expert panel for ranking using a 6-point Likert scale. This step identified the degree of the importance of the activities and practices for preparing and supporting teachers to become assistant principals. The Round 2 responses were used to calculate the mean and the median scores for each item named in the Round 1. The mean scores in Round 3 also allowed the panelists to see where their responses placed within the distribution of ratings and, additionally, served as feedback, giving them context, as they reviewed their decisions and considered possible changes in their answers.

**Limitations**

The Delphi technique is a valuable instrument in obtaining expert opinion on issues and topics where it is essential to find consensus, as that expert opinion can assist in identifying and prioritizing issues for managerial decision making or guide a policy-making process (Donohoe et al., 2012; Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2007; Rayens & Hahn, 2000; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Yousuf, 2007). The Delphi process is beneficial in situations where the problem cannot be solved through application of analytical techniques and in face-to-face meetings (Donohoe et al., 2012; Sommerville, 2008; Yousuf, 2007). Yet, the Delphi process is also not without limitations. The Delphi technique critics and proponents agree that a number of characteristics can affect the quality of the Delphi study: (a) the quality of the conclusions are limited by the expertise of the panel members; (b) poor panel selection may lead to poor motivation in participants; (c) the length of time of the study and ignoring and not exploring disagreement among the participants can potentially lead to high panel attrition rate and fatigue; (d) subjective opinion about the urgency of the issue at stake may affect the quality of the responses or generate bias; (e) the results are often limited because of the poor quality of the facilitator's survey instruments, and (f) bias can also occur if questions are poorly worded (Donohoe et al., 2012; Hallowell, 2009; Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2007; Rayens & Hahn, 2000; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Yousuf, 2007).

In the case of this particular study, a number of measures was taken to minimize the potential limitations. The control for bias was ensured though the anonymity of the surveys to eliminate the "halo effect", feedback of reasons, and aggregated numerical

survey data in each round (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Rowe, 1999; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Tersine & Riggs, 1976). Reliability and validity were also confirmed through the use of iteration, the redistribution of surveys with controlled feedback (Hallowell, 2009; Sommerville, 2008; Tersine & Riggs, 1976; Yousuf, 2007). However, the sample in this study was limited to experts meeting the researcher's criteria for inclusion for each expert group; therefore, results may not be generalizable to a population not meeting these criteria. In addition, the sample was limited to the California's five counties, which may not be reflective of all regions in California.

**Summary**

Chapter III included the purpose statement, research questions, and research design. The chapter also provided a description of the methodology, the population and sample, instruments and instrument field-tests/validity, data collection, data analysis, and limitations. The objective of Chapter III was to describe the rationale for conducting a qualitative research study using a Delphi method as the data collection technique.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

**Overview**

Chapter IV presents an analysis of the data collected from this study. The study aimed to determine professional development topics and practices experts identified as the most important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, to determine how experts ranked the importance of different topics and practices, and to determine strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals. Additionally, this chapter restates the study's purpose, research questions, methodology, population, and sample followed by a presentation of the data organized by research questions. Chapter IV concludes with a summary of the findings.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by a panel of experts. An additional purpose was to identify strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were used to address the purpose of the study:

**Round 1**

1. What professional development topics do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

2. What practices do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to

become elementary assistant principals?

**Round 2**

3. How do the panel of experts rank the importance of these practices for

preparing elementary assistant principals?

**Round 3**

4. What strategies do the expert panel recommend  for implementing the most

important practices?

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**Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

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The selected design for this study was a non-experimental, descriptive research

design in order to gather data from an expert panel of elementary school principals and

administrative credential program supervisors in select counties of the state of California.

The selection of a methodology is based on the problem and the purpose of the study

(Roberts, 2010). The purpose of the study was to identify the important professional

development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant

principals, as perceived by a panel of experts. Additionally, experts were to identify

strategies for implementing the important practices for the preparation of teachers to

become elementary assistant principals.  It was determined that the Delphi method was

the most appropriate method to conduct the study. Using the Delphi technique allows for

obtaining descriptive data through a "philosophical orientation called *phenomenology*,

which focuses on people's experience from their perspective" (Roberts, 2010). As part of

the methodology selection process, the researcher considered the data needed for

collection. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through three rounds of

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the Delphi process. Population and sample design were also taken into consideration, as the experts must be identified and their participation secured for the entire process. Moreover, the type and the quality of the data collected by the researcher ensure that the researcher can achieve consensus of opinion among the expert panelists as well as reach a deeper understanding and comprehension of the research topic.

In the Delphi technique, expert panel members respond to a series of questionnaires anonymously and independently from other panel members, and the questionnaires are followed by feedback from the researcher (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Rowe & Wright, 1999; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Tersine & Riggs, 1976). The researcher selected this methodology because of the value of the Delphi technique in the education field, as it allows educational experts to communicate effectively and identify trends and needs that relate to a specific area of education while building consensus as an essential component of any policy-making process (Rayens & Hahn, 2000; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Yousouf, 2007). According to research, the Delphi method works especially well when the goal is to improve our understanding of problems, opportunities, solutions, or to develop forecast, which could lead to better planning and more effective managerial decision-making (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). The Delphi technique in this study was used to gather data on kinds of topics and practices that experts identify as important for preparing and supporting teachers to become assistant principals. Data included open-ended qualitative questions in rounds one and three and quantitative Likert scale ratings in Round 2.

By using both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able to bring the experts that qualified to this study to a consensus.  The research on Delphi technique determined that there is no optimal size for a panel; however, having a sufficient number of representative experts is found to be more important (Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Sommerville, 2008; Weatherman & Swenson, 1974). A representative panel minimum of 15 experts is stated to be adequate to yield sufficient results in heterogenous or homogenous sample (Delbecq et al.,1975; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). The data collected provided the researcher with a depth of understanding and insight from the various experts assembled for this study (Powell, 2003).  A total of three rounds of questions were presented to the expert panel. The first round asked two open-ended qualitative questions regarding the experts' perception of important professional development topics for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals and also regarding practices that are important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals. The second round was a quantitative question asking the experts to rate the professional development topics and practices that were identified in Round One. Round Three sought to determine strategies that the expert panel members recommended for implementing the most important practices. There is a gap of research on this topic, and the Delphi process was appropriate for developing a consensus of expert opinion to guide future practice in this area.

### Population and Sample

The population for this study included all elementary school principals in California. The characteristics of this population include direct involvement in formal coaching or mentoring of elementary assistant principals in California. In July 2018,

California Department of Education (2018) reported 868 school districts with 5,873 elementary schools in the state. Each elementary school will typically have one principal; therefore, the number of principals in this study is 5,873.

The target population for this study comprised of the California elementary school principals that have an assistant principal, particularly at the elementary schools located in the five counties - San Bernardino, Fresno, Tulare, Kern, and Sacramento. These five counties were purposefully selected also because between 2007 and 2017 these areas experienced a high number of retirements and documented shortages of public school administrators along with an increase in student enrollment, which raised the projected need for new administrators (Hill, Ottem, & DeRoche, 2016; Jackson, 2007; Scott, 2011; White, Fong, & Makkonen, 2010).

The sample in this study was a panel of experts selected for their knowledge and experience concerning the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Skumolski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). For this particular study, the criteria were developed in order to ensure the expertise of the Delphi panel (see Table 1). The researcher contacted district assistant superintendents overseeing elementary schools in the selected California counties seeking support in identifying the panelists matching the criteria necessary for this study. Additionally, participants were solicited through direct correspondence with the administrative credential program supervisors. The total number of participants in this study was 29 experts.

**Demographic Data**

The participants of the Delphi study comprise a diverse and highly qualified group of individuals. Tables 3 through 11 present the group's demographic data:

Table 3

*Position/role in education of panelists*

| Primary Role in Education | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary Principals | 14 | 48% |
| Administrative Credential Program Supervisors | 15 | 52% |

The expert panel contained a slight majority of elementary school principals. At the same time, six percent of the elementary principals would have also qualified for the study as administrative credential program supervisors given their experience in that role as well.

Table 4

*Age of panelists*

| Age of Panelists | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 35-39 | 4 | 14% |
| 40-49 | 9 | 31% |
| 50-59 | 11 | 38% |
| 60-69 | 5 | 17% |

The largest groups fell in the 50-59 and 40-49 range. Taken together, over half of the study panel comprised mid-career principals and administrative credential program supervisors.

Table 5

*Gender of panelists*

| Gender of Panelists | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 20 | 70% |
| Male | 9 | 30% |

Almost two-thirds of the twenty-nine panelists were female.

Table 6

*Education level of panelists*

| Education Level of Panelists | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| MA | 22 | 76% |
| Ed.D. | 7 | 24% |

Over two-thirds of the panelists had an MA degree, and one-third had an Ed.D.,

the highest level of the academic degree.

Table 7

*Type of California Administrative Services Credential*

| Type of California Administrative Services Credential of Panelists | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Clear | 29 | 100% |

All participants possessed the Clear California Administrative Credential.

Table 8

*Years of elementary principalship experience*

| Years of Elementary Principalship | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 3-9 | 11 | 36% |
| 10-14 | 6 | 21% |
| 15-19 | 8 | 29% |
| 20-25 | 4 | 14% |

The largest group of participants with elementary principlaship experience placed

in the range of three to nine years, with the second largest group falling in the range of

fifteen to nineteen years. The smallest group fell in the range of 20 to 25 years of

experience.

Table 9

*Years of administrative credential program supervision/coursework delivery*

| Years of Administrative Credential Program Supervision/Coursework Delivery | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 3-9 | 25 | 87% |

| 10-14 | 2 | 6.5% |
|---|---|---|
| 15-19 | 0 | 0% |
| 20-25 | 2 | 6.5% |

Over four-fifths of the participants with experience in the administrative

credential program supervision work or coursework delivery fell in the range of three to

10 years. Less than one-tenth had that experience for ten to fourteen and twenty to

twenty-five years.

Table 10

*Completion of formal training in mentoring*

| Completion of formal training in mentoring | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants by Role |
|---|---|---|
| Principals | 14 | 48% |
| Mentors | 15 | 52% |

All panelists completed some form of training in mentoring.

Table 11

*Participation in a formal relationship with elementary assistant principals in a coaching/support role*

| Participation in a formal relationship with elementary assistant principals in a coaching/support role | Number of Participants | Percentage of Participants by Role |
|---|---|---|
| Principals | 14 | 48% |
| Mentors | 15 | 52% |

All panelists participated in a formal relationship with the elementary assistant

principals in a coaching or support role.

