Exploring Novice Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership:

Building Instructional Leadership Capacity through Socialization Resources

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A Capstone Project

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by

Erik J. Healey

B.S. Colorado State University

M.A. The University of Virginia

Ed.D. The University of Virginia

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Executive Summary

Dr. Sandra Mitchell, chair

Literature claims the role of the assistant principal must evolve to include instructional leadership (Barnett et al., 2012). Instructionally focused leadership serves as a component of effective schools (Marshall & Hooley, 2006) and an effective frame for education (Murphy et al., 2006). Instructional leadership allows leaders to stay focused on the elements of teaching and learning, and to ensure all other aspects of the school work in service to improve student learning (Murphy et al., 2006). Studies also indicate instructional leadership has a positive effect on student outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008) and school outcomes (Valentine & Prater, 2011). However, the transitional challenges faced by new assistant principals impact the ability of these school leaders to engage in instructional leadership tasks.

The transition into school leadership can be difficult for new assistant principals. Often these new administrators struggle to identify with the new role (Armstrong, 2015; Searby et al., 2017), are challenged by the complexity and ambiguity of the role (Oleszewski et al., 2012), and are overwhelmed by the excessive number of tasks they are asked to perform (Cohen & Schechter, 2019b; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). The myriad of responsibilities given to the assistant principal leaves little time for these leaders to engage in instructional leadership tasks (Oleszewski et al., 2012; Morgan, 2018). Despite calls for assistant principals to have a more substantial role in instructional leadership (Armstrong, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012), these school leaders spend most of their time with personnel, operational, and student management (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Morgan, 2018).

To positively influence assistant principal transition, and by extension their ability to engage as instructional leaders, socialization tactics can have a direct and immediate effect on role clarity and role conflict for these new school leaders (Kowtha, 2018). Proper socialization is critical to ensuring new assistant principals can quickly and positively contribute to the school organization (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017). Socialization resources may be deployed to achieve successful adjustment of new assistant principals into their role as school leaders (Saks & Gruman, 2012), and potentially have a positive influence on their instructional leadership capacity.

The goal of this study was to explore the instructional leadership practices with which new assistant principals engage and determine the level of support needed by new administrators in developing their instructional leadership capacity. To achieve this goal, this research utilized a conceptual framework that first integrated literature on assistant principal responsibilities (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2002; Sun, 2011) and effective leadership practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006) to define instructional leadership for assistant principals. The second key component of the conceptual framework was how these instructional leadership practices interact with socialization resources as a means of improving instructional leadership capacity. This study utilized quantitative survey methods to explore the instructional leadership engagement and support needs of assistant principals in three large school districts. Several statistical analyses were conducted to report the level of engagement and support desired by new assistant principals on 16 outlined instructional leadership practices.

Additionally, reported results include the socialization resources new assistant principals deemed most helpful in building their instructional leadership capacity.

Major themes from this study suggest new assistant principals utilized instructional leadership tactics to build school-wide instructional culture rather than practices that support teachers with instructional planning and delivery. Findings from this research also suggest new assistant principals require support broadly across instructional leadership practices, particularly as it relates to integrating culturally responsive learning experiences and providing instructional feedback to teachers. Finally, this study suggests support and feedback from their principal are critical to instructional leadership development for new assistant principals.

Based on these themes, there are five proposed recommendations for school district leaders and principals for supporting instructional leadership development in new assistant principals:

- Ensure principals emphasize, and provide support for, new assistant principals engaging in the work of collaborative teacher teams.
- Integrate cultural responsiveness into new assistant principal instructional leadership development.
- Develop skills in new assistant principals on how to engage in instructional discourse with teachers.
- Provide formal training to new assistant principals on supporting teachers with curriculum and assessment.
- Provide training to principals on how to best support and develop instructional leadership in new assistant principals.

Department of Leadership, Foundations, and Policy
University of Virginia School of Education and Human Development
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

APPROVAL OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

This capstone project, "Exploring Novice Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership: Building Instructional Leadership Capacity through Socialization Resources", has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Sandra Mitchell, Ed.D., Capstone Chair

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Sara Dexter, Ed.D., Committee Member

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David Eddy-Spicer, Ed.D., Committee Member

March 27, 2023
Date of Defense

Dedication

To Lisa, for your unwavering love, support, understanding, and encouragement

throughout this process. I truly could not have achieved this accomplishment without

you.

To Maddie and Meredith, for always taking an interest, offering ongoing support, and

reminding me to take much-needed breaks.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter I - Introduction

The assistant principal is a vital member of the school leadership team, but new assistant principals frequently struggle as they transition into this role (Armstrong, 2009, 2015; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Novice administrators have difficulty with task management (Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012) and handling the excessive workload of school administration (Armstrong, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Searby et al., 2017), Often the abundance of tasks given to assistant principals negatively influences the time these school leaders can dedicate to instructional leadership (Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Hausman et al., 2002; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Despite evidence of research dating back to 1985 calling for the reimagining of the role of the assistant principal to include instructional leadership (Greenfield, 1985), more recent research indicates assistant principals spend little time as instructional leaders (Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Hausman et al., 2002; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Given the abundance of research recognizing the positive impact instructional leadership practices have on school effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Valentine & Prater, 2011), and the calls for additional research surrounding the transition and role of new school administrators (Oleszewski et al., 2012), exploring the instructional leadership practices of new assistant principals is warranted.

The goal of this study was to determine what support new assistant principals require to build their instructional leadership capacity by examining a set of specific

instructional leadership practices related to the assistant principalship. This study also sought to discern what support new assistant principals deem as the most helpful in their pursuit of building instructional leadership skills. This analysis was achieved by exploring a subset of socialization resources that can be deployed by a school district to assist new administrators with role transition and instructional leadership capacity. The next section will further illuminate the problem of practice, describe the intended purpose of the study, and provide previews of the literature and conceptual framework for the study. Additionally, a description of the methodology, biases and assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this research will be provided.

Problem of Practice

Effective leadership is second only to teacher quality in predicting student achievement as evidenced by the abundance of research articulating the correlation between effective leadership practices and positive school outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Leithwood & Louis, 2012). However, the focus of research on effective leadership has shifted over time. As Hitt and Tucker (2016) illuminate in their historical recounting of effective leadership practices, the principal's role as a school leader has shifted from organizational manager to instructional leader, to transformational leader, to a combination of each. Whereas some research suggests transformational and instructional leadership practices should be deployed simultaneously to substantially improve student achievement (Marks & Printy, 2003); others claim that the impact of instructional leadership practices on student achievement is significantly greater than that of transformational leadership practices (Robinson et al.,

2008). The extent may be in dispute, but researchers agree about the importance of instructional leadership when considering effective leadership.

Among the frameworks articulating effective leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006), several outline practices directly related to instructional leadership. Although a more robust synthesis of instructional leadership practices will be conducted in the subsequent chapter, a brief review of these frameworks shows effective instructional leaders support teachers with curricular development (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006), evaluate and improve instruction (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006; Valentine & Prater, 2011), and monitor instructional progress of students (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008). Much of the literature around effective instructional leadership practices either emphasizes the work of the principal (Hallinger & Heck, 1998) or looks at leadership more broadly to include a host of individuals and administrators (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012).

Literature has called for assistant principals to have a more prominent role in instructional leadership (Armstrong, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012). Assistant principals have been associated with tasks such as shaping the school's vision and goals (Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Robinson et al., 2008), developing and managing curriculum and instruction (Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Morgan, 2018; Robinson et al., 2008; Sun, 2011), and impacting teaching and learning through data-driven decision making (Barnett

et al., 2012; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Kwan, 2009; Morgan, 2018; Robinson et al., 2008). However, assistant principals often lack sufficient time to dedicate to instructional leadership practices (Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Instead, assistant principals spend much of their time with student behavior, personnel management, and school operations (Arar, 2014; Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Cranston et al., 2004; Glanz, 2004; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Morgan, 2014, 2018). As a result, research suggests assistant principals indicate needing support in their development as instructional leaders (Oleszewski et al., 2012; Searby et al., 2017). Exploring the instructional leadership practices in which new administrators would benefit from further assistance will inform districts and building principals on how to better support their development as instructional leaders.

The expectation of being an instructional leader, along with the multitude of other responsibilities given to assistant principals, can exacerbate work-related stress (Grodski, 2011) and provoke feelings of ill-preparedness to serve as an instructional leader (Barnett et al., 2012). The difficulties associated with the assistant principalship are amplified for new school leaders. New assistant principals are often expected to acclimate to their role quickly (Hohner & Riveros, 2017). Redefining their identity as an administrator (Armstrong, 2012; Grodski, 2011; Searby et al., 2017), managing the abundance of tasks (Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012), and handling the excessive workload (Armstrong, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Searby et al., 2017) all contribute to the difficulty transitioning into the assistant principalship. The challenges faced by new assistant principals have led to calls for additional research surrounding the transition of new school administrators (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

The role of the assistant principal is often not emphasized in administrator preparation programs, which may exacerbate transitional challenges faced by new assistant principals. (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). In a survey of directors of higher education leadership preparation programs in a southern US state, James (2017) found none of the programs had a specific course tailored to the needs of the assistant principal. Despite the small sample size of James' (2017) study, the results illuminate the possibility of new administrators not having adequate training in the skills necessary for the job. Since these novice school leaders may lack the professional training for the assistant principalship, many new assistant principals gain experience through on-the-job training (Oleszewski et al., 2012). More specifically, the enculturation through the socialization process is critical to transitioning into the role of the assistant principalship (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

There are several stages of transition for assistant principals (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Marshall & Hooley, 2006), as well as numerous types of career socialization (Cohen & Schechter, 2019b). For this research, an emphasis is placed on organizational socialization since this stage begins once an individual starts their role within the organization, including learning the norms and information necessary for the role (Cohen & Schechter, 2019b). The socialization process for new administrators can be challenging as the process usually involves trial and error, and the time needed to socialize to the role often varies by the individual (Oleszewski et al., 2012). However, research indicates organizations implement various socialization practices to support individuals as they transition into their new role (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Saks and Gruman (2012) state new employees are typically socialized into an organization through five broad categories:

orientation programs, training programs, socialization tactics, job characteristics, and socialization agents. More specifically, Saks and Gruman (2012) outline 17 socialization resources used to support newcomers' transition into an organization. Understanding which socialization resources have the greatest impact on new assistant principal development as instructional leaders will assist in cultivating more comprehensive organizational socialization programs, and by extension improve assistant principal instructional leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the instructional leadership development needs of new assistant principals and what socialization resources best meet those needs. This was conducted through an examination of the instructional leadership practices that new assistant principals engage in and desire support in developing. Determining the instructional leadership practices assistant principals highlight as important areas for development may inform school districts and building principals on how to best support these new school leaders in building instructional leadership capacity. An exploration of the instructional leadership support needs of new assistant principals may also assist schools and school divisions in differentiating the support provided to new assistant principals. This research also sought to discover the socialization resources new assistant principals deem as potentially helpful in their development as instructional leaders. In doing so, school districts and building principals may be able to match the socialization tools that would positively impact the development of instructional leadership skills in new assistant principals.