**Presentation of the Data**

Data is presented for each research question, beginning with research question

one.  Each of the three rounds of the Delphi study is reported consecutively for each

research question.

**Interrater Reliability**

Interrater reliability, or intercoder agreement, is a method used to "cross-check codes developed by different researchers by comparing results that are independently derived" (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). Its purpose is to ensure reliability of qualitative research. Interrater agreement is reached when the researcher and another coder have an agreement level of at least 80% in their coding (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). For the purposes of this Delphi study, a peer researcher was sought out to check the coding of two practices of the Round Three responses to ensure consistency and accuracy of themes. The peer researcher reached an agreement level of 80% in the coding of the practices as compared to the coding results of the primary researcher. The peer researcher identified themes and reached conclusions closely related to the ones identified by the primary researcher.

**Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 asked: *What professional development topics do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?*

**Round One.** In round one, participants were asked to respond via electronic survey to the open-ended question: *What professional development topics do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?* An email invitation was sent out to three groups: elementary principals working with assistant principals, selected using public records on the California Department of Education website; district assistant superintendents overseeing those elementary schools; and local university administrative credential programs. These three groups were all located in five selected California counties (see Appendix A). These five counties (San

Bernardino, Fresno, Tulare, Kern, and Sacramento) were purposefully selected because between 2007 and 2017 these areas experienced a high number of retirements and documented shortages of public school administrators along with an increase in student enrollment, which raised the projected need for new administrators (Hill, Ottem, & DeRoche, 2016; Jackson, 2007; Scott, 2011; White, Fong, & Makkonen, 2010). Twenty-nine panel experts responded to the invitation and returned a signed electronic consent form, after which they were emailed the round one questionnaire (see Appendices B and C). Instructions accompanying the survey requested that respondents answer the two open-ended questions and provide justification and insight for their opinion where they felt it was necessary (see Appendix C). All twenty-nine participants responded to the round one questionnaire. The researcher then reviewed, sorted, and categorized panel members' responses. Similar responses were combined, and multi-part responses for proposed professional development topics and effective practices were disaggregated. For example, one respondent stated that it is necessary to consider all of professional development topics that "would lead to teachers becoming effective assistant principals… to be strong in curriculum, instruction, climate and culture" and then added that any topics that lead to growth as an educator will prepare a teacher to be an assistant principal and should be considered. The researcher disaggregated the specific topics mentioned in the response and added them to the similar groups.

From the round one responses to the research question one, the researcher generated a list of professional development topics that were identified by the panel members as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals. The list was narrowed down by the researcher to 30 items, as outlined in Table 12.

Table 12

*Professional development topics identified by the panel members as important for preparing teacher to become elementary assistant principals (Research Question 1)*

| Professional Development Topics | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Instructional leadership (e.g., components of good instruction, effective learning environment) | 16 |
| 2. Coaching/Mentoring (e.g., effective systems to observe and coach teachers through a cycle of continuous improvement, holding crucial conversations) | 15 |
| 3. Building trust and relationships with staff | 12 |
| 4. Discipline (e.g., classroom management practices, understanding of many and varied discipline techniques and how to share those with teachers) | 12 |
| 5. Writing a vision statement/Development of shared vision | 10 |
| 6. Time management and scheduling (e.g., effective systems to handle competing demands, managing information, balancing time between student discipline and instructional leadership) | 10 |
| 7. Building teams and a collaborative culture (e.g., PLCs, learning how to get a group to focus on collaboration to close the student achievement gap, working with teams, focusing on a common goal to increase student achievement) | 9 |
| 8. Communication (e.g., active listening, learning to deal with parents/community members, community outreach, and family and community engagement) | 9 |
| 9. Data analysis for site-based decision making (curriculum to purchase, technology to use, assist with staffing, instructional practices, academic and behavioral intervention, etc.) | 7 |
| 10. MTSS, including all three components: academic (instructional best practices and appropriate interventions), behavioral (PBIS and Restorative Justice), and social-emotional supports (self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, self-awareness, and reasonable decision-making) | 7 |
| 11. Legal issues (e.g., concepts of due process, direct instruction in how to do an investigation, educational policy, discipline) | 6 |
| 12. Student learning and progress monitoring (e.g., planning and assessment, training to unwrap standards, create learning progressions, learning intentions, success criteria, and interventions) | 5 |
| 13. Orchestrating and leading change | 5 |
| 14. Observations/evaluations (e.g., understanding and applying the observation/evaluation protocols of school/district, and knowing what to observe in the classrooms) | 4 |
| 15. Effective behavior management & understanding appropriate consequences and behavior management strategies | 4 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 16. | Ethics and integrity | 3 |
| 17. | Special Education | 3 |
| 18. | Budget and resource management | 3 |
| 19. | De-escalation strategies for conflict resolution | 3 |
| 20. | Professional Development aligned to the district's instructional framework and CAPSEL | 2 |
| 21. | Identifying your leadership style | 1 |
| 22. | Writing skills | 1 |
| 23. | Creating presentations | 1 |
| 24. | Project management training | 1 |
| 25. | Cultural sensitivity | 1 |
| 26. | Safety plan development and understanding school plans | 1 |
| 27. | Teacher recruiting and retention of high performing faculty | 1 |
| 28. | Situational Awareness (SA) & instruction on systems that support SA | 1 |
| 29. | Psychology | 1 |
| 30. | Adolescent development | 1 |

**Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 of the survey asked a similar question in regard to practices:

*What practices do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become*

*elementary assistant principals?*

**Round One.** Research Question 2 was distributed to the participants in the Round

One electronic survey along with the Research Question 1. From the responses to the

Research Question 2, the researcher generated a list of practices that were identified by

the panel members as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant

principals. The list was narrowed down by the researcher to nine items, as outlined in

Table 13.

Table 13

*Practices identified by the panel members as important for preparing teacher to become elementary assistant principals (Research Question 2)*

| Effective Practices | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Providing leadership opportunities throughout the school: Leadership Committee, PBIS Site Team, School Site Council, ELAC, and union experience. | 10 |
| 2. Coaching: Intentional time set aside for teacher goal setting, processing, and getting feedback with an on-site coach. | 9 |
| 3. Hands-on experiences and activities: Providing release time for shadowing of administrative work in day-to-day school operations. | 8 |
| 4. Mentoring: Working with an off-site mentor outside of school time on personal and professional development issues. | 6 |
| 5. Formal leadership positions: Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), Admin Designee, Curriculum Coach/TOSA, and grade-level leader. | 4 |
| 6. Cohort model of instruction: Building an informal pool of high-achieving principal candidates or teacher leaders, providing them with specific training and time to collaborate. | 3 |
| 7. A blended approach to learning and preparation: Include seminar learning (half days, days, or hours of professional development on the topics from Research Question 1), on-the-job training (performing tasks or responsibilities of the position) or shadowing a current administrator, practicum hours or projects, mentors or administrative coaches to support, and provide individual coaching. | 3 |
| 8. Teacher presenting PD: Provide teachers with opportunities to develop and deliver presentations to teach their colleagues. | 2 |
| 9. Graded responses to scenarios that are rubric scored and challenge candidates to reflect on how they make decisions. | 1 |

**Analysis of Round One**. All 29 participants responded to the Round One questionnaire and provided at least one answer to each of the two questions.

For Research Question 1, sixteen of the 29 respondents indicated that *Instructional Leadership* is viewed to be important in preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals. Further review of the participants' responses provided additional details that included components of good instruction and effective learning environment.

Fifteen of the 29 panelists also indicated that *Coaching and Mentoring* are also viewed as important for the teachers on their journey to become elementary assistant principals. Reviewing the comments from the experts, it was determined that these topics of professional development should include learning about effective systems to observe and coach teachers through a cycle of continuous improvement and holding crucial conversations.

Twelve of the 29 experts that responded to the Round 1 Questions One identified two topics equally important for teachers to become elementary assistant principals, *Building Trust and Relationships with Staff* and also the topic of *Discipline,* in which they included the following elements to be considered:

- classroom management practices

- understanding of many and varied discipline techniques

- how to share those discipline techniques with teachers.

Ten of the 29 respondents named the next two topics as equally important as well. These topics included *Writing a Vision Statement/Development of Shared Vision* and also *Time Management and Scheduling.* Within the second topic in this group, respondents indicated that these subtopics must be addressed in the training:

- effective systems to handle competing demands,

- managing information

- balancing time between student discipline and instructional leadership

The topic of *Building Teams and Collaborative Culture* was named as important by nine of the 29 respondents. In this topic, respondents included the following subtopics:

- PLCs

- learning how to get a group to focus on collaboration to close the student achievement gap

- working with teams

- focusing on a common goal to increase student achievement.

Another topic that was named also by the nine participants as equally important was the topic of *Communication*, where the participants suggested to focus on the following elements:

- active listening

- learning to deal with parents/community members

- community outreach

- family and community engagement.

Seven of 29 panel experts identified *Data Analysis for Site-based Decision Making* and *MTSS* and the next on the list of important professional development topics in preparation of teachers for elementary assistant principalship. The respondents indicated that *Data Analysis* should include training on what curriculum to purchase, technology to use, assist with staffing, instructional practices, and academic and behavioral intervention. Within professional development on *MTSS*, the experts identified the all three components are equally important for the training:

- academic (instructional best practices and appropriate interventions)

- behavioral (PBIS and Restorative Justice)

- and social-emotional supports (self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, self-awareness, and reasonable decision-making).

Six of 29 respondents included *Legal Issues* in the list of professional

development topics and specified that the topic must include the following content:

- concepts of due process

- direct instruction in how to do an investigation

- educational policy

- discipline.

Five experts listed the topics of *Student Learning and Progress Monitoring* next

to *Orchestrating and Leading Change.* The participants also suggested to include in the

first topic of this group information on the following points:

- planning and assessment

- training to unwrap standards

- create learning progressions

- learning intentions

- success criteria

- interventions.

Four panelists out of 29 named *Observations and Evaluations* and also *Effective

Behavior Management and Understanding Appropriate Consequences and Behavior

Management Strategies* to be included in the professional development topics. For the

first topic in this group, the experts also included in the professional development content

subtopics of understanding and applying the observation/evaluation protocols of

school/district and knowing what to observe in the classrooms.

Three panelists named as equally important the topics of *Ethics and Integrity,*

*Special Education, Budget and Resource Management,* and *De-escalation Strategies for*

*Conflict Resolution.*

Two participants named *Professional Development Aligned to the District's*

*Instructional Framework and CAPSEL* as important professional development topics for

teacher to become elementary assistant principals.

Lastly, the analysis of the data shows that there were ten professional

development topics that were mentioned only once each, respectively. Those professional

development topics important for professional development of teachers seeking

elementary assistant principalship included the following areas:

- *Identifying your leadership style*

- *Writing Skills*

- *Creating Presentations*

- *Project Management Training*

- *Cultural Sensitivity*

- *Safety Plan Development and Understanding School Plans*

- *Teacher Recruiting and Retention of High Preforming Faculty*

- *Situational Awareness (SA) and Instruction on Systems that Support SA*

- *Psychology*

- *Adolescent Development.*

For Research Question 2, ten of the 29 respondents listed *Providing Leadership*

*Opportunities throughout the School* as important for teachers in preparation to become

elementary assistant principals. The panel members included as part of this practice the following tasks:

- participation in leadership committees

- being part of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) site team

- participation in school site councils

- English language Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)

- union experience.

Nine of 29 experts listed *Coaching* as the next important practice. Specific comments regarding this practice underlined setting intentional time aside for teacher goal setting, processing, and getting feedback with an on-site coach as necessary parts of this practice.

Eight panelists named *Hands-on Experiences and Activities* as identified practices for preparing teachers for elementary assistant principalship. Here the emphasis was placed on providing release time for shadowing of administrative work in day-to-day school operations.

Six participants out of 29 listed *Mentoring* and working with a mentor on personal and professional development issues as another important practice. One of the participants emphasized that a mentor should be assigned from another site, and the mentoring activities should take place outside of school time. Another expert stated that "through mentoring a trusting relationship can be built which is necessary for growth and reflection."

Four panelists out of 29 listed *Formal Leadership Positions* as the next important practice. Here they included activities, such as being a Teacher on Special Assignment

(TOSA), administrative designee, curriculum coach/curriculum TOSA, and a grade-level leader.

Three panelists of the 29 experts named *Cohort Model of Instruction* and *a Blended Approach to Learning and Preparation* as equally important practices. Those experts that listed the *Cohort Model of Instruction* specifically emphasized the importance of this practice for building an informal pool of high-achieving principal candidates or teacher leaders and providing them with specific training and time to collaborate. The experts that named *a Blended Approach to Learning and Preparation* added commentary that they listed this practice due to its benefit of including seminar learning (half days, days, or hours of professional development on the topics from Research Question 1), on-the-job training (performing tasks or responsibilities of the position) or shadowing a current administrator, practicum hours or projects, mentors or administrative coaches to support, and providing individual coaching.

Two participants out of 29 listed *Teacher Presenting Professional Development (PD)* as important for preparation of teachers that are becoming elementary assistant principals. One of these respondents commented that teacher developed and facilitated professional development even provides "teachers with opportunities to develop and deliver presentations to teach their colleagues."

Lastly, one expert named *Graded Responses to Scenarios* as another important practice. This expert commented that as these scenario responses are graded according to a rubric, they "challenge candidates to reflect on how they make decisions."

With the information from Round One analyzed, coded, and arranged into frequency tables (see Tables 12 and 13), the researcher was able to create the survey

needed for Round Two. The Round Two survey was subsequently created containing the 30 professional development topics and nine practices noted above and sent to the panel for further analysis, e.g. ranking on a six-point Likert scale.

**Research Question 3**

In following the Delphi methodology, Round Two was specifically dedicated to a quantitative analysis of the responses collected during Round One. During Round Two of this study, the following research question was a focus: *How do the panel of experts rank the importance of the practices for preparing elementary assistant principals identified in Research Question 1?*

Panel members' responses to Round One became the basis for Round Two of this Delphi study. As Round One has two research questions, the purpose of Round Two is to identify the highest ranked professional development topics along with the highest ranked practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals on a six-point Likert scale. The 30 responses to Round One, Research Question 1, and the nine responses to Round One, Research Question 2 were entered into an electronic survey, using Google form survey for Round Two, Part 1 and Part 2 respectively. The first part of the Round Two survey included the following instructions for the participants: "*In the first part of Round Two, we will be focusing on what Professional Development topics are the most important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals. Below you'll see the range of answers generated in the first round. For each, please rate how important you feel this item would be to include in the professional development program for elementary assistant principals. If you feel*

*strongly about any of the items, please note the question number and make a comment in the optional field at the end. These will be included in Round Three of the survey."*

Instructions for the Part Two of Round Two were similar to the Part One and applied to the ranking of practices, asking participants to rate how important they felt each of the nine items would be to include in the effective practices for preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals. Similarly to Part One, experts were encouraged to make comments about any of the times they felt it was necessary.

**Analysis of Round Two.**

All 29 expert panel members were invited to participate in the Round Two survey, and all 29 responded to both parts of the Round Two. The researcher's primary goal of this round was to determine the top ten professional development topics of the 30 named by the experts panelists and the highest ranked important activities of the of important activities identified by the expert panel members in an effort to gather data for the third and final round. The data from this round was then placed into a table and a mean was established for each item (see Table 14).

For Research Question 1, the participants were asked to rank the importance of all 30 professional development topics identified during Round One on a six-point Likert scale ranging from Least Important to Most Important. Each point on the Likert scale was then given a point value ranging from 1 point for Least Important up to 6 points for Most Important. By assigning a point value to each point on the Likert scale, the mean was able to be established for each of the 30 professional development topics as seen in Table 14 below.

Table 14

*Mean Ranking of Professional Development Topics for Preparing Elementary Assistant Principals*

| Professional Development Topics | Mean |
|---|---|
| 1.  Building trust and relationships with staff | 5.71 |
| 2.  Building teams and a collaborative culture (e.g., PLCs, learning how to get a group to focus on collaboration to close the student achievement gap, working with teams, focusing on a common goal to increase student achievement) | 5.53 |
| 3.  Instructional Leadership (e.g., components of good instruction, effective learning environment) | 5.28 |
| 4.  Communication (e.g., active listening, learning to deal with parents/community members, community outreach, and family and community engagement) | 5.25 |
| 5.  Ethics and Integrity | 5.21 |
| 6.  Student learning and progress monitoring (e.g., planning and assessment, training to unwrap standards, create learning progressions, learning intentions, success criteria, and interventions) | 5.10 |
| 7.  Orchestrating and leading change | 5.07 |
| 8.  De-escalation strategies for conflict resolution | 5.00 |
| 9.  Effective behavior management & understanding appropriate consequences and behavior management strategies | 4.92 |
| 10. Data analysis for site-based decision making (curriculum to purchase, technology to use, assist with staffing, instructional practices, academic and behavioral intervention, etc.) | 4.92 |

The mean scores for the top ten professional development topics ranged from 5.71 to 4.92. Further analysis of the data for Round Two demonstrates that the other 20 professional development topics identified by the respondents fell in the range from 4.89 to 3.32.

The most important professional development topic with a mean score of 5.71 is *Building Trust and Relationships with Staff*. Second to that, the data shows that with a mean score of 5.53 the second most important professional development topic is *Building Teams and a Collaborative Culture*. The third most important professional development topic as identified by the panel of experts is *Instructional Leadership* that received a mean score of 5.28. *Communication* was placed as the fourth important professional development topic with the mean score of 5.25. *Student Learning and*

*Progress Monitoring* was ranked as fifth and had a mean score of 5.10. The mean score of 5.07 was given to the next important professional development topic, *Orchestrating and Leading Change*. *De-escalation Strategies for Conflict Resolution* was placed as the eighth important topic, and it received a mean score of 5, finishing the list of professional development topics that received a mean score of five and above. The next two topics, *Effective Behavior Management and Understanding Appropriate Consequences and Behavior Management Strategies* and also Data analysis for site-based decision making, were assigned the ninth and the tenth place respectively with the mean score of 4.92.

In comparing the calculations of frequency in Table 12 with the rankings of importance shown in Table 14, an increase in the relative importance of certain topics was noted. Topics originally lower in frequency were chosen to be of greater importance in later rankings. For example, topics dealing with ethics, integrity, teambuilding, and leading change were given higher rankings than their original frequency. This suggests a recognition by the panel of the importance of change leadership training for potential administrators.

Research Question 2 asked the participants to rank on a six-point Likert scale ranging from Least Important to Most Important the importance of practices that were identified during Round One. The data for this research questions was placed into a table with a mean established for each item (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Mean Ranking of Practices for Preparing Elementary Assistant Principals*

| Practices for Preparing Elementary Assistant Principals | Mean |
|---|---|
| 1.   Providing leadership opportunities throughout the school: Leadership Committee, PBIS Site Team, School Site Council, ELAC, and union experience. | 5.06 |
| 2.   Formal leadership positions: Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), Admin Designee, Curriculum Coach/TOSA, and grade-level leader. | 4.93 |
| 3.   Coaching: Intentional time set aside for teacher goal setting, processing, and getting feedback with an on-site coach. | 4.86 |
| 4.   A blended approach to learning and preparation: Include seminar learning (half days, days, or hours of professional development on the topics from Research Question 1), on-the-job training (performing tasks or responsibilities of the position) or shadowing a current administrator, practicum hours or projects, mentors or administrative coaches to support, and provide individual coaching. | 4.82 |
| 5.   Hands-on experiences and activities: Providing release time for shadowing of administrative work in day-to-day school operations. | 4.75 |
| 6.   Cohort model of instruction: Building an informal pool of high-achieving principal candidates or teacher leaders, providing them with specific training and time to collaborate. | 4.72 |
| 7.   Teacher presenting PD: Provide teachers with opportunities to develop and deliver presentations to teach their colleagues. | 4.51 |
| 8.   Mentoring: Working with an off-site mentor outside of school time on personal and professional development issues. | 4.24 |
| 9.   Graded responses to scenarios that are rubric scored and challenge candidates to reflect on how they make decisions. | 3.48 |

The mean was established for each of the nine practices that were named by the experts important for preparing elementary assistant principals. The mean scores in this case ranged from 5.06 to 3.48.