Preview of the Literature

The literature review begins by describing the transitional stages for new assistant principals (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Bridges, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Sigford, 2005) and the challenges faced during this transition. The research highlights several difficulties new assistant principals face with role identity (Armstrong, 2015; Grodski, 2011; Searby et al., 2017), role complexity (Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012), and role ambiguity (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Additionally, the literature will expand on the current state of assistant principals as instructional leaders and how instructional leadership is impacted by the transition process.

The review of literature continues by exploring the historical context and evolution of instructional leadership. Then, I explore the literature on assistant principal work-life and responsibilities (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Sun, 2011) with the intent of developing foundational categories that define assistant principal instructional leadership. I have labeled these foundational categories as "assistant principal instructional leadership domains." To further bolster my categorization of these assistant principal instructional leadership domains, a robust analysis of several frameworks on effective leadership (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006) was conducted to cross-reference instructional leadership practices found in effective leadership literature that are most relevant to the assistant principal instructional leadership domains. Similar to Hitt & Tucker's (2016) *Unified Framework* or Leithwood's (2012) *Ontario Leadership Framework*, I aim to identify a set of instructional leadership practices especially relevant to the assistant principalship. These key instructional leadership practices will serve as a

pillar for my conceptual framework as well as a basis for my data collection and analysis.

Finally, the literature review will provide additional insight into organizational socialization methods and the impact socialization has on individuals and organizations. I will build a connection between research on organizational socialization and how this research relates to the socialization of new assistant principals. Additionally, I explain the tenets of Socialization Resources Theory (SRT), highlighting six specific resources (formal orientation, formal assistance, socialization agents, supervisor support, supervisor feedback, and formal training) that will be explored in this research. These socialization resources serve as the second pillar of my conceptual framework and a basis for my data collection and analysis.

Preview of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is a result of the interplay between two key foci. The first focal area involves the engagement in, and developmental support of, instructional leadership practices of new assistant principals. A summary of the literature on assistant principal tasks (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Sun, 2011) yielded five broad categories defining instructional leadership for assistant principals, which, as stated previously, I call Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains (APILD): (a) supporting curriculum development, (b) improving instructional practice, (c) monitoring progress and assessment, (d) fostering a positive instructional environment, and (e) encouraging professional growth. To provide greater detail to the APILD, a crosswalk of the instructional leadership practices found in the literature outlining effective leadership practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood,

2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006) was conducted. The process of cross-referencing and synthesizing the literature on effective leadership practices led to 16 instructional leadership practices for assistant principals which can be categorized across the five APILD.

The second focal point of my conceptual framework involves how new assistant principals are supported through organizational socialization practices. Saks and Gruman (2012) state that organizations can provide socialization resources for newcomers to ease their transition and support skill development, which they elaborate on in Socialization Resource Theory (SRT). Socialization Resources Theory outlines 17 socialization resources at various stages of the socialization process to assist new employees as they adjust to their new role (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Of these outlined socialization resources, I will utilize those that take place while the new administrator is active in their role. I focus on the socialization resources evidenced in literature as supporting new assistant principal transition: formal orientation, formal assistance, socialization agents, supervisor support, supervisor feedback, and formal training.

The conceptual framework for this study thus combines key instructional leadership practices of assistant principals with socialization resources deployed by school districts for supporting transition and skill development in new school leaders. I contend that by first identifying the instructional leadership development needs of new assistant principals, and then exploring which socialization resources are reported by new administrators as the most helpful in building their instructional leadership skills, school districts will be able to hone their methods for bolstering new assistant principals'

instructional leadership capacity. A deeper explanation of the conceptual framework will be provided in Chapter Three of this capstone.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study explored how to support new assistant principals in building instructional leadership capacity. Additionally, the research questions sought to discern how socialization resources may be utilized to support the development of new assistant principals as instructional leaders. To investigate the instructional leadership practices of new assistant principals, as well as their informal and formal socialization, I examined the following research questions:

1. In which instructional leadership practices do new assistant principals most often engage?

2. What instructional leadership practices do new assistant principals identify as areas requiring support?

3. Which socialization resources are most helpful to new assistant principals in their development as instructional leaders?

The first research question served to illuminate how frequently assistant principals engaged in specific instructional leadership tasks. This question provided a baseline for comprehending the current state of assistant principal tasks as it relates to instructional leadership. Data collected related to this research question provides information to schools and districts as to whether assistant principals in their district participate in instructional leadership.

The second research question sought to understand the level of support being received by new assistant principals related to specific instructional leadership practices,

and which of these practices new school administrators indicated needing additional support in developing. In exploring this research question, certain analyses were completed to determine if differences exist between different demographics of assistant principals. Since both novice and experienced assistant principals were invited to participate in this research, disaggregating information from each group may highlight what new assistant principals require immediately as well as what support more experienced assistant principals wish they would have received in retrospect.

The third research question sought to collect the views of new assistant principals on which socialization resources contributed to their instructional leadership development. More specifically, which socialization resources would new assistant principals deem as most helpful in building their instructional leadership capacity. Through this investigation, schools may better understand what modifications, if any, need to be made to the socialization of these school leaders. Additionally, investigating subgroup data may further highlight how socialization can be tailored to best meet the needs of the assistant principal based on the primary grade level served.

Methodology

This study deployed quantitative methods to answer the research questions. Quantitative methods served as the primary method of data collection as these can be used to describe trends and explain relationships among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In this nonexperimental, correlational study design, I used correlational statistics to describe the relationship between variables with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample in this study was gathered from three, large school districts in the same region of a Mid-

Atlantic state. Each of the school districts has an articulated leadership development program for new assistant principals and a diverse student population. The generalizability of the results of this study will be limited since data will be collected from three school districts within a single region; however, information gathered through this study may contribute to the literature on the role, and developmental needs, of assistant principals.

To address the research questions for this study, a cross-sectional survey was provided to all assistant principals from three previously mentioned school districts. Consistent with the purpose of survey design research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the survey aimed to gather information about the perceptions of new assistant principals on their developmental growth needs in instructional leadership. More specifically, the survey asked assistant principals four questions related to 16 outlined instructional leadership practices: (a) the frequency with which participants engage in each instructional leadership practice, (b) the level of support received in developing their ability to perform each instructional leadership practice, (c) the participants' beliefs about the need for more support in developing their capacity to perform the instructional leadership practice, and (d) the socialization resources, in ranked order, that participants believe would be the most helpful in developing their capacity to perform the instructional leadership practice. Further information gathered included which of the six socialization resources were available to assistant principals when entering school leadership. Assistant principals within their first three years in the role answered the questions based on their current experience and more experienced assistant principals

responded to the questions reflecting on their needs when they were novice assistant principals.

Data analysis for this research was conducted in numerous ways. For the first research question, descriptive statistical analysis, such as evaluating the median, mean, and standard deviation, was used to understand the current participation in instructional leadership. The second research question was answered by using the same descriptive statistics as before, along with performing a *t*-test for independent samples to explore if differences in instructional leadership development needs exist by grade level served or experience level of an assistant principal. Finally, to address the third research question, a chi-square test for independence was conducted to examine if the socialization resources deemed most helpful in building instructional leadership capacity are independent of the grade level served (elementary, middle, or high).

Biases and Assumptions

There were assumptions and biases to consider from my perspective as a researcher. First, I assumed school districts and building principals seek to further develop their assistant principals in matters of instructional leadership. This study adhered to the call in the literature for assistant principals to have a more prominent role as instructional leaders (Armstrong, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012) and assumed the school district and building principals supporting these new assistant principals feel similarly.

Another assumption of this study was that the frameworks for effective leadership practices can be applied to the assistant principalship even though they are not specifically dedicated to the assistant principalship. This assumption was made from arguments in the literature that contend the assistant principalship has become as complex

as the role of the principal (Harris & Lowery, 2004) and serves as a stepping stone to the principalship (James, 2017).

Finally, I must highlight potential bias as a researcher in this study. My experience as a former assistant principal may have impacted how I developed instrumentation, interpreted results, and communicated research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Throughout the research process, I attempted to limit this bias by triangulating quantitative data sources by pilot-testing instrumentation and member checking to determine the accuracy of data interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

One limitation of this research lies in the size of the sample. Although this study focused on assistant principals from three large school districts, these districts represent the same geographical area, and therefore results cannot be generalizable to all assistant principals (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Furthermore, the sampled school districts currently have an outlined leadership development program for new assistant principals, which may have skewed results of the data since the level of support being provided to these new school leaders may have been greater than other school districts. However, findings from this research may inform these school districts of the effectiveness of their leadership development program as it relates to instructional leadership capacity and the potential support needs indicated by new assistant principals. Additionally, for other school districts with formal leadership development programs for new assistant principals, or those seeking to implement this type of program, this study could provide

valuable information on how to build instructional leadership capacity in these new school leaders.