**Research Question 4**

The Delphi method is an approach to conducting a study using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies over multiple rounds. For the final round of this study, the question was meant to solicit a qualitative response from the expert panel members. The question to be studied was: *What strategies do the expert panel recommend for implementing the most important practices?* The instructions for the Round Three

survey stated that the participants needed to recommend specific strategies for implementing the most important practices. The instructions clarified that "effective practices" refer to organizational, administrative, instructional, or support activities engaged in by highly successful programs, as validated by research and literature sources. Also, it was explained that as used in this study, "strategies" refer to a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal."

**Analysis of Round Three.**

As the range of mean ranking for the Research Question Two had one category, category nine, fall below the score of 4, earning the mean ranking of 3.48, the researcher discarded that outlier after consultation with faculty advisors and utilized for the Round Three survey only the practices that earned a mean ranking of four and higher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Thus, the practice of Graded Responses to Scenarios that are Rubric Scored and Challenge Candidates to Reflect on How They Make Decisions was not included in the final round. For this round, the researcher created a new electronic survey using Google forms with the top eight most important practices for preparing elementary assistant principals identified by the panel members during Round Two. The purpose of the Round Three was to solicit qualitative responses from the panel of experts with recommendation of specific strategies for implementing the most important practices. All 29 expert panel members were invited to participate in the Round Three survey, and all 29 responded. The data from Round Three was qualitatively analyzed, coded, and arranged into a frequency table in efforts to ascertain the most mentioned themes/strategies for implementation of practices preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as seen in Table 16.

Table 16

*Strategies for Practice 1: Providing Leadership Opportunities throughout the School: Leadership Committee, PBIS Site Team, School Site Council, ELAC, and Union Experience*

| Strategies for Providing Leadership Opportunities throughout the School | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Encourage the teachers who have leadership qualities to apply for leadership opportunities, to get involved in leadership teams, and to highlight to them the opportunities that are available. | 8 |
| 2. Schedule leadership opportunities with the teachers, calendaring them at the beginning of a school year, highlighting all possible leadership opportunities in advance and communicating them with all involved stakeholders. | 5 |
| 3. The teachers that want to become assistant principals should practice running the meetings for leadership teams such as PBIS, ELAC, and grade-level teams. | 5 |
| 4. Find the teachers' strength or solicit interest and match with the appropriate leadership role for them, setting goals and developing a pathways for leadership development and a career advancement. | 4 |
| 5. Provide interested teachers training for the leadership roles. | 3 |
| 6. Coach the teachers through the leadership opportunities. | 2 |
| 7. Buy-out days for the teachers' leadership opportunities, letting them volunteer, and assignment them as administrative designees. | 1 |

In analyzing the data for strategies recommended for implementation of practice number one, *Providing Leadership Opportunities throughout the School: Leadership Committee, PBIS Site Team, School Site Council, ELAC, and Union Experience*, the most frequent concept that surfaced from the experts' responses, with a frequency of eight, was the following suggestion:

- Encourage the teachers who have leadership qualities to apply for leadership opportunities, to get involved in leadership teams, and to highlight to them the opportunities that are available.

With a frequency of five, the experts reported the following theme:

- Schedule leadership opportunities with the teachers, calendaring them at the beginning of a school year, highlighting all possible leadership

opportunities in advance and communicating them with all involved stakeholders.

With a frequency of five as well, another concept that surfaced was as follows:

- The teachers that want to become assistant principals should practice running the meetings for leadership teams such as PBIS, ELAC, and grade-level teams.

With a frequency of four, the expert panel members' responses indicated another theme:

- Find the teachers' strength or solicit interest and match with the appropriate leadership role for them, setting goals and developing a pathway for leadership development and a career advancement.

With a frequency of three, the next significant theme surfaced as follows:

- Provide interested teachers training for the leadership roles.

With a frequency of two, the experts identified the next concept:

- Coaching the teachers through the leadership opportunities.

The least reoccurring themes, with the frequency of one, included the concepts of buying-out days for the teachers' leadership opportunities, letting them volunteer, and assigning them as administrative designees.

For practice two, *Formal Leadership Positions: Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), Admin Designee, Curriculum Coach/TOSA, and Grade-Level Leader*, the panel members' responses are recorded in Table 17.

Table 17

*Strategies for Practice 2: Formal leadership positions: Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), Admin Designee, Curriculum Coach/TOSA, and Grade-Level Leader*

| Strategies for Formal Leadership Positions | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1.  Encourage teachers to apply and take them through the application process. | 5 |
| 2.  Have teachers present professional development events (PD). | 3 |
| 3.  Develop and maintain job descriptions and make teacher apply for those leadership positions. | 2 |
| 4.  Let teachers apply independently. | 2 |
| 5.  Provide teachers with release time and provide opportunities to coach colleagues. | 1 |

With practice two, *Formal Leadership Positions: Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), Admin Designee, Curriculum Coach/TOSA, and Grade-Level Leader*, the panel of experts produced a theme which reoccurred five times:

- Encourage teachers to apply and take them through the application process.

With a frequency of three, the experts named the following concept:

- Have teachers present professional development events (PD).

The frequency of two defined the next two themes:

- Develop and maintain job descriptions and make teachers apply for those leadership positions.

- Let teachers apply independently.

The lowest frequency, the frequency of one, identified strategies of providing teachers with release time and providing opportunities to coach colleagues.

For practice three, *Coaching: Intentional Time Set aside for Teacher Goal Setting, Processing, and Getting Feedback with an On-Site Coach*, the panel's responses are recorded in Table 18.

Table 18

*Strategies for Practice 3: Coaching: Intentional Time Set aside for Teacher Goal Setting, Processing, and Getting Feedback with an On-Site Coach*

| Strategies for Coaching | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1.  Set intentional time for coaching and provide release time. | 5 |
| 2.  Set goals and focus for coaching. | 5 |
| 3.  Provide a trained coach. | 5 |
| 4.  Observe/shadow the principal doing coaching. | 5 |
| 5.  Provide feedback and coaching after classroom observations. | 4 |
| 6.  Teachers need to practice before coaching and record themselves for practicing purposes. | 2 |
| 7.  Coaching can be done through designing and conducting PD. | 2 |
| 8.  Listen, prod, and ask questions to help a teacher move forward. | 1 |

With practice three, *Coaching: Intentional Time Set aside for Teacher Goal Setting, Processing, and Getting Feedback with an On-Site Coach*, the panel of experts produced a few themes which reoccurred five times each:

- Set intentional time for coaching and provide release time.

- Set goals and focus for coaching.

- Provide a trained coach.

- Observe/shadow the principal doing coaching.

With the frequency of four, the respondents indicated the next theme:

- Provide feedback and coaching after classroom observations.

The frequency of two highlighted the following two concepts:

- Teachers need to practice before coaching and record themselves for

  practicing purposes.

- Coaching can be done through designing and conducting PD.

The lowest frequency, the frequency of one, was given to the strategies of listening,

prodding, and asking questions to help a teacher move forward.

The results for Practice 4, *A Blended Approach to Learning and Preparation* are contained in Table 19.

Table 19

*Strategies for Practice 4: A Blended Approach to Learning and Preparation: Include Seminar Learning (Half Days, Days, or Hours of Professional Development on the Topics from Research Question 1), On-the-Job Training (Performing Tasks or Responsibilities of the Position) or Shadowing a Current Administrator, Practicum Hours or Projects, Mentors or Administrative Coaches to Support, and Provide Individual Coaching*

| Strategies for A Blended Approach to Learning and Preparation | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1.  Develop a consistent plan with measurable goals and ongoing calendared events. | 7 |
| 2.  Have coaching/mentoring on-site with structured time. | 5 |
| 3.  Conduct shadowing with the principal followed by reflections. | 4 |
| 4.  Conduct shadowing off-site at different sites. | 3 |
| 5.  Assign an off-site mentor. | 1 |
| 6.  Provide release time. | 1 |

In the practice number four, A Blended Approach to Learning and Preparation: Include Seminar Learning (Half Days, Days, or Hours of Professional Development on the Topics from Research Question 1), On-the-Job Training (Performing Tasks or Responsibilities of the Position) or Shadowing a Current Administrator, Practicum Hours or Projects, Mentors or Administrative Coaches to Support, and Provide Individual Coaching,  the panel of experts produced a theme which reoccurred seven times. That was the following theme:

- Develop a consistent plan with measurable goals and ongoing calendared events.

With the frequency of five, the experts named the following theme:

- Have coaching/mentoring on-site with structured time.

With the frequency of four, the concept that appeared next is as follows:

- Conduct shadowing with the principal followed by reflections.

The frequency of three earned a different concept:

- Conduct shadowing off-site at different sites.

The lowest frequency, the frequency of one, was noted for the concepts of having

an off-site mentor and providing release time.

The panel's results for Practice 5 are contained in Table 20.

Table 20

*Strategies for Practice 5: Hands-on Experiences and Activities: Providing Release Time*
*for Shadowing of Administrative Work in Day-to-Day School Operations*

| Strategies for Hands-on Experiences and Activities | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Set time for the activities through the year and calendar them for monthly events. | 5 |
| 2. Provide debrief and reflection time. | 5 |
| 3. Conduct the practices at different sites with different demographics. | 3 |
| 4. Teachers should take their personal days for these activities. | 2 |
| 5. Have a structure for shadowing days. | 1 |
| 6. Divide the time evenly among multiple participants. | 1 |
| 7. Use LCAP funds. | 1 |

The analysis of the practice number five, Hands-on Experiences and Activities:

Providing Release Time for Shadowing of Administrative Work in Day-to-Day School

Operations, demonstrated that there were two concepts with the highest frequency, the

frequency of five:

- Set time for the activities through the year and calendar them for monthly

  events.

- Provide debrief and reflection time.

With the frequency of three, the experts identified the following concept:

- Conduct the practices at different sites with different demographics.

With the frequency of two, the next strategy reoccurred among the panelists' responses:

- Teachers should take their personal days for these activities.

The frequency of one, the lowest frequency, was noted for the concepts of having a structure for shadowing days, dividing the time evenly among multiple participants if that occurs, and using Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) funds to support these activities.

The panel's responses regarding Practice 6: Cohort Model of Instruction are featured in Table 21.