Another limitation of this study is the method of quantitative data collection. First, the survey utilized in this study was not an existing survey, which raises questions regarding the validity of the instrument. However, the survey questions were developed by synthesizing major works in the field around assistant principal tasks and effective instructional leadership practices. These prominent works establish content validity as these works are widely accepted. Pilot testing of the survey was conducted with a small sample prior to distribution to the target population to further address the concern of content validity and to provide an evaluation of the internal consistency of the items (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Furthermore, the survey instrument required participants to self-report their instructional leadership activities and developmental needs. Since the results were predicated on participant self-disclosure this may be seen as a limitation of the study, as participant personal bias may have impacted the results. Participants may have felt embarrassed to admit requiring additional support on instructional leadership tasks and, as a result, they may have inflated responses to portray higher levels of instructional leadership capacity. To address this limitation, participants were assured their responses remain anonymous.

Finally, the circumstances of society at the time of this study may have impacted the results. During the time this research was conducted, public education had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, new assistant principals had another circumstance affecting their transition into the role of school leadership. Since new

assistant principals are defined as leaders who have completed less than three years in their role, the individuals with the most time in the role spent half their time performing the duties of the assistant principalship during a pandemic. These circumstances could have impacted participants' attitudes toward the instructional leadership practices they required more support in developing.

Delimitations

This study did not seek the opinions of principals or school district leaders as to what they deem new assistant principals needed to improve instructional leadership capacity. This delimitation was strategic as research indicates a lack of consistency in the defined role and tasks of assistant principals (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Therefore, different principals and school districts may have different definitions of assistant principal instructional leadership thus impacting their reports of instructional leadership capacity needs of assistant principals. As a result, this research focused on the opinions and beliefs of assistant principals on a set of defined instructional leadership practices.

In this study, I utilized frameworks on effective leadership practices of principals as a basis for analyzing instructional leadership practices of new assistant principals. Although the instructional leadership practices were cross-referenced with literature on assistant principal tasks, extrapolating these practices and applying them to assistant principals may not serve as the most comprehensive list of instructional leadership tasks for assistant principals. The definition of assistant principal leadership practices created in this study is not standard and may leave out practices the field would deem as instructional leadership practices for these school leaders. However, there is a need to

define the instructional leadership role of the assistant principal more adequately (Barnett et al., 2012). For the scope of this research, applying previously established effective leadership practices for principals that are relevant to the assistant principal seems reasonable.

Lastly, the strategic reduction of the socialization resources explored served as another delimitation of this study. Socialization Resources Theory (SRT) outlines 17 socialization resources to support new employees from prior to beginning their new role to after they have completed the socialization process. Since this research sought to understand the socialization resources new assistant principals deem helpful when starting in the position, this automatically eliminates three resources from SRT. Additionally, this research aimed to better understand the socialization resources novice assistant principals deem helpful in their development as instructional leaders. Several of the socialization resources focus on an individual's connectedness to the organization and feelings of belonging (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Although these are important components of organizational socialization, this study sought to investigate the resources that assist with skill and knowledge development, hence this study focused on six socialization resources: formal orientation, formal assistance, socialization agents, supervisor support, supervisor feedback, and formal training. Connections between these six socialization resources and the assistant principalship are outlined in Chapter Three of this research.

Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity of meaning, I define key terms utilized throughout this study below.

New/Novice Assistant Principals

In this study, I sought to understand the instructional leadership needs of novice assistant principals, which can be a broadly used term. Drawing upon the research surrounding the transition to the assistant principalship, the literature suggests school leaders have generally acclimated to this role by the end of their third year (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). As a result, I used the term new or novice assistant principals to refer to any individual who has yet to complete three full school years in the role.

Instructional Leadership

As previously noted, the definition of instructional leadership has shifted over time. In fact, some still claim the term instructional leadership is ill-defined (Neumerski, 2013). Furthermore, instructional leadership as it relates to the assistant principal has not been clearly articulated within the literature. For this research, instructional leadership practices included any practices that could directly impact instructional practice, curriculum development, and student academic progress. The frameworks on assistant principal tasks and effective leadership practices were analyzed for instructional practices that fall into these categories.

To further explain this definition, an example can be given from Leithwood's (2012) *Ontario Leadership Framework*. One of the core practices in this framework is setting direction, which includes the leadership practice of building a shared vision. Now, building the vision of the school is typically left to the building principal and would not fall under the jurisdiction of the assistant principal. However, diving further into Leithwood's (2012) outlined practices, he describes leaders who build a shared vision may "build understanding of the specific implications of the schools' vision for its'

programs and the nature of classroom instruction," (p. 15). In this case, building an understanding between the outlined school vision and classroom instruction would fall under the definition of directly impacting instructional practice, and would be an action that could fall into the role of the assistant principal.

Organizational Socialization

In general, organizational socialization refers to the practices or techniques deployed by an organization to orient and socialize new employees (Louis et al., 1983; see also Saks & Gruman, 2012). For the purposes of this study, I utilized the definition of organizational socialization practices provided by Saks and Gruman (2012): "organization-initiated activities, programs, events, and experiences that are specifically designed to facilitate newcomers' learning, adjustment, and socialization into a job, role, work group, and organization so that they can become effective members of the organization," (p. 3). The six socialization resources deployed in this study are defined as follows:

- *Formal Assistance* - refers to a school district assigned mentor for the new assistant principal, either inside or outside the school building of employment, who supports skill development and problem-solving related to the assistant principalship.

- *Formal Orientation* - refers to a formal onboarding program, or series of events, delivered by the school district to orient new assistant principals to the role. Formal orientations could include one-time information sessions, or an ongoing induction program over time, focused on supporting the transition to the assistant principalship.

- *Formal Training* - refers to the formal programs and professional development provided by the school district to new assistant principals after starting their position. Formal trainings are typically more conventional, highly planned programs aimed at developing specific skills and knowledge to effectively perform tasks.

- *Socialization Agent(s)* - refer to administrators, coaches, or specialists, other than the principal or mentor, who work directly or indirectly with the new assistant principal by providing information, guidance, feedback, or resources.

- *Supervisor Feedback* - refers to the specific, evaluative feedback provided by the building principal on the new assistant principal's job performance and work-related behaviors.

- *Supervisor Support* - refers to the building principal's demonstration of availability and willingness to assist the new assistant principal. Supervisor support can be defined as the extent to which one's immediate supervisor exhibits behaviors that demonstrate they care about, value, and take action to assist the new assistant principal.

Summary and Organization of Capstone

In this study, I aimed to identify what support novice assistant principals require to further build their instructional leadership capacity by exploring specific instructional leadership practices for assistant principals. Additionally, I sought to determine which socialization resources these new assistant principals deemed as supportive in their efforts to further develop as instructional leaders. In the chapter that follows, I conducted a comprehensive review of the literature in three broad areas: assistant principal

transition, assistant principal instructional leadership, and assistant principal socialization.

Utilizing pre-existing frameworks on effective leadership practices, I synthesized these practices into a set of assistant principal instructional leadership practices. The relationship between assistant principal instructional leadership practices and socialization resources, as outlined by Socialization Resources Theory, served as the basis for the conceptual framework for this research. In Chapter Three of this dissertation, I detail the elements of the conceptual framework and elaborate on how this conceptual framework guides my methods.

Chapter II - Literature Review

This literature review aims to better understand the transitional challenges faced by novice assistant principals and how these challenges might impact instructional leadership capacity. Additionally, this review seeks to investigate how new school administrators can be supported by schools and districts. More specifically, this literature review addresses: (a) the transitional challenges new assistant principals face and the impact these challenges have on new assistant principals' ability to serve as instructional leaders; (b) what the literature states about the impact of instructional leadership on school achievement, how instructional leadership relates to the assistant principalship, and how effective instructional leadership practices can be applied to the assistant principal; and, (c) how organizational socialization supports role transition and how socialization resources are enacted in schools or school districts as it relates to assistant principals.

Search Methodology

For each of the three main areas of this literature review, I started my search in the EBSCO Education Databases utilizing broad terminology for each category. In each of these categories a few prominent works were found and then I used literature cited in these works to explore the concept more thoroughly. For example, searching for research on assistant principal transition yielded several articles from Armstrong (2012, 2015), and this research then led to additional works (i.e., Armstrong, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; etc.). This strategy was also used when examining the role of the assistant principal

and effective instructional leadership. Beginning with Hitt and Tucker (2016), I was able to explore additional frameworks for effective leadership practices (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006).

To explore the transitional challenges of assistant principals, I used the key term "assistant principal transition", which garnered an abundance of research both relevant and irrelevant to this research. My focus was on the literature surrounding entry into the assistant principalship rather than transitioning from the assistant principalship. Diving further into this research, I explored "assistant principal roles", focusing on articles outlining assistant principal tasks and responsibilities. This key term search would also expose whether instructional leadership was associated with the assistant principalship in educational literature.

Next, I began a broad search of "instructional leadership", utilizing articles that provided historical context to defining this type of leadership, as well as research defining effective instructional leadership practices. As is detailed later in this literature review, several frameworks for instructional leadership (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006) served as a foundation for a review of effective instructional leadership. These frameworks also led to several supplemental articles addressing instructional leadership practices.

Finally, an EBSCO search was conducted on "organizational socialization". Utilizing this broad term was strategic, as it would yield general information about how organizational socialization is defined and used in non-educational settings. Following this search, I modified the key term to "assistant principal socialization", which provided

detail on how socialization practices can be used to support novice administrators. The subsequent sections outline the research findings in each area.

Transition to the Assistant Principal Role

Stages of Transition

The transition to the assistant principalship begins well before the first day as a school administrator (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Craft et al., 2016; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Although the research differs in the number of stages involved in the transition process (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Bridges, 2009; Cohen & Schechter, 2019b; Sigford, 2005), similarities exist across the research in the cognitive and emotional processes endured by aspiring school leaders. Table 1 represents my comparison of this research and breaks down the stages of transition of the assistant principal into approximate timelines: pre-assistant principalship, initial months, years one and two collectively, and then year three. The emphasis of this literature review will exclude the pre-assistant principal phase and instead focus on the stages during which the individual is actively in the assistant principal role, as this will represent the participants of this study.

Table 1

Stages of Transitioning to the Assistant Principalship Over Time

	Armstrong (2009, 2012)	Bridges (2009)	Marshall & Hooley (2006)	Sigford (2005)
Pre-AP	Entry-Exit		Deciding to leave teaching Analyzing selection process	
Initial Months	Immersion – Emmersion	Ending, Losing, Letting Go	Maintaining calm in face of culture shock	Denial Anger Depression

| Year 1-2 | Disintegration – Reintegration | The Neutral Zone | Define relationships with teachers
Art of becoming "street level" bureaucrat | Bargaining |
| Year 3 | Transformation - Restabilization | The New Beginning | Identifying, demanding, and protecting "territory"
Discipline management and daily work | Acceptance |

Once a school leader enters the assistant principalship, the second phase takes place in the initial months as a new administrator (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019b, Sigford, 2005) and can be characterized as an abrupt transition which forces new leaders from their comfort zone (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Bridges, 2009, Cohen & Schechter, 2019b). The new professional reality can be accompanied by feelings of denial, uncertainty, and shock (Bridges, 2009, Cohen & Schechter, 2019b, Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Sigford (2005) compares the transition into leadership to the psychological stages of grief (Cohen & Schechter, 2019b). During the stages of denial, anger, and depression, new assistant principals feel separated from their old role, and are met with feelings of loss, sadness, frustration, and guilt, and may even consider returning to the classroom (Cohen & Schechter, 2019b, Sigford, 2005). However, intermittently throughout this phase new administrators begin seeking advice and developing a support network (Armstrong, 2009, 2012).

As new assistant principals enter Years One and Two (see Table 1), they begin to bridge between the loss of identity as a teacher and the formulation of a new professional identity as an administrator (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Bridges, 2009; Cohen & Schechter,

2019b; Sigford, 2005). Developing a new professional identity includes redefining their relationship with teachers (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012), while building new coping strategies, management abilities, and skills (Cohen & Schechter, 2019b; Sigford, 2005). Armstrong (2012) describes the latter part of this phase as reintegration, in which new administrators "develop new skills and relationships, adopt new attitudes and perspectives, and understand their role and community," (p. 414).

In the final phase, Year Three (see Table 1) new assistant principals have redefined themselves within the administrative culture (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019b, Sigford, 2005), and have entered a stage of acceptance and openness to learning (Bridges, 2009, Cohen & Schechter, 2019b). Additionally, individuals in this transition phase have become socially and psychologically distanced from teachers (Armstrong, 2009, 2012). New administrators are able to better identify their responsibilities (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012), have greater capacity to cope with the realities of their daily work (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012), and generally exude higher levels of confidence in role performance (Armstrong, 2009, 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019b; Sigford, 2005).

Transition Challenges

Each transitional stage is accompanied by challenges and areas of growth. Research on the difficulties faced by new assistant principals regarding their roles, responsibilities, and tasks can be summarized into three categories: role identity, role complexity, and role ambiguity.

Role Identity. An abundance of research points to the shift in social identity from teacher to administrator as one of the primary challenges transitioning into school

leadership (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Grodski, 2011). Entering the role of school administrator creates new relationship dynamics with former colleagues (Armstrong, 2015; Craft et al., 2016; Grodski, 2011; Hohner & Riveros, 2017), which frequently causes new administrators to feel lonely and isolated from a once familiar support group (Hohner & Riveros, 2017; Searby et al. 2017). The upward shift in the school hierarchy makes it difficult for new administrators to maintain the same collegial and professional relationships with teachers (Marshall & Hooley, 2006), leading to role dissonance, dislocation, and displacement (Armstrong, 2015; Hohner & Riveros, 2017).

Not only are new administrators coping with the loss of peer collegiality, but they are also simultaneously redefining their professional identity as an administrator (Searby et al., 2017). Often new assistant principals enter their role with the intention of being an advocate for teachers (Hausman et al., 2002); however, the combination of changing professional reference groups and the external pressure to conform to traditional roles of the assistant principalship can result in transitional strain (Armstrong, 2012). Some research claims new administrators need to completely relinquish their teacher perspectives (Armstrong, 2012; Hartzell et al., 1994); although, other research argues leaders benefit from their cumulative, formative experiences which may contribute to more effectively assuming leadership roles (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). Nevertheless, the transition to the assistant principalship entails reframing their role and reconciling conflicting role expectations (Armstrong, 2012; Grodski, 2011), while attempting to find their footing in the organizational structure (Cohen & Schechter, 2019b; Hartzell et al., 1994).

Role Complexity. A review of the literature on the tasks performed by the assistant principal illuminates the wide expanse of responsibilities asked of individuals in this role (Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Morgan, 2018). Most education professionals view assistant principals first and foremost as disciplinarians or student managers (Barnett et al., 2012; Bukoski et al., 2015; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Glanz, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Morgan, 2018; Sun, 2011). Unfortunately, in their semi-structured interviews with over 100 assistant principals in a southern U.S. state, Barnett et al. (2012) found the overwhelming amount of time assistant principals spend on disciplinary tasks has been shown to negatively impact job effectiveness. In addition to student management, assistant principals also spend considerable time on personnel management (Hausman et al., 2002). One of the primary tasks for assistant principals related to personnel management is teacher evaluation (Morgan, 2018; Sun, 2011); however, research indicates new administrators struggle with conducting evaluations and providing feedback (Craft et al., 2016) and may experience tension when working with ineffective teachers (Barnett et al., 2012).

In addition to supporting student and personnel management, assistant principals engage in parent and community relations, and operations management. Assistant principals often handle conferences to address parental complaints (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Marshall & Hooley, 2006), which research shows is a difficult task for assistant principals (Barnett et al., 2012). Assistant principals may be asked to engage in public relations activities (Marshall & Hooley, 2006) or connect with the external community (Kwan, 2009; Morgan, 2018). Additionally, assistant principals are often asked to

complete miscellaneous administrative tasks, paperwork, and school logistics (Cohen &

Schechter, 2019a; Morgan, 2018; Sun, 2011), such as handling the master schedule,

student registration, and attendance (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Role Ambiguity. With the myriad tasks assistant principals are asked to perform,

some research claims these responsibilities as "ill-define[d], inconsistent, and at times

incoherent," (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 7). The assistant principalship rarely has a

formalized, well-defined job description (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Marshall &

Hooley, 2006) or a clear delineation of duties (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). In their

extensive review of literature on assistant principals from 1970-2011, Oleszewski et al.

(2012) state the lack of clarity around the assistant principal role has been found to

impact well-being and job performance, which may result in physical, cognitive, and

emotional stress (Armstrong, 2012). In fact, in her examination of assistant principal

burnout, Blanchard (1990) found significant relationships between emotional exhaustion,

role conflict, and role ambiguity (as cited in Hausman et al., 2002). The unpredictability

of the job, the sporadic nature of the workday, and the plethora of tasks present a

challenge for new assistant principals to manage, and meet, the expectations of the role

(Craft et al., 2016).

Impact on Instructional Leadership

Considering the abundant tasks which deter assistant principals from instructional

leadership – one of the most impactful areas of effort by administrators - research has

called for a redefinition of the assistant principalship to account for greater instructional

leadership opportunities (Armstrong, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012). Studies examining how

assistant principals spend their time document they are given tasks related to developing

curriculum (Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Morgan, 2018; Robinson et al., 2008; Sun, 2011), or deploying data-driven decision-making to improve instructional practices (Barnett et al., 2012; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Kwan, 2009; Morgan, 2018; Robinson et al., 2008). In their study of 459 assistant principals in Alabama, Searby et al. (2017) found 62% of assistant principals reported more than 50% of their responsibilities fall into instructional leadership. Conversely, in their book synthesizing research on assistant principal responsibilities, socialization, and challenges, Marshall and Hooley (2006) state only some assistant principals work on, or even take an interest in, improving curriculum and teaching.

Research indicates most assistant principals spend little time in the instructional leader role (Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Hausman et al., 2002; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Instead, tasks related to student discipline, personnel management, or school operations often dominate the assistant principal workload (Arar, 2014; Barnett et al., 2012; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Cranston et al., 2004; Glanz, 2004; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Morgan, 2014, 2018). The idea of serving as an instructional leader alongside the abundance of other responsibilities can increase work-related stress (Grodski, 2011). Some research indicates assistant principals require more support with broad instructional leadership tasks (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Deploying Leithwood's (2012) *Ontario Leadership Framework* as a barometer for effective instructional leadership in assistant principals, Searby et al. (2017) found that assistant principals who reported feeling somewhat ready or not ready for instructional leadership stated needing mentoring in improving the instructional program (61.5%), focusing on learning (55.5%), setting direction (49.5%), and developing people (47.5%).

Instructional Leadership

Considering that research indicates assistant principals feel ill-prepared to serve as instructional leaders (Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012), the subsequent section dives into how instructional leadership has been defined in educational literature and outlines its impact on schools and assistant principals.

Evolution of Instructional Leadership

Origins of instructional leadership were born out of the effective schools movement of the 1970s (Neumerski, 2013), in which educators and scholars alike recognized effective and successful schools could not exist with weak instructional leadership (Neumerski, 2013; Robinson et al., 2008). However, a concise definition of instructional leadership at the time was still missing (Neumerski, 2013). Beginning in the 1980s, the role of the principal specifically began to shift toward instructional leadership (Hallinger, 1992; Valentine & Prater, 2011). Research began to articulate instructional leadership as demonstrating knowledge of curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 1992), supervising teachers and classroom instruction (De Bevoise, 1984, as cited in Valentine & Prater, 2011; Hallinger, 1992), developing staff (Bossert et al., 1982, as cited in Valentine & Prater, 2011; De Bevoise, 1984, as cited in Valentine & Prater, 2011), and monitoring student progress and achievement (Bossert et al., 1982, as cited in Valentine & Prater, 2011; Hallinger, 1992).