Table 21

*Strategies for Practice 6: Cohort Model of Instruction: Building an Informal Pool of High-Achieving Principal Candidates or Teacher Leaders*

| Strategies for Cohort Model of Instruction | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Scheduled regular meeting time. | 6 |
| 2. Established and facilitated by the district. | 5 |
| 3. Ensure safe sharing and collaboration. | 2 |
| 4. Have cross-over levels (elementary, middle, and high school). | 2 |
| 5. Encourage teachers to participate. | 2 |
| 6. Work on real situations and scenarios. | 2 |
| 7. Set experiences and activities for the program. | 1 |
| 8. Facilitated by the District Office administration. | 1 |
| 9. Survey principals to gather names for potential participants. | 1 |
| 10. Ensure time for discussion. | 1 |
| 11. Conduct walk-throughs together. | 1 |
| 12. Facilitate after school. | 1 |

With practice number six, *Cohort Model of Instruction: Building an Informal Pool of High-Achieving Principal Candidates or Teacher Leaders*, the panel of experts produced a few themes. The next theme reoccurred six times each:

- Schedule regular meeting time.

With the frequency of five, the respondents indicated the next theme:

- The cohort instruction must be established and facilitated by the district.

The frequency of two highlighted the following four concepts:

- Ensure safe sharing and collaboration.

- Have cross-over levels (elementary, middle, and high school).

- Encourage teachers to participate.

- Work on real situations and scenarios.

The lowest frequency, the frequency of one, was given to the strategies of setting experiences and activities for the program, the need for the program to be facilitated by the District Office administration, surveying principals to gather names for potential participants, ensuring time for discussion, conducting walk-throughs together, and the need for the program to be facilitated after school.

For the seventh Practice: Teacher Presenting PD, the panel's responses are recorded in Table 22.

Table 22

*Strategies for Practice 7: Teacher Presenting PD: Provide Teachers with Opportunities to Develop and Deliver Presentations to Teach their Colleagues*

| Strategies for Teachers Presenting PD | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Teachers present PD on staff development days and faculty meetings | 5 |
| 2. Identify teacher's strengths/expertise areas and give that area to present PD | 3 |
| 3. Teachers design and present PD on administration-directed tasks from the school plan. | 3 |
| 4. Co-plan/co-present with the district coaches. | 1 |
| 5. Teachers record themselves providing PD for improvement | 1 |
| 6. Present site-based PD and district-based PD. | 1 |
| 7. Prepare and review PD with the administration. | 1 |
| 8. Create a team of PD trainers. | 1 |

In the practice number seven, *Teacher Presenting PD: Provide Teachers with Opportunities to Develop and Deliver Presentations to Teach their Colleagues,* the panel of experts produced a theme which reoccurred five times. That was the following theme:

- Teachers present PD on staff development days and faculty meetings.

With the frequency of three, two themes were named:

- Identify teacher's strengths/expertise areas and give that area to present PD.

- Teachers design and present PD on administration-directed tasks from the school plan.

With the frequency of one, there was a group of concepts that emerged from the respondents' answers:

- Co-plan/co-present with the district coaches.

- Teachers record themselves providing PD for improvement.

- Present site-based PD and district-based PD.

- Prepare and review PD with the administration.

- Create a team of PD trainers.

The final set of responses, those for Practice 8: Mentoring, appear in Table 23.

Table 23

*Strategies for Practice 8: Mentoring: Working with an Off-Site Mentor outside of School Time on Personal and Professional Development Issues*

| Strategies for Mentoring | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Set and calendar scheduled time, structured hours, monthly meetings | 6 |
| 2. Ensure safe, unbiased talk and trusting relationship | 4 |
| 3. Join local networking groups and agencies outside to identify partnerships for mentoring | 3 |
| 4. Provide guidance for mentors in structure and planning to ensure reaching goals | 2 |
| 5. Design the program, recruit, promote | 1 |
| 6. Connect mentors to mentees based on the competencies, backgrounds, and learning styles and needs. | 1 |
| 7. Assign a mentor. | 1 |

The analysis of the practice number eight, *Mentoring: Working with an Off-Site Mentor outside of School Sime on Personal and Professional Development Issues,* identified that there were two concepts with the highest frequency, the frequency of six:

- Set and calendar scheduled time, structured hours, monthly meetings.

With the frequency of four, the experts identified the following concept:

- Ensure safe, unbiased talk and trusting relationships.

With the frequency of three, the next theme reoccurred among the panelists' responses:

- Join local networking groups and agencies outside to identify partnerships for mentoring.

The frequency of two was noted for the following concept:

- Provide guidance for mentors in structure and planning to ensure reaching goals.

The frequency of one illuminated a group of strategies that named the following concepts:

- Design the program, recruit, and promote.
- Connect mentors to mentees based on competencies, backgrounds, and learning styles and needs.
- Assign a mentor.

## Summary

Chapter IV offered the data and an accompanying analysis of this Delphi study. The purpose of this descriptive Delphi study is to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by a panel of experts, and also to identify

strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

The subsequent research questions directed the study:

1.  What professional development topics do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

2.  What practices do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

3.  How do the panel of experts rank the importance of these practices for preparing elementary assistant principals?

4.  What strategies do the expert panel recommend for implementing the most important practices?

Round One of the study was a qualitative round meant to solicit as many examples of professional development topics that the expert panel members identified as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals and also to identify practices that experts see as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

The sample size consisted of 29 participants, and all 29 of these experts responded to the questions sent to them via electronic Google survey during Round One. The information collected during Round One answered Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 that was organized into charts, analyzed, coded, and then utilized to create the survey questions for Round Two.

Round Two of this Delphi study was quantitative in nature, as the participants were asked to rank the aggregate responses from Round 1 on a six-point Likert scale

ranging from Least Important to Most Important. There were 30 professional

development topics and nine practices that were identified by the 29 respondents

during Round One. The rankings from Round Two were placed into a chart enabling

the mean for each to be calculated. Finally, the researcher was able to sort the mean

for each activity from high to low to find the top ten most important professional

development topics and nine practices and, therefore, answer Research Question 3.

The results of Round Two enabled the expert panel members to answer Round 3.

Round Three was a qualitative round meant to elicit expert recommendations

from the respondents on how to implement the most important practices in preparation of

teachers for elementary assistant principalship. All 29 of the 29 panel members

responded to survey Round Three. The researcher reviewed, coded, sorted and

categorized panel members' responses. Similar responses were grouped together

according to emerging themes and presented in tables aligned to the research question

four, which resulted in the finding of this study. In order to ensure intercoder reliability,

an independent review of the data was conducted by a Brandman University Doctoral

Program alumna familiar with this study.

The purpose of Chapter IV was to present information surrounding the data

related to this study. Chapter V will present conclusions, implications, and

recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V presents a review of this study's purpose statement, accompanying research questions, methodology, and the associated population and sample. This chapter specifically offers the findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research. Lastly, this chapter will close with concluding remarks and reflections of the researcher.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Delphi study is to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by a panel of experts. An additional purpose was to identify strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

## Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What professional development topics do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

2. What practices do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

3. How do the panel of experts rank the importance of these practices for preparing elementary assistant principals?

4. What strategies do the expert panel recommend for implementing the most important practices?

**Research Methodology**

The selected design for this study was a non-experimental, descriptive Delphi research design in order to gather data from an expert panel of elementary school principals and administrative credential program supervisors in select counties of the state of California. The research questions noted above required a qualitative approach during the first round, a quantitative approach during the second, and then, finally, a second qualitative round during Round Three. The purpose of Round One was to invite the panel of experts to brainstorm professional development topics and practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals. After analysis, their responses were utilized to create the Round Two survey instrument. The purpose of Round Two was to rank on a six-point Likert scale the major themes discovered during Round One in efforts to identify the top ten professional development topics and top practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals. Lastly, the information from Round Two was presented to the panel in order to qualitatively solicit suggestions on specific strategies for implementation of the identified top practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

There were 29 participants that became respondents for the study. During Round One, all 29 expert panel members (100%) participated in answering the survey questions. After qualitatively analyzing and coding the data, 30 professional development topics and nine practices were utilized to create the survey for Round Two. During Round 2, again, all 29 participants responded (100%). Their responses allowed the researcher to determine the mean of each of the 30 previously identified professional

development topics and the nine practices from Round One. That information was used to identify the top ten most important professional development topics and the top eight most important practices for preparing teachers for elementary assistant principalship. Round Three was created from the data collected during Round Two. During Round Three, all 29 participants responded to the survey (100%). There were a total of 64 distinct themes identified during Round Three, which provided the researcher with the suggestions of the expert panel on how school districts and universities' administrative credential programs could best implement the top eight practices identified during Round Two.

<div align="center">**Major Findings**</div>

**Key Finding 1: Professional Development Topics**

There are specific topics that need to be addressed in the preparation of teachers aspiring to become elementary assistant principals. The expert panel members' responses on professional development topics were reviewed for duplication and similarity of ideas and resulted in 30 professional development (PD) topics, which after ranking in Round Two were condensed to the top ten topics. Four of them directly involved working with staff on building trust and relationships, buildings teams and collaborative culture, communication, and conflict resolution. These aspects of change leadership were initially not the most frequently mentioned topics, but they emerged as the most important ones over the course of the study. Two topics focused on instructional leadership, student learning, progress monitoring, success criteria, and intervention. Two PD topics identified change leadership and the areas of ethics and integrity. One topic highlighted data analysis for site-based decision making and operations of a school. This finding

<div align="center">130</div>

confirms the notion that aspiring assistant principals' professional development needs to address various topics, and not just issues of discipline. It is no longer sufficient to prepare the elementary assistant principals solely for the role of a disciplinarian in the school hierarchy, as the demarcation line between the roles of principal and assistant principal blends, and the elementary assistant principals must develop skills of instructional leaders and be able to create the climate of success in their school (Best, 2016; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Vick, 2011).

**Key Finding 2: Encouraging Teachers to Seek Leadership Opportunities**

Teachers with leadership potential need to be encouraged to apply for leadership opportunities. That concept appeared repeatedly in responses for strategies in practices 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 (see Tables 16, 17, 20, 21, and 22). The experts shared that administration needs to highlight possible leadership opportunities to the teachers in advance, making teachers aware of them, and encourage teachers to participate in leadership committees by approaching the teachers directly and inviting them to join. Another strategy suggested to identify teachers' strengths and encourage the teachers to volunteer in respective areas of leadership. One of the processes for this approach, as suggested, could be developing and maintaining job descriptions for leadership positions and making teachers apply according to the job descriptions and their strengths or professional growth interests. This concept finds its support in the literature on educational leadership development that states that school executives must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive leadership manner (CCSEAS, 2016; Hanover Research, 2012). The existing research on organizational management training shows that such approach is practiced in the non-educational world. Trainees in these organizations develop new

skillsets in the environment of experimentation, where they can "test their new knowledge, emotions, and behaviors" before they have to apply them into their real-life jobs and professional organization environments (Clements, 2013; Baron & Parent, 2015).