Into the 1990s, the term instructional leader grew clearer within the research. As Lashway (1995) describes, high-performing schools have principals who "lead the academic program, set goals, examine curriculum, evaluate teachers, and assess results," (p. 1, as cited in Valentine & Prater, 2011, p. 7). As education moved into the turn of the

century, instructional leadership began including the creation of equitable learning opportunities for students, educators, and the educational system more broadly (Knapp et al., 2003, as cited in Murphy et al., 2006). In other words, instructionally focused leadership includes the ability of school leaders to stay focused on the core purpose of schooling (i.e., learning, teaching, curriculum, and assessment), and to make all other dimensions of schooling work in service to this core purpose and improved student learning (Murphy et al., 2006). However, some research still maintains that the term instructional leadership remains weak and ill-defined (Neumerski, 2013).

Impact of Instructional Leadership

There is evidence in the literature which demonstrates instructionally focused leadership as an effective frame for education (Murphy et al., 2006). The instructional leadership of principals has shown a small, but statistically significant, effect on student learning (Hallinger, 2005; see also Robinson, et al., 2008). Robinson et al. (2008) conducted a quantitative meta-analysis of 27 studies published from 1978-2006 linking leadership and student outcomes and calculated the effect size of those leadership practices on student outcomes. The authors found the mean effect size of instructional leadership was three to four times greater than that of transformational leadership practices (Robinson et al., 2008). Further still, in their quantitative study of 313 high schools in Missouri, Valentine and Prater (2011) analyzed the degree to which principals positively impacted school outcomes through key instructional leadership practices. They found the factors of instructional and curricular improvement explained the positive variance in language arts, social studies, and science scores (Valentine & Prater, 2011).

Instructional Leadership and the Assistant Principalship

Despite the evolution of instructional leadership in the last 50 years, and the clear evidence of the value of instructional leadership on school outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008; Valentine & Prater, 2011), there remains a lack of research defining the role of the assistant principal as an instructional leader. Some research claims assistant principals can only be instructional leaders in "rare" or "nuanced ways," (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 17). Research dating back as far as 1985 documents the reconfiguration of the assistant principalship to include having a more substantial role in instructional leadership and school improvement (Armstrong, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012; Greenfield, 1985). As Barnett et al. (2012) explain, "the role of the assistant principal must evolve from the traditional perspective of disciplinarian and manager to a perspective in which enhancing the instructional program is at the forefront," (p. 92).

Proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains (APILD)

Although a need exists for greater emphasis on instructional leadership within the assistant principalship, much of the literature exploring assistant principal responsibilities does not define instructional leadership for these school leaders. There is some literature exploring assistant principal work-life (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Sun, 2011) and development (Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012) that include elements of instructional leadership, but this research provides broad explanations of assistant principal tasks which do not focus primarily on instructional leadership. To define assistant principal instructional leadership more specifically, I explored literature outlining duties, tasks, and the work-life of assistant principals (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2002; Sun, 2011). Across these pieces of literature on the role of assistant principals, I searched for tasks in the literature

which are directly or indirectly associated with curriculum, instruction, or assessment.

Many of the tasks described in the literature are broad (i.e., "instructional leadership",

"staff development", etc.). To bring more specificity to this study, I identified

commonalities across this literature and categorized these elements. From that

categorization, I propose five Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

(APILD) as outlined in Table 2: (a) supporting curriculum development, (b) improving

instructional practice, (c) monitoring progress and assessment, (d) fostering a positive

instructional environment, and (e) encouraging professional growth.

Table 2

Proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Armstrong (2004)	Kwan (2009)	Hausman et al. (2002)	Oleszewski et al. (2012)	Sun (2011)
Supporting Curriculum Development	X	X	X	X	X
Improving Instructional Practice	X	X	X	X	X
Monitoring Progress & Assessment	X	X		X	
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	X	X	X	X	X
Encouraging Professional Growth	X	X	X	X	X

Supporting Curriculum Development

Literature indicates assistant principals have been associated with supporting

curriculum development (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009;

Oleszewski et al., 2012; Sun, 2011). For some assistant principals, this could be

organizing curriculum development activities (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009), or

evaluating and managing curriculum (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et

al., 2012). Some research shows assistant principals report curriculum development is in

the lower half (Sun, 2011), or close to the bottom (Armstrong, 2004), of their outlined

duties. However, when assistant principals were asked how they should spend their time, curriculum development was in the top ten tasks (Sun, 2011).

Improving Instructional Practice

One of the primary roles outlined in the literature on assistant principals related to improving instruction is the supervision and evaluation of teachers (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Sun, 2011). Through observation of classroom teaching (Kwan, 2009), reviewing teaching and learning outcomes (Kwan, 2009), and coaching teachers (Oleszewski et al., 2012), assistant principals can have an impact on improving the instructional program. In fact, teacher evaluation is reported in the top five tasks of assistant principals across the literature (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Sun, 2011). However, improving instructional practice involves more than simply evaluating teachers and warrants further exploration within the literature.

Monitoring Progress and Assessment

Part of the assistant principalship is collecting, reviewing, and analyzing assessment data (Armstrong, 2004; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Monitoring assessment data could allude to public exam results, such as statewide accreditation testing, or school-wide testing outcomes (Kwan, 2009). Regardless, assistant principals at times are tasked with utilizing assessment data to make decisions and support school planning (Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment

At the forefront of the literature about fostering a positive instructional environment is the assistant principal's role in student management and discipline

(Armstrong, 2004; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Sun, 2011). This task includes resolving student behavioral problems through direct supervision of students (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009), consulting with teachers about specific students (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009), and counseling students (Sun, 2011). However, the role of the assistant principal in fostering a positive instructional environment could go beyond simply disciplining students. Assistant principals have also been associated with encouraging student learning (Hausman et al., 2002) and promoting a learning-centered environment (Kwan, 2009) as a means of impacting instruction across the school.

Encouraging Professional Growth

Assistant principals have the potential to serve as instructional leaders by encouraging professional growth in their staff (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Sun, 2011). Although staff development has been ranked in the lower half of tasks assistant principals perform (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Sun, 2011), assistant principals have been tasked with planning and facilitating instructional development programs for staff (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Furthermore, the literature indicates assistant principals also attend meetings, seminars, and conferences as a means of their own professional growth (Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009).

Although these five domains serve to ground this study in the instructional leadership tasks of assistant principals, these domains remain broad. As a result, additional literature needs to be consulted if specific instructional leadership practices for assistant principals are to be established. The following section aims to provide further specificity to these Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains by synthesizing

prominent literature on effective leadership practices and categorizing them into each APILD.

Proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practices

To further define the role of the assistant principal as an instructional leader and buttress the categorization of the five domains, I explored prominent frameworks on effective leadership practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006) to crosswalk all practices related to instructional leadership through key vocabulary (i.e., curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment, etc.) that could be categorized into one of the five Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains. In examining the connections between the Domains and practices, I found 116 distinct practices linked to instruction which served as a baseline for defining effective assistant principal instructional leadership practices within schools. These 116 practices were then categorized into the appropriate APILD as follows: supporting curriculum development (21), improving instructional practice (27), monitoring progress and assessment (24), fostering a positive instructional environment (31), and encouraging professional growth (13). Practices within each domain were then grouped together by commonality and collapsed into a single instructional leadership practice. From this process, 16 practices were created and formed the proposed assistant principal instructional leadership practices for this research. A summary of how each domain and practice relates to the literature is shown in Table 3.

The next sections further explain and define each of the five domains and the 16 assistant principal instructional leadership practices.

Table 3

Proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains and Practices

	Effective Leadership Practices Research				
	Hitt & Tucker (2016)	Leithwood (2012)	Murphy et al. (2006)	Robinson et al. (2008)	Sebring et al. (2006)
Supporting Curriculum Development					
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	X	X	X		X
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	X	X	X		X
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas		X	X	X	X
Improving Instructional Practices					
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	X		X	X	X
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice		X	X	X	X
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	X	X	X	X	
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams		X	X	X	X
Monitoring Progress and Assessment					
Support in the development of high-quality assessments		X	X		
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	X		X		
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement		X	X	X	
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment					
Build trusting relationships with staff and families	X	X	X		X
Foster a collaborative culture	X	X	X		X
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	X	X	X	X	X
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice	X	X	X		
Encouraging Professional Growth					
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	X	X	X		
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	X	X	X	X	

Note. Information adapted from Hitt & Tucker (2016), Leithwood (2012), Murphy et al., (2006), Robinson et al., (2008), and Sebring et al., (2006)

Supporting Curriculum Development

Supporting Teachers in Developing Engaging and Culturally Responsive Learning Experiences. Before instruction begins in the classroom, literature describes the importance of the leader's role in supporting teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006, Sebring et al., 2006). Further still, instructional leaders assist

teachers in developing a deep understanding of their students' race, ethnicity, and social class to identify, incorporate, and reflect students' backgrounds in the construction of the instructional program and learning environment (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006). In doing so, leaders develop teachers' ability to utilize the social and intellectual capital of their students' diverse backgrounds (Leithwood, 2012). Thus, assistant principals support the creation of educational experiences that honor diversity while strengthening instruction and improving student achievement (Murphy et al., 2006).

Ensure the Creation of a Rigorous Curricular Program for All Students.
Assistant principals who serve as strong instructional leaders ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students. Although Brewer (1993) focused on the work of principals, this research found schools with principals who expressed high academic goals showed higher academic gains (as cited in Hallinger & Heck, 1998). In general, effective leaders set the tone of rigor and high expectations in the curricular program (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006). Every student deserves to be exposed to more rigorous content (Murphy et al., 2006), and the key to achieving this expectation for assistant principal instructional leaders is to ensure teachers move beyond basic skills and provide intellectually stimulating and challenging work (Sebring et al., 2006). When addressing the achievement of students who have traditionally struggled to be successful at school, effective instructional leaders must devote even more time and effort to the staffs' collective commitment to high expectations for all students (Leithwood, 2012).

Align Curriculum Across Grade Levels and Subject Areas. In addition to ensuring rigor within the curriculum, effective instructional leaders also secure alignment with standards inside and across classrooms over the duration of a student's educational experience (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006). The vertical and horizontal articulation of content across grade levels and subject areas reinforces learning while avoiding unnecessary overlap in content (Leithwood, 2012). Organizing and coordinating the curriculum across classrooms, subjects, and grades leads to modifications in instruction (Sebring et al., 2006). If assistant principals as instructional leaders fail to make time for curricular alignment, they run the risk of "weakening students' learning opportunities and achievement through delays, repetitions, and gaps in core knowledge and skills," (Sebring et al., 2006, p. 14).

Improving Instructional Practices

Display Instructional and Pedagogical Knowledge. Research indicates effective instructional leaders demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of instructional practices and pedagogy (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006). For assistant principals to be seen as instructional leaders, they must show commitment to the advancement of teaching practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016) and be seen by teachers and staff as a source for instructional advice (Robinson et al., 2008). When leaders are sought out as a source for instructional advice, they have greater respect from the staff and more significant influence over teaching practices (Friedkin & Slater, 1994, as cited in Robinson et al., 2008).

Actively Support the Development and Advancement of Instructional Practice. Simply displaying pedagogical knowledge is not enough to influence

instructional practice, rather strong instructional leaders are frequently and directly involved in the design and implementation of the instructional program (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006, Robinson et al., 2008). Through monitoring and coordinating the instructional program, assistant principal instructional leaders can support colleagues in their effort to strengthen their teaching practices (Murphy et al., 2006). Furthermore, effective instructional leaders challenge staff to embrace innovative instructional approaches and materials to increase their capacity in instructional practices (Sebring et al., 2006).

Provide Regular, Actionable Feedback on Instructional Practices. One of the primary roles of the assistant principal surrounds personnel management through teacher evaluation (Barnett et al., 2012; Hausman et al., 2002; Oleszewski et al., 2012), which is described in the literature as a key practice for effective instructional leaders (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008). To be effective instructional leaders, assistant principals must be attuned to teaching practices through active classroom observations (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008). Strong instructional leaders must also supply consistent, frequent, timely, and formative feedback on instructional practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006) aimed at improving teaching (Robinson et al., 2008) and positively reinforcing desired outcomes (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Although their research focused on school principals, Hallinger and Heck (1998) found leaders who were more directly involved in classroom supervision and improving teacher instructional practice had a significant indirect effect on school outcomes.

Lead Meaningful Discussions About Instructional Practice. Providing valuable feedback to teachers clearly influences instructional practice, but to truly change behaviors instructional leaders must spearhead discussions about curriculum, instruction, and the effectiveness of instructional practices with staff (Leithwood, 2012; Sebring et al., 2006). Being a high-caliber instructional leader requires active involvement in collegial discussions around instructional matters (Robinson et al., 2008), encouraging staff to reflect on the impact of their instructional practice on desired student outcomes (Leithwood, 2012; Robinson et al., 2008), and challenging staff to examine how their instructional practice contributes to student well-being (Leithwood, 2012). Moving from discussion, to reflection, to examination of instructional practices shifts teachers from thinking about instructional practices to applying new instructional strategies.

Monitoring Progress and Assessment

Support in the Development of High-Quality Assessments. Discussions about the impact of instructional practice on student outcomes cannot be maximized without quality assessments. Assistant principals serving as instructional leaders must be knowledgeable about assessment practices (Murphy et al., 2006) while assisting the staff in understanding the importance of student assessment "for, of, and as learning," (Leithwood, 2012, p. 28). Additionally, high-caliber instructional leaders are heavily involved in the design, implementation, and monitoring of comprehensive assessment systems (Murphy et al., 2006). Assistant principal involvement could include creating progress monitoring and data collection strategies or providing resources to craft well-developed assessments (Murphy et al., 2006).

Ensure Assessments are Aligned to Student Learning and Desired Outcomes.

Like the necessity of curricular and instructional alignment, effective instructional leaders

recognize the importance of assessments aligned with curriculum and instructional

practices and dedicate time to continuously monitoring and evaluating this alignment

(Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Quality instructional leaders hold the organization accountable for

designing formative and summative assessments aligned to desired outcomes while

monitoring the progress toward advancing those goals (Hitt & Tucker, 2016).

Furthermore, strong instructional leaders recognize the methods for assessing students in

the classroom should coincide with the methods of assessing student learning throughout

the school (Murphy et al., 2006).

Analyze Data to Monitor Student Progress and School Improvement. Leading

teachers through the process of modifying instructional practice requires the ability to

analyze multiple sources of data to diagnose student progress (Leithwood, 2012) and

implement modifications to content and student learning (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). In other

words, strong assistant principal instructional leaders recognize and cultivate the

importance of, formative and summative assessment data to advance school improvement

(Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Through incorporating explicit use of data in their own decision-

making, instructional leaders model how systematically monitoring assessment results

can improve instructional practice (Leithwood, 2012; Robinson et al., 2008) and drive

school improvement (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006). Examining data on student

learning, student achievement, student assessment, and school conditions are all factors

that cultivate high-quality instructional leaders (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006).

When leaders encourage teachers to use a variety of data to evaluate student progress,

adjust teaching, and provide students feedback, the quality of the school increases (Robinson et al., 2008).

Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment

Build Trusting Relationships with Staff and Families. Although perhaps at first glance the concept of trust seems unrelated to instructional leadership, promoting trust among teachers and families has been shown to positively impact not only school climate, but also student learning and improved student outcomes (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012). Assistant principals serving as instructional leaders must build norms that value open conversation with teachers about best practices (Leithwood, 2012), and focus staff and families on the quality of instruction and student learning (Murphy et al., 2006). Additionally, strong instructional leaders create an environment in which parents and families are valued partners in student learning (Leithwood, 2012). Student learning is enhanced when leaders consciously include parents in academic content (Sebring et al., 2006) and link academics to the external community (Murphy et al., 2006).

Encourage and Foster a Collaborative Culture. Building a collaborative culture is vital to a schools' ability to improve student learning, achieve school goals, and develop professional learning communities (Leithwood, 2012). Effective instructional leaders protect and value professional collaboration (Hitt & Tucker, 2016), and provide regular opportunities for teachers to engage in instructional improvement together (Leithwood, 2012). Part of encouraging collaboration resides in a leader's ability to lure teachers out of isolation to dialogue with colleagues about student learning (Sebring et al., 2006). As a result, teachers deepen and expand their instructional skills (Sebring et al., 2006). According to Murphy et al. (2006), effective instructional leaders "understand,

and help others understand, that communities of professional practice offer the most appropriate cauldrons for professional learning and the forging of new instructional skills," (p. 18). To be a strong assistant principal instructional leader, one must unite collaborative teams of professionals through reflective dialogue about instructional practice.

Maintain a Safe School Climate that Protects the Instructional Environment. Exceptional instructional leaders recognize the importance of, and actively protect, teachers' instructional time (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006). In fact, Francera and Bliss (2011) found that of the ten leadership practices they measured, protecting teachers' instructional time was the only practice with a significant impact on student achievement (as cited in Leithwood, 2012). The protection of this time can occur through creating schedules that maximize time on task and minimize the daily disruptions to classroom time (Leithwood, 2012).

Another method of maximizing instructional time lies in an assistant principal's capacity to enforce expectations for student behavior consistently and fairly (Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006), which is typically seen as the primary role for the assistant principalship (Barnett et al., 2012; Hausman et al., 2002; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). To support the integrity of the instructional program, high-quality assistant principal instructional leaders not only enforce disciplinary issues with students (Murphy et al., 2006) but also implement and monitor appropriate disciplinary practices across the school community (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006). Research suggests effective leaders, and by extension effective schools, emphasize safe and supportive environments (Heck et al., 1991; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Robinson et al., 2008). More specifically, safe,

and orderly school environments contribute to higher levels of academic learning (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006).

Recognize and Celebrate High-Quality Instructional Practice. Much has been stated about the importance of monitoring instruction and setting expectations, but assistant principal instructional leadership also includes positively reinforcing desired teaching practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). With all the time, effort, and energy placed into improving instructional practice, effective instructional leaders recognize and praise quality teaching and student learning (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006). Assistant principals aimed at being strong instructional leaders celebrate high-quality teaching and learning and provide incentives and rewards that are linked to improved student performance (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006).

Encouraging Professional Growth

Provide Opportunities for Professional Growth. One way in which assistant principals can serve as strong instructional leaders is by providing meaningful, stimulating, job-embedded, individualized professional development opportunities focused on improving instructional skills (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006). Offering professional growth opportunities is simply the first step. Integral to improving instructional practice is supporting teachers with integrating newly acquired skills into their teaching (Murphy et al., 2006). Successful professional development opportunities are aligned with school goals and informed by student achievement data (Murphy et al., 2006). Additionally, assistant principal instructional leaders encourage staff to develop and pursue their own professional goals in areas of their interest and support them as they attempt to implement these skills into practice (Leithwood, 2012).

Learn Alongside Staff to Promote Collective Professional Growth. High-quality instructional leaders model the importance of professional growth by participating and learning side-by-side with teachers about instructional improvement (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Robinson et al., 2008). Robinson et al. (2008) state teachers who report their school leaders as active participants in teacher development and learning, see higher student outcomes in the school. Moreover, assistant principals who engage in this side-by-side learning with teachers will strengthen their capacity and knowledge for curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2008), while simultaneously increasing their legitimacy as instructional leaders among staff (Hitt & Tucker, 2016).

Summary

The 16 outlined assistant principal instructional leadership practices combine research on assistant principal responsibilities and effective instructional leadership. The Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains (APILD) provide a proposed set of practices aligned with the work of the assistant principalship and serve as a primary component of this capstone. While these practices represent "what" assistant principal instructional leadership looks like, organizational socialization represents "how" new assistant principals are oriented to their work. The following section describes organizational socialization, its impact on new employees and by extension novice administrators, and details Socialization Resources Theory (SRT) and how it can be applied to supporting new assistant principals.

Organizational Socialization

As previously stated, transitioning into the assistant principalship can be fraught with strife (Armstrong, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Often transition, regardless of the role, leads to feelings of uncertainty and unfamiliarity (Van Maanen, 1977; see also Saks & Gruman, 2012). Newcomers to an organization are required to learn, think, and interact with individuals within that organization if they want to be accepted and effective members (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Accomplishing this task requires acquiring knowledge of the technical elements of a job, as well as adjusting to the social behaviors that are acceptable within the organization (Saks & Gruman, 2012). As such, organizational socialization has been defined as the process by which individuals acquire skills and social knowledge to assume their role within an organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; see also Saks & Gruman, 2012).

Early research on organizational socialization aimed to define the way organizations orient newcomers to their roles (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) proposed newcomers are highly influenced by six dichotomous tactics which are utilized by organizations to adjust individuals into their role: collective versus individual, formal versus informal, investiture versus divestiture, serial versus disjunctive, sequential versus random, and fixed versus variable (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017; Harris et al., 2020; Kowtha, 2018). These bipolar tactics have been categorized as either institutionalized tactics, which represent a highly structured program predominantly controlled by the organization; or, individualized tactics, which are more informal, less structured methods that necessitate proactiveness and innovation on the part of the newcomer (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017; Harris et al., 2020).

Jones (1986) later condensed the six pairs of socialization tactics into three major groups: contextual tactics, social tactics, and content tactics (Kowtha, 2018). Contextual tactics reference the collective-individual and formal-informal organizational socialization strategies deployed by organizations (Kowtha, 2018). This could be if newcomers participate in formal training with colleagues in similar roles, or if newcomers learn on the job informally with the support of organizational insiders through trial and error (Kowtha, 2018). With social tactics, newcomers are either provided support and mentoring from individuals within the organization to ease their transition into the role, or they are left to learn requisite skills on their own with little guidance (Kowtha, 2018). Finally, content tactics refer to the structure of organizational socialization. For example, the socialization program may have a clearly defined timetable of training where newcomers know what needs to be completed to transition into the role (Kowtha, 2018). Whereas more individualized content tactics provide little information about when and how training for a role will commence, which can leave newcomers with a sense of uncertainty (Kowtha, 2018).

Impact of Organizational Socialization

The decisions made by organizations surrounding how to socialize newcomers to the organization lead to a variety of impacts. Some research claims institutionalized tactics reduce anxiety, lower intention for leaving the role, and promote higher initial job satisfaction (Jones, 1986; see also Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017); but may lead largely to maintaining the status quo (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017; Harris et al., 2020). Institutionalized tactics have also shown a stronger positive influence on less experienced workers (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007; as cited in Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017),

while more experienced employees are less affected by these tactics as they tend to have already developed tools for adjusting to a new role (Cooper-Thomas, 2012; as cited in Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017). For new assistant principals, who typically lack previous school administration experience, any prior experience adjusting to a new role may be obsolete given the different nature of the assistant principalship. As for more individualized socialization tactics, although research states these methods provide newcomers chances to explore their role identity and freedom to seek various role models and sources of information (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017), the less formal approach may require newcomers to seek more feedback and support due to the lack of structure (Jones, 1986; Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017).

Whether employing institutionalized or individualized tactics, ensuring effective organizational socialization is vital for newcomers to quickly, and positively, contribute to the organization (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017). Poor organizational socialization tactics cause newcomers to become resentful and create additional stress upon entering a role, whereas positive socialization experiences validate individual strengths and support proactive behavior (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017). Socialization practices need to reduce uncertainty, increase confidence, and require providing feedback and social support for newcomers to perform their job and cope with the demands of their role (Saks & Gruman, 2012).

Well-implemented socialization tactics have a direct and immediate effect on role clarity and role conflict for organizational newcomers (Kowtha, 2018), which are two major barriers to successful transitions for new assistant principals (Grodski, 2011; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Searby et al., 2017). Meta-analyses of organizational

socialization have shown institutional socialization tactics influence newcomer adjustment by positively impacting role clarity (Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007) while negatively impacting role conflict (Kowtha, 2018). Additionally, higher role clarity and lower role conflict positively affect organizational commitment (Holtom et al., 2008, as cited in Kowtha, 2018). As a result, organizations benefit from examining socialization tactics from the perspective of the newcomer to gain insight into what is needed for them to reduce anxiety and successfully adjust to their new role (Saks & Gruman, 2012), particularly as it relates to novice assistant principals (Enomoto, 2012).

Socialization Resources Theory

Socialization Resources Theory (SRT) is designed to shift the focus away from socialization practices and toward the socialization needs of newcomers, and then examines the practices required to fill those needs (Saks & Gruman, 2012). More specifically, SRT is "an approach to organizational socialization and onboarding that focuses on the resources newcomers require for successful adjustment to their jobs, roles, workgroup, and the organization," (Saks & Gruman, 2012, p. 29). Socialization Resources Theory rests on the premise that providing newcomers with the resources to manage the inherent challenges of transitioning into a new role is the most effective manner to achieve successful adjustment and organizational socialization (Saks & Gruman, 2012). So, organizations provide newcomers with resources that expedite their adjustment to becoming more effective in their role, which allows organizations to identify the most effective techniques for achieving positive socialization outcomes (Saks & Gruman, 2012).

Socialization Resources Theory outlines 17 dimensions, forged from academic and practitioner literature, correlated with specific socialization resources to support newcomer adjustment (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Saks and Gruman (2012) contend certain resources will fluctuate in their effectiveness on various socialization outcomes at different times throughout the transition process (see Table 4). Considering the scope of this research is on the transition of new assistant principals while in the role, the dimensions prior to entry and after the formal socialization process will not be discussed. Those that remain correspond to the phases of emphasis for assistant principal transition previously outlined: initial years, years one and two, and year three. Though SRT outlines resources for newcomers in any organization, research on assistant principal transition mentions tools and strategies for supporting assistant principals that align with some of the resources articulated in SRT. Namely, formal assistance, formal orientation, formal training, socialization agents, supervisor feedback, and supervisor support are socialization resources from SRT that could be applied to the assistant principal transition. What follows is a description of each socialization resource, its impact on newcomer transition, and how each resource has been tied to the assistant principalship within the literature.

Table 4

Socialization Resources Theory Dimensions and Timelines

	Timeline of Socialization				
SRT Dimension	Prior to Entry	Immediately After Entry	Following Orientation – Social Capital	Following Orientation – Work-Related Resources	Following Formal Socialization
Anticipatory Socialization	X				
Formal Orientation		X			
Proactive Encouragement		X			
Formal Assistance		X			

Social Events	X		
Socialization Agents	X		
Supervisor Support	X		
Relationship Development	X		
Job Resources		X	
Personal Planning		X	
Training		X	
Assignments		X	
Information		X	
Feedback		X	
Recognition & Appreciation		X	
Follow-Up			X
Program Evaluation			X

Note: Adapted from Saks & Gruman (2012)

Formal Assistance. Formal assistance is defined as the extent to which a newcomer is assigned a mentor (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Being assigned a formal mentor has found to positively relate to distal and proximal socialization outcomes (Saks & Gruman, 2012; see also, Allen et al., 1999; Chatman, 1991; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993), and allows newcomers to adjust more quickly (Rollag et al., 2005; as cited by Saks & Gruman, 2012). Assistance from a formal mentor has been positively related to role expectations and role clarity (Blau, 1998, Saks & Gruman, 2012), which is particularly helpful for new assistant principals given the previously stated transitional challenges in these areas. Formal mentors have also been shown as vital supports for accumulating organizational knowledge (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993; Saks & Gruman, 2012), determining organizational fit (Chatman, 1991; Saks & Gruman, 2012), and establishing organizational commitment (Blau, 1998; Saks & Gruman, 2012).

The benefits of a formal mentor have also been shown as an important factor for assistant principal transition (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a). Assistant principals with mentors can take advantage of their advice and guidance to build confidence as school

administrators (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Mentors also serve as key resources in skill development, as new assistant principals utilize their expertise to gain a better understanding of global problem-solving and decision-making skills surrounding the role of the assistant principalship (Lyons, 2019). Though, some research has found new assistant principals report needing more mentoring, particularly with instructional leadership tasks (Searby et al., 2017).

Formal Orientation. Formal orientation refers to the nature (i.e., length, method, activities, organizational member involvement, etc.) of how a newcomer is oriented to their role (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Orientation programs are a significant resource for introducing newcomers to an organization, facilitating content learning about the organization, and establishing positive job attitudes (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Klein and Weaver (2000) found employees who attended an orientation program demonstrated higher levels of organizational socialization and commitment (as cited in Saks & Gruman, 2012). Applying this to new assistant principals specifically, developing orientation programs tailored to the skills needed to serve as an assistant principal would support a more effective transition into this role (Hartzell et al., 1994); especially since some research indicates these school leaders are ill-served by higher education leadership preparation programs (Hartzell et al., 1994; James, 2017; Kearney & Herrington, 2013).

Some debate exists however about the helpfulness of orientation programs. Most orientation programs are conducted in a short time frame, thus limiting the volume of topics that can be covered (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Previous research indicates orientation programs exhibit modest outcomes in terms of helpfulness to newcomers (Louis et al., 1983; see also, Saks & Gruman, 2012). Wanous and Reichers (2000) argue

orientation programs are too narrow in scope and primarily serve the purpose of information dissemination (as cited in Saks & Gruman, 2012). So, although orientation programs have generally shown to be effective in imparting knowledge, lowering anxiety, and positively impacting organizational commitment (Saks & Gruman, 2012), additional research could be conducted to determine the impact of orientation programs on newcomers.