**Key Finding 3: Creating Structure for Leadership Opportunities and Trainings**

Leadership opportunities and trainings for the teachers with leadership aspirations need to have structure. This concept appeared in responses for practices 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 (see Tables 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 23). It was emphasized that leadership opportunities should be scheduled in advance and calendared at the beginning of the year for the rest of the school year. Meetings and trainings must have consistency, maintain regular time, and provide set expectations for each activity. As one of the experts noted, setting intentional time and providing structure for meetings, shadowing opportunities, and coaching/mentoring prevent these opportunities from turning into an informal social event rather than a formal training session. Researchers on educational leadership also emphasize that well-structured leadership experiences and trainings provide an effective learning environment for the trainees (Hoffert, 2015; Retelle, 2003; Scott, 2011.)

**Key Finding 4: Developing Professional Growth Pathways**

Teachers with leadership potential should be supported in their professional growth through developing for them professional growth pathways. Responses for practices 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8 suggest finding these teachers' strengths or solicit their interest and then set goals and create "pathways for leadership development and career advancement" (see Tables 16, 18, 19, 22 and 23). This plan should have consistency and measurable goals. The selected pathway goals must include practice in various activities,

including coaching, mentoring, and giving teachers roles in school committees matched to their strengths. Research on best practices in teacher leadership training supports the concept of developing pathways for teachers that want to become administrators. Hannover Research (2012) report states that once a group of high potential employees has been identified, districts should consider using a structure of an Individual Development Plan (IDP), "which outlines planned activities that will help narrow the gap between what the individuals can already do and what they should do to meet future work requirements of one or more positions." This concept also aligns with the principles of andragogy, which emphasize the need of adults to be in control of their learning because they seek specific knowledge and skills they will need for the fulfillment of their life goals (Crews, 2018; Gehring, 2000; Knowles, 2005; Zemke & Zemke, 1995; Zmeyov, 1998).

**Key Finding 5: Providing On-going PD On-site**

Teachers that inspire to become elementary assistant principals must be provided with on-going opportunities for professional development on-site. That finding is built on data found in responses to practices 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (see Tables 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22). Experts suggested that teachers should shadow the principals in conducting classroom walk-throughs and observations. It is imperative that walk-throughs and observations are followed by debrief, practice in providing feedback, and coaching. Another form of on-site preparation suggested by the experts is presenting professional development events for the school and being coached through designing and conducting PD. Professional Development events can be designed on administration-directed tasks to align with the school plan and also be co-planned and co-presented with the district

coaches. Teachers recording themselves providing PD was named as one of the tools for skill-improvement. The data also demonstrated that teachers should receive training for leadership roles on-site that include practice running meetings for leadership teams, such as PBIS, ELAC, and grade-level teams. In order to be able to develop their potential and to use these learning opportunities, teachers must be supported through providing release time and buy-out days for being an administrative designee. Nevertheless, the educational research and existing preparation programs mostly focus on strategies and techniques of training and on-going support for new teachers and new principals, completely overlooking the talent pool among teachers that desire to transition into an assistant principalship (Armstrong, 2012; Bloom & Krovetz, 2011; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Scott, 2011).

**Key Finding 6: Providing Off-site Training**

There is a need for off-site professional development for aspiring administrators. This finding was supported with data provided for practices 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (see Tables 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23). The respondents stated that shadowing and other practice opportunities should be conducted not only at the teachers' own schools, but also off-site at different schools with different demographics. For off-site training, the experts suggested the use of a cohort model of instruction with cross-over levels. The model should include time for sharing, collaboration, discussion, work on real situations and scenarios, and planned walk-throughs together. The data also included suggestions about cohort models' need to have set experiences and activities for the program, established and facilitated by the districts. The district offices need to survey principals for potential names of participants. Cohort grouping is an effective leadership development model that

provides participants with personal and professional support, creates high participant

buy-in, and provides opportunities for the application of new knowledge (Hannover

Research, 2012; Pate, 2015).

**Key Finding 7: Coaching and Mentoring**

It is imperative to provide teachers that want to become elementary assistant

principals with coaching and mentoring (see Tables, 16, 18, 19, 22, and 23). The experts

suggested to coach teachers through the leadership opportunities on-site and "listen, prod,

and ask questions to help an aspiring leader move forward." When coaching colleagues,

the teachers need to practice before the coaching session and record themselves for

practice purposes. While some experts suggested that teachers should observe the

principal doing coaching, others emphasized the need to provide teachers with a trained

coach. Coaching/mentoring can be done on site or with an assigned off-site mentor. Data

indicated that 20% of respondents listed as characteristics of a successful mentoring "safe

setting" and "trusting relationship" that support a non-judgmental environment, enable

unbiased, candid conversations, and ensure that the mentee can be "truthful without fear

of reprisal." This concept confirms the notion that safe mentoring relationships help the

aspiring administrators find "someone who takes time to answer questions, model

appropriate administrative behaviours, explain policies and procedures, demonstrate

practices and provide growth-promotion feedback" (Armstrong, 2015). The last concept

also illuminates the core idea of the research on transition theory and organizational

socialization – the need to train aspiring assistant principals in understanding the

physical, cognitive, socio-emotional challenges of the transition from teaching into

assistant principalship, which could assist the aspirants in navigating the challenging

transition times with minimal losses and help school districts retain new administrators, positively addressing the current reality of "the shrinking pools of qualified administrative candidates" (Armstrong, 2015).

To ensure reaching set goals, the experts identified the need to provide guidance for mentors in structure and planning. The data suggested connecting mentors to mentees based on competencies, backgrounds, and learning styles and needs of the mentees. These partnerships for mentoring can be identified through local networking groups and agencies. As for the districts, the experts shared that the districts must design their mentorship programs, recruit, and promote. Literature on coaching confirms that coaching is one of the effective training approaches and may vary in level of structure and formality, ranging from "casual impromptu discussions" to "highly-structured meetings framed by specific protocol" (Hannover Research, 2012). However, multiple researchers agree that coaching and mentoring should be tailored to match the needs of the individual trainee, have clear expectations for both parties, stimulate personal and professional reflections, and be framed by a personal growth plan or CPSEL framework (CCSES, 2016; CTC, 2014; Hanover Research, 2016). This concept also aligns with the principles of andragogy, which emphasizes the need of adults to be in control of their learning because they seek specific knowledge and skills they will need for the fulfillment of their life goals (Armstrong, 2015; Knowles, 2005; McDaniel, 2017).

## Unexpected Findings

There was one unexpected finding connected to this Delphi study. It dealt with encouragement of teachers to participate in leadership opportunities. Round Three practice of *Providing Leadership Opportunities* demonstrated that more than one-third of

the participants (37.9%) stated that teachers should seek opportunities for leadership rather than the administration should approach teachers that have leadership potential and encourage them to join leadership groups. Moreover, in the practice four, *A Blended Approach to Learning and Preparation,* and in the practice five, *Hands-on Experiences and Activities*, panel members suggested that "this should be done on the teacher's expense" using a "personal day" or a "discretionary day." This finding was unexpected, yet informative. However, the researcher found no support for this stance in the literature. The next section provides conclusions surrounding this study with respect to the findings presented above.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by a panel of experts. An additional purpose was to identify strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals. The conclusions that follow are based on the research findings and insights extracted from the review of the literature.

### Conclusion 1

Based on the findings of this study and supported by research, is concluded that aspiring elementary assistant principals must receive professional development that addresses topics related to various aspects of leadership. Among the topics that were identified by the expert panel members were instructional leadership, change leadership, building trust and relationships, building teams and collaborative culture, and ethics and integrity. Even though historically most assistant principals are assigned a narrow range

of responsibilities, typically discipline or student activities, the current demands to improve student achievement demonstrate that it is no longer sufficient to prepare the elementary assistant principals solely for the role of a disciplinarian in the school hierarchy, as the elementary assistant principals must develop skills of instructional leaders and be able to create the climate of success in their school (Armstrong, 2015; Best, 2016; Bloom & Krovetz, 2001; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Vick, 2011). Aspiring administrators who do not develop their skills in these areas will fail.

**Conclusion 2**

School and district administration will meet the leadership needs of the schools and tap into major resources of leadership potential if they approach and encourage teachers with interest in administrative responsibilities to participate in leadership opportunities. The conclusion is based on the findings that expert panel members see a benefit to highlighting possible leadership opportunities to the teachers in advance, approaching aspiring leaders directly, identifying teachers' strengths and encouraging them to participate in respective areas of leadership as viable strategies for building leadership potential in teachers. This conclusion is also drawn from support in the literature on educational leadership development that states that school executives must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive leadership manner, letting them gain knowledge and develop a new skillset in leadership before they have to apply them into real-life leadership jobs and professional organization environments (Baron & Parent, 2015; CCSEAS, 2016; Clements, 2013; Hanover Research, 2012; Wong, 2009).

**Conclusion 3**

Schools and school districts that provide well-planned leadership opportunities that match interests of aspiring leaders will create and maintain a large pool of prepared teacher-leaders and future elementary administrators. Leadership opportunities for aspiring elementary assistant principals must be scheduled in advance and maintain a level of expectation and consistency. This conclusion is based on the data collected from the expert panel members that suggested calendaring leadership opportunities at the beginning of the year for the entire school year, maintaining regular time, and providing set expectations and protocols for each of the practice leadership activities. Research on educational leadership also emphasizes that well-structured pre-service leadership experiences and trainings provide an effective learning environment for the trainees and minimize the stress and the need for corrections when administrators start the job and need support and assistance with daily job expectations (Hannover Research, 2012; Hoffert, 2015; Retelle, 2003; Scott, 2011; Huggins et al., 2017.)

**Conclusion 4**

School and district leadership that utilize development and application of professional growth pathways will create a large cadre of future elementary administrators. Professional growth pathways should be focused on leadership development and career advancement for aspiring elementary assistant principals. These pathways should include measurable goals and focus on matching the strengths of potential leaders with the learning leadership opportunities. Support for the concept of developing pathways for teachers who want to become elementary assistant principals is found in research on best practices in teacher leadership training. Hannover Research

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(2012) suggests that districts should identify high potential teachers and use for their leadership development a structure of an Individual Development Plan (IDP), "which outlines planned activities that will help narrow the gap between what the individuals can already do and what they should do to meet future work requirements of one or more positions." The support for this conclusion is also drawn from the principles of andragogy, which emphasize that adults seek specific knowledge and skills they will need for the fulfillment of their life goals (Crews, 2018; Gehring, 2000; Knowles, 2005; Zemke & Zemke, 1995; Zmeyov, 1998).

**Conclusion 5**

School districts that provide on-site training for aspiring elementary assistant principals will have more success in preparation of future leaders. This conclusion is drawn from the responses of the expert panel members, which stated that in order to be able to develop their leadership potential, teachers should shadow principals in conducting classroom walk-throughs, observations, and the coaching of other teachers. The data also demonstrated that teachers should receive training for leadership roles on-site that includes practice running meetings for leadership teams, designing and delivering PD events for the staff, and practice in providing feedback. Administration must provide training and release time for teachers aspiring to be leaders. The educational research  demonstrates that school district and existing preparation programs would benefit from focusing on strategies and techniques of training and on-going support for teachers that desire to transition into assistant principalship (Armstrong, 2012; Bloom & Krovetz, 2011; Hannover Research, 2012; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Scott, 2011).

**Conclusion 6**

School districts that use a cohort model of preparation of future elementary assistant principals will provide leadership opportunities, on-going professional support, and create high participant buy-in. The cohort model must include time for sharing, collaboration, discussion, work on real situations and scenarios, and planned walk-throughs together. This conclusion is based on the data drawn from the expert panel's recommendation that the district offices need to survey principals for potential names of cohort participants and provide those aspiring leaders with cohort programs that have set experiences and activities for the program, established and facilitated by the districts. Research on leadership development states that aspiring leaders who have participated in a cohort-based training program are rated higher for their leadership practices than those who have not been in such a program (Hannover Research, 2012; Pate, 2015).

**Conclusion 7**

School administration should provide coaching opportunities to potential administrators and specifically assign a coach with planned goals and outcomes for the aspiring leader. As data from this study demonstrates, panel experts recommend providing coaching to aspiring assistant principals through their on-site training experiences, describing coaching as "effective, especially if done in a blended coaching or cognitive coaching method." This conclusion is also drawn from the educational leadership research that names coaching that can range from "casual impromptu discussions" to "highly-structured meetings framed by specific protocol" as one of the best practices for teacher leadership training (CCSES, 2016; CTC, 2014; Hanover

Research, 2012). Set as part of an individualized development plan or a professional

growth pathway, it must be tailored to the needs of the individual trainee (CCSES, 2016;

CTC, 2014; Hanover Research, 2012).

**Conclusion 8**

Aspiring elementary assistant principals who form a trusting relationship with a

mentor will have success in tailoring their professional growth to their individual and

professional development needs and will be better prepared for entering educational

administration. This conclusion is drawn from the study participant's responses, 20% of

which named "safe setting" and "trusting relationship" as essential for effective

mentorship. The experts suggested connecting mentors to mentees based on

competencies, backgrounds, learning styles, and needs of the mentees for a more

effective mentoring process. This conclusion is also based on the current educational

leadership development practices that require participants in California clear

administrative credential programs to have a mentor and participate in a structured

mentoring program (CTC, 2014). With the adaption of the new credentialing system, the

state of California is recognizing the complexity of the role of the assistant principal and

the need for rigorous training that includes application of that learning to practice and

mentoring by the experienced leaders to ensure that the emerging leaders are prepared for

the demands of educational administration in the 21st century (Beam, Claxton, & Smith,

2016; Carroll, 2015; McDaniel, 2017; Soho, Barnett, & Martinez, 2012; Turnbull,

Anderson, Riley, MacFarlane, & Aladjem, 2016).

**Implications for Action**

The assistant principalship has changed dramatically since its inception. The early 19th century's role of a head teacher in charge of clerical tasks transcended into the current expectation of assistant principals to be instructional leaders and change agents (Beam, Claxton, & Smith, 2016; Hohner, 2016; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010). Today, the need for effective school leaders is recognized and linked to improved student achievement (Bodger, 2011; *Department for professional* employees, 2016; McDaniel, 2015; Jackson, 2007; The Wallace Foundation, 2013; NASPP & NAESP, 2013). The state of California is no exception where state and local demands call for school administration, assistant principals included, to be well prepared and impact student outcomes (CCSESA, 2016; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010; Postell, 2012; WestEd, 2010; White, Fong, & Makkonen, 2010). Based on the research findings from this study and the conclusions drawn by the researcher, this study recommends the following actionable items to advance training for teachers who aspire to become elementary assistant principals:

1. School districts and school administration should develop a model professional development (PD) plan for aspiring elementary administrators that should focus on change leadership, ethics and integrity, and instructional leadership. District administration should form a team of stakeholders to develop a detailed plan, which includes smart goals aligned with CPSELs and supported with a funding stream designed for leadership development. This PD model should be evaluated for effectiveness and course correction at least twice a year by stakeholders involved in the program.

2. School site administration and district offices should develop specific

   leadership opportunities as well as provide identification and assessment

   instruments, such as various leadership skills inventories, for teachers with

   leadership potential. Aspiring teacher leaders should use specific instruments to

   self-identify their leadership interests, potential, and areas of growth. School

   districts should develop leadership opportunities and invite teachers with

   leadership potential to participate by providing them with a calendar of

   leadership opportunities.

3. School site administration with support of district office teams should develop

   a structured leadership training program with a calendar and development plan

   that encompasses the entire school year. This plan will be based on best

   research-based practices in educational leadership development and align with

   the districts' mission and vision as well as with CPSELs. This plan will be

   funded by the district office with the goal of outstanding leadership

   development that will have a positive effect of school site and student

   achievement.

4. District leadership with support of the Board of Trustees should combine the

   professional development opportunities for aspiring assistant principals with

   leadership identification and structured leadership development plan into

   individualized pathways. Professional growth pathways will help identify the

   key positions the employee should be prepared for, the learning objectives of

   the individual's development, and the methods and strategies of the

   development process. These pathways should lead from site leadership to

district level leadership. Professional growth pathways would include succession plan to a position individualized to a talent and passion of an aspiring leader.

5. School site administration with support of district offices should develop and implement an on-site professional development plan for aspiring leaders. Schools should fund release time and buy-out days that are structured and aligned with LCAP goals. Aspiring assistant principals will shadow administrators as well as observe, keep journals of learning experiences, debrief, set goals, co-plan/co-teach, and plan next steps in their personal leadership development, aligning them to PD goals of the districts and CPSELs.

6. School districts should develop cohorts of aspiring assistant principals. Local county offices of education should also develop a cohort-model of preparation for aspiring assistant principals. This model should include instruments to identify teachers with leadership potential as possible participants, structure in time to collaborate, discuss, and work on real-life scenarios. The cohort would be given goals which align with best research-based educational leadership development practices to implement, evaluate, and debrief with fellow cohort members and cohort facilitators.

7. School districts should develop a precise coaching model for aspiring assistant principals which aligns with the districts' mission, vision, and LCAP goals. This coaching model will be based on best practices in leadership development and be a blended model in order to meet individual needs of all aspiring

leaders: (a) the coaching model will vary in level of structure by providing both highly-structured sessions framed by a specific protocol and outcomes as well as impromptu discussions based on the situational need of the aspiring leaders; (b) be individualized and tailored to suit the needs of the individual aspiring assistant principal; and (c) feature clear expectations of both parties, focus on specific topic for each session, stimulate personal reflection, and be framed by a personal growth plan. The coaching sessions will include a variety of activities, such a questioning, modeling, observation of practice, discussion of professional development opportunities, and on-going self-assessments. This model will be evaluated for effectiveness three times a year by participants and stakeholders to ensure sustainability and effectiveness.

8. Aspiring leaders in collaboration with district leaders and local networking groups as third parties should be assigned a mentor. This mentor will be matched or selected based on strengths, personality, and needs of the aspiring leader. This mentor-mentee relationship will be built on trust with focus on personal development and career advancement, which will be identified in a mentor-mentee protocol. The mentors will be provided guidance in structure and planning that will be developed by the district leadership and third-party mentor providers. This model will be evaluated for effectiveness three times a year by participants and stakeholders to ensure course correction that will impact sustainability and effectiveness of the program.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the research findings, conclusions, and limitations of this study, the researcher recommends that further research be conducted in the area of training and preparation of assistant principals and offers recommendations on the following topics:

1. It is recommended that a phenomenological study be conducted with current elementary assistant principals to examine expectations and perceptions of their leadership development before becoming an assistant principal as well as during their tenure in the assistant principal position.

2. It is recommended that a replication study be conducted using a secondary panel of experts with the same criteria to clarify if the results of this study are representative of K-12 education overall.

3. This study identified several professional practices for aspiring leaders. However, this study did not provide data on the effectiveness of these professional practices. It is recommended that the further research should be conducted specifically on the effectiveness of the professional growth pathways practice.

4. This study identified the importance of professional development opportunities with aspiring elementary assistant principals. Leaders in education acquire their administrative credentials through different means. In California, they can pass a test called CPACE, or they can participate in a structured preparation program for their preliminary administrative credential (CTC, 2017). It is recommended that a comparison study be conducted to examine the experiences of leaders in a leadership position who took a test versus the experiences of leaders who went through a structured program.

5. The expert panel of this study was represented by leaders in several school districts, county offices of education, and institutions of higher learning across California. It is recommended that a mixed methods study be conducted in school districts that have a defined leadership development plan, which includes at least half of the results of this study.

6. While the focus of this study was on teachers who aspire to become administrators, further research needs to be done on the necessary topics and best practices for developing teacher leaders who do not want to become administrators.