Formal Training. Formal trainings are typically more conventional, highly planned programs aimed at developing specific skills and knowledge to effectively perform job tasks (Saks & Gruman, 2012). These socialization resources can have a significant impact on norm development, determining appropriate workplace behavior, and establishing attitudes toward the role and the organization (Feldman, 1989; Louis et al., 1983; Tannenbaum et al., 1991; as cited in Saks & Gruman, 2012). Training programs have been positively correlated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and tenure intentions (Louis et al., 1983; as cited in Saks & Gruman, 2012). For individuals with lower self-efficacy in their role, such as new assistant principals (Duran & Yildirim, 2017), formal training has been shown to be helpful in reducing anxiety for newcomers (Saks & Gruman, 2012).

There is research to suggest that assistant principals call for additional training in key areas of instructional leadership. For example, research contends assistant principals seek professional training in curriculum development (Allen & Weaver, 2014; Enomoto, 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Oliver, 2005), instructional management (Oleszewski et al., 2012), and teacher evaluation procedures (Allen & Weaver, 2014; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Oliver, 2005). Given the importance of maintaining a positive instructional

environment (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006), it is not surprising research indicates assistant principals have requested additional training on addressing student discipline (Enomoto, 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012). However, Saks and Gruman (2012) state more research is needed on formal training as a socialization practice to determine the type of training that is most effective for newcomers.

   Socialization Agent(s). Socialization agents refer to the extent to which insiders make a concerted effort to communicate with newcomers and support them through the transition process (Saks & Gruman, 2012). For the purposes of this research, socialization agents are defined as administrator colleagues, coaches, or specialists, other than the principal, who help newcomers adjust to their role by providing information, guidance, feedback, and resources (Klein & Heuser, 2008; Saks & Gruman, 2012). There are several studies that indicate one of the primary methods for socializing newcomers to their role is through quality interactions with socialization agents (Korte, 2010; Louis et al., 1983; Reichers, 1987; Saks & Gruman, 2012). Some studies even indicate that informal support from colleagues is more important and helpful than formal socialization practices like orientations and training (Nelson & Quick, 1991; Saks & Gruman, 2012). Socialization agents play a critical role in the adjustment of newcomers by being a primary resource for knowledge acquisition (Saks & Gruman, 2012), demonstrating how practices are performed (Harris et al., 2020), providing social support (Saks & Gruman, 2012), and illuminating the broader culture of the organization (Harris et al., 2020).

   The benefits of socialization agents outlined in the research are also applicable to new school administrators. Research on new assistant principals indicates these novice

school leaders frequently seek out a wide range of individuals to access advice, build

collaborative relationships, and acquire effective behaviors (Armstrong, 2015; Marshall

& Hooley, 2006). More specifically, new assistant principals value opportunities to

discuss their experiences and challenges with more experienced assistant principals

(Armstrong, 2015). Several studies outline the desire of new administrators to establish a

network of assistant principals to facilitate the sharing of ideas, pose questions, and

connect with experts on current topics impacting the role of the assistant principalship

(Allen & Weaver, 2014; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Hohner & Riveros, 2017).

   Supervisor Feedback. Supervisor feedback focuses on providing newcomers

with accurate and timely feedback on job performance and work-related behavior (Saks

& Gruman, 2012). Often supervisor feedback serves as the primary method for

newcomers to assess work performance (Saks & Gruman, 2012) and identify whether

there is a need to adjust behaviors (Morrison, 1993; Saks & Gruman, 2012). When

supervisors allow newcomers to practice new skills in a controlled environment and pair

this with timely feedback, higher levels of self-efficacy are created in newcomers

(Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017). Additionally, engaging in feedback allows newcomers to

adopt practices that are accepted by insiders, thus shifting the newcomer's position in the

organization from outsider to insider (Harris et al., 2020).

   The feedback process for new assistant principals can have mixed effects on their

development as school administrators. The evaluative relationship with a building

principal can positively influence new administrators' job-related improvement,

development, and socialization (Hausman et al., 2002), and can contribute to a

heightened sense of safety and security especially with supervisors tolerant of mistakes

(Armstrong, 2015). However, feedback from the principal may result in assistant principals adopting behaviors that may or may not be appropriate (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Searby et al., 2017). New assistant principals are frequently constrained by their principal's leadership style and regularly receive direct and indirect signals to conform to certain systems, rules, and leadership styles (Armstrong, 2015). Therefore, further exploration of this socialization resource may shed light on the helpfulness of supervisor feedback on assistant principal instructional leadership.

Supervisor Support. Different from supervisor feedback, supervisor support is defined as the extent to which one's immediate supervisor exhibits behaviors that demonstrate they care about and value the newcomer and take action to assist newcomers with adjustment (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Given their ability to provide rewards, assign work tasks, and allocate resources, support from a newcomer's supervisor has been found to be essential to newcomer socialization (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009; as cited in Saks & Gruman, 2012). Direct manager support has been associated with strong positive attitudinal outcomes (Ng & Sorenson, 2008; as cited in Saks & Gruman, 2012) and positive feelings of acceptance (Saks & Gruman, 2012; see also, Green, 1998). Whereas low levels of perceived supervisor support were associated with decreases in role clarity and job satisfaction for newcomers (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009; Saks & Gruman, 2012).

For new assistant principals, support and mentoring from the building principal have been indicated as one of the most important factors contributing to administrator growth (Armstrong, 2015). In one study of new assistant principals' readiness to engage in instructional leadership tasks, Searby et al., (2017) found assistant principals most ready to engage in these activities received mentoring from their principal through one-

on-one sessions or informal meetings. Some research even claims the building principal

has a professional responsibility to mentor, train, and develop their assistant principals

(Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991; Hausman et al., 2002; Marshall & Hooley, 2006;

Searby et al., 2017). However, the level of support new administrators receive varies

from principal to principal (Grodski, 2011). Considering the level of support,

collaboration, accessibility, and availability of a building principal directly impacts the

transition process for new assistant principals (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a), exploring this

resource warrants additional consideration.

Synthesis of Literature Review

The role of the assistant principal can be daunting for new school administrators,

particularly as it relates to instructional leadership. The challenges with role identity, role

complexity, and role ambiguity impact the ability of these school leaders to be strong

instructional leaders. Although instructional leadership is a vital component of effective

school leadership, this type of leadership is typically associated with principals rather

than assistant principals. To define instructional leadership for assistant principals, this

literature review synthesized key literature on assistant principal tasks to establish five

Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains, then cross-walked research on

effective leadership practices to identify 16 leadership practices that can be grouped

across the five domains. By narrowing the subset of evidence-based practices we might

expect assistant principals to carry out for instructional leadership, it focuses the

exploration of how to develop these capacities in new school leaders.

Although the early works of Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and Jones (1986)

focused on how organizations utilize socialization tactics to influence the transition of

newcomers, Saks and Gruman (2012) centered their work on the resources organizations can deploy to support newcomer transition. More specifically, Socialization Resources Theory outlines numerous resources organizations can provide to ease transitional difficulties (Saks & Gruman, 2012). These socialization resources can thus be applied to new assistant principals given the challenges transitioning into school leadership. Six resources were identified as suitable for supporting novice school leaders: formal assistance, formal orientation, formal training, socialization agent(s), supervisor feedback, and supervisor support can all be utilized to support novice school leaders.

In the subsequent section, I outline the conceptual framework for this research which describes how assistant principal instructional leadership and Socialization Resources Theory can be used in tandem to support the development of new assistant principals' instructional leadership capacity. I will then describe how this framework informs data collection and data analysis for this study.

Chapter III - Methodology

The focus of this research was to better understand the instructional leadership practices for which new assistant principals require support. As evidenced in the literature review from Chapter II, the transition to the assistant principal role can be a struggle for new leaders, which may have a negative impact on their instructional leadership abilities. Furthermore, research indicates assistant principals need assistance in developing skills associated with instructional leadership (Oleszewski et al., 2012; Searby et al., 2017), and that assistant principals rarely engage in instructional leadership at all (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Once the instructional leadership needs of assistant principals have been identified, organizational socialization tactics could help support skill acquisition and development (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Therefore, this research sought to determine the level of support needed by assistant principals on key instructional leadership practices and which socialization resources were deemed to be the most helpful in developing those instructional leadership practices.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework which served as a foundation for this research was built on two main concepts: literature surrounding effective instructional leadership practices as it relates to assistant principals and organizational socialization practices. More specifically, the Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains and Socialization Resources Theory served as the pillars of this conceptual framework.

This conceptual framework (see Figure 1) begins with a subset of assistant principal instructional leadership tasks generated from evidence-based leadership practice and known areas of foci for assistant principal work. The Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains, and the practices within each domain, defined instructional leadership for assistant principals and the articulate practices. This allowed this research to determine the engagement, support received, and support desired by assistant principals in these instructional leadership practices.

When examining the level of assistant principal engagement, support received, and support desired in the APILD, I theorize the potential for interconnected relationships between these components. For example, new assistant principals may engage more frequently in certain instructional leadership practices resulting in seeking out and receiving more support. Conversely, new assistant principals may receive more initial support in certain instructional leadership practices leading to increased engagement. The level of engagement and support received in the instructional leadership practices may then influence whether new assistant principals desire additional support in developing their capacity in certain instructional leadership practices. By discovering the instructional leadership development needs of new assistant principals, schools and school divisions can then tailor the assistance provided to these new school leaders.

Understanding the instructional leadership skills new assistant principals need to be successful is key, but the resources they require to improve those skills are equally important. By inquiring into the socialization resources new assistant principals deem as potentially helpful in their growth of instructional leadership practices