**Concluding Remarks and Reflections**

This study was a result of my desire to understand the best practices that can be implemented for leadership development of aspiring teacher leaders and the leaders who are often called in the literature on educational leadership "novice assistant principals." The first-time questions about preparation and support of elementary assistant principals came to my mind during my first assignment as an assistant principal of an elementary school. Having previously taught for seven years in California and for another decade outside of the United States before, I felt that the tasks of the new job were a bit discombobulated, and the supports that I was trying to locate were scarce. Furthermore, after I had a chance to serve as the assistant principal at other elementary school sites, I noticed that responsibilities and duties of the assistant principal differed from site to site based on the principal's discretion. I found the explanation for this observation in my comprehensive look at the literature for this study, where I learned that the assistant principalship has been seen for a long time as a stepping stone into principalship, and, therefore, specific training for this job does not exist (Armstrong, 2015; Marshall &

Hooley, 2006; Hohner, 2016; Wong, 2009). The responses shared by the expert panel members, however, revealed that they realize the need for such system of preparation and support for teachers that have leadership potential and want to transition into elementary administration.

As novice assistant principals address the plethora of demands and complex challenges in their administrative assignments, transformative changes are needed in multiple areas surrounding preparation of elementary assistant principals. The change process needs to occur at the district level regarding availability of leadership opportunities and training for teachers that are still fulfilling their teaching assignment yet are interested in developing a new skillset and exploring administrative duties before they decide to leave the classroom. These teachers in particular have the energy and desire to learn how to lead their schools, inspire other teachers to put their ideas together, combine their expertise, and build teams for transforming schools and districts in order to provide the learning that our students truly need and deserve. Thus, suggestions to ask these teachers to use their discretionary days to buy-out time for leadership opportunities and practicing new leadership skills are rather disappointing.

Next, transformational change should bring individualization to leadership development. Teachers with strong leadership potential would benefit from learning about their strengths and identifying areas of growth through a professional growth pathway or an individualized development plan. As teachers know that students in their classes need individualized approach to learning, so do aspiring leaders need specific individualized goals for their personal and professional growth. This process must start when teachers just start thinking about becoming administrators in order to be able to use

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the transition time effectively and learn about their strengths and areas of growth and find the appropriate mentors that could help them build on strengths and develop their talents.

In addition, teacher leaders would thrive through a learning process in a supportive environment of a cohort of fellow teacher-leaders, knowing that they are not alone and learning from the collective wisdom and experiences of fellow aspiring administrators. From my experience of learning in an administrative internship cohort, I can attest that conversations that occurred during intern meetings answered more sensitive questions than some mentors could answer. The idea of a safe environment is truly essential for learning of teachers that just start stepping out of the comfort zone of their classrooms. This safety is necessary for transition and socialization of the aspiring and new assistant principals while facing the challenges that are associated with this process, as they are different from the transition and socialization experiences of the new principals (Armstrong, 2004; Grodzki, 2010; Hohner, 2016). Coaching and mentoring in a safe environment that were mentioned in responses of the expert panel members can be a perfect ground for candid discussions and successful personal and professional growth of aspiring assistant principals.

Today's assistant principals are charged with the daunting task of transforming schools and presenting breakthrough results in student achievement. Ensuring that novice administrators are well-trained, supported, and are able to lead change with confidence is a priority that is critical to the success of our country's education. It is my hope that this study inspires further exploration into improving the systems of support and training for aspiring assistant principals in their development into transformational leaders who can

build individual capacity and organizational culture and lead their schools toward

breakthrough results.

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APPENDICES

## Letter of Invitation to Research Subjects

_____:

I am a doctoral student in the field of Organizational Leadership in the School of Education at Brandman University. I am conducting a study into The Training of Elementary Assistant Principals. In particular, I am seeking to assemble an expert group of elementary principals and administrative credential program supervisors to investigate the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

I am asking for your assistance in the study by requesting that you respond to a series of three electronic questionnaires as part of a Delphi study. The questionnaires will be administered in three rounds. Each round will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Rounds will be administered in 7-10 day increments, beginning on Monday, (date to be determined). You will have the opportunity to respond to each round at your convenience within the time period designated for each round.

If you agree to participate in the electronic questionnaire, be assured that it will be completely confidential. Your name will not be attached to your electronic survey response. All information will remain in electronic files accessible only to the researcher. No employer will have access to the electronic questionnaire information. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. Further, you may be assured that the researcher is not affiliated with your employing agency.

Please review the attached *Informed Consent* and *Research Participant's Bill of Rights*. If you agree to participate, please respond to this email indicating that you have read the attachments and agree to participate. (You do not need to print and sign the forms; your email response will suffice as your informed consent.)  When I receive your response, I will send the first questionnaire.

I am available by phone at (559) 920-5660 to answer any questions you may have. Your participation would be greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Nailya Jarocki

**Informed Consent Form**

# CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Training of Elementary Assistant Principals — A Delphi Study

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY
16355 LAGUNA CANYON ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92618

**Responsible Investigator**: Nailya Jarocki

**Purpose of Study**: The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals, as perceived by a panel of experts. An additional purpose was to identify strategies for implementing the most important practices for the preparation of teachers to become elementary assistant principals.

**Procedures**: In participating in this study, I agree to respond to a series of three electronic survey questionnaires administered in 5-7 day increments over a period of no more than 30 days as part of a Delphi Study. Each survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

     a. Round one of the electronic questionnaire will require participants to type responses to two open-ended questions.
     b. Round two of the electronic questionnaire will require participants to rate the level of importance of items related to responses to round-one questions on a predetermined Likert scale.
     c. Round three of the electronic questionnaire will require participants to type responses to an open-ended question related to ratings generated during round two.

I understand that:
     a. There are minimal foreseeable risks involved in this research study. The identity of all participants will be anonymous throughout the duration of the study, though email addresses of participants will be required for electronic survey participation.
     b. The possible benefits of this study to the field of education include contributing to the growing body of research related to the most important professional development topics and practices for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals

c. Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Nailya Jarocki, M.A. at (559) 920-5660 or jaro2602@mail.brandman.edu.

d. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

e. I also understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be informed and my consent reobtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

Acknowledgement: I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights."

Consent: I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

_____

**Printed Name of Participant**

_____                    _____

**Signature of Participant**                                        **Date**

_____                    _____

**Signature of Principal Investigator**                        **Date**

**Research Participants' Bill of Rights**

## BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

### Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB                    Adopted                    November 2013

APPENDIX D

**IRB Approval**

MyBrandman <my@brandman.edu>                    Mar 25, 2019, 3:14 PM

to me, Douglas, Laurie


Dear Nailya Jarocki,

Congratulations! Your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board.  Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at IRB.Brandman.edu

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank You,

BUIRB
Academic Affairs
**Brandman University**
16355 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618
buirb@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu
A Member of the Chapman University System

APPENDIX E

**Delphi Study Round One Questionnaire**

Sent to participants electronically via Google Forms:

https://forms.gle/YPLofiN99dm4P2NZ9

Welcome to this Delphi Study on The Training of Elementary Assistant Principals to inform preparation of teachers transitioning into assistant principalship. We'll be involved in a few rounds of discussion on what professional development topics and practices would best help the teachers transitioning into an assistant principalship. For this first round, we'll start with two open-ended questions. As you answer them, feel free to expand on your responses, providing insight and justification for your opinions. If you have any questions about the questions, feel free to contact me.

After I've received the group's responses, I'll be analyzing them and then forming the second-round survey, where we'll work towards consensus on the preparation and support of teachers transitioning into assistant principalship. Most Delphi Studies end after the third round.

Thank you for your participation in this study. I hope you look forward to engaging with colleagues on this potentially rich source of information on how to support teachers in their transition to assistant principalship.

Email address: _____

Age: _____

Gender:

- o Male

- o Female

Education Level:_____

Type of California Administrative Credential:

- o Preliminary

- o Clear

Years of elementary principalship experience: _____

Years of administrative credential program supervision/coursework delivery: _____

Completion of formal training in mentoring:

- o Yes, I have completed formal training in mentoring

- o No, I have not completed formal training in mentoring

Participation in a formal relationship with elementary assistant principals in a coaching/support role:

- o As a principal/mentor in a coaching/support role

- o As an administrative credential program supervisor/professor in a coaching/support role

**Question 1:** What professional development topics do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

 [long answer text box]

**Question 2**: What practices do experts identify as important for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals?

[long answer text box]

**Delphi Study Round Two, Part 1 Questionnaire**

Sent to participants electronically via Google Forms:

https://forms.gle/Pw2LwN8dT19vG7cF9

Welcome back to the study! This is the first part of Round Two of three surveys. In this one, we'll be looking at the answers you gave in Round One and attempting to come to consensus on some of the topics. Thank you for taking part in this study!

In the first part of Round Two, we will be focusing on what Professional Development topics are the most necessary for preparing teachers to become elementary assistant principals. Below you'll see the range of answers generated in the first round. For each, please rate how important you feel this item would be to include in the professional development program for elementary assistant principals. If you feel strongly about any of the items, please note the question number and make a comment in the optional field at the end. These will be included in Round Three of the survey.

Email address: _____

List of Professional Development Topics

Please rate the degree of importance (1=Least Important; 10=Most Important)

1        2        3        4        5        6        7        8        9        10

APPENDIX G

**Delphi Study Round Two, Part 2 Questionnaire**

Sent to participants electronically via Google Forms:

https://forms.gle/m8edQB8N28Ga5Qv39

This is Part 2 of the Round Two survey. For each of the nine items, please rate how important you feel this item would be to include in the effective practices for preparation of elementary assistant principals. If you feel strongly about any of the items, please note the question number and make a comment in the optional field at the end. These will be included in Round Three of the survey.

Email address: _____

List of Practices

Please rate the degree of importance (1=Least Important; 10=Most Important)

<div style="text-align:center">1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10</div>

APPENDIX H

**Delphi Study Round Three Questionnaire**

Sent to participants electronically via Google Forms:

https://forms.gle/m8edQB8N28Ga5Qv39

Welcome to the final round! Here are the highest rated practices for preparing

teachers to become assistant principals as identified by the study participants. In this

round, you will be asked to recommend specific strategies for implementing the most

important practices.

As used in this study, "effective practices" refer to organizational, administrative,

instructional, or support activities engaged in by highly successful programs, as validated

by research and literature sources. In addition, as used in this study, "strategies" refer to a

plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal.

I would like to thank you for your participation and ongoing support of my study!

I hope you found this process interesting and informative.

Email address: _____

List of highest ranked practices

[long answer text box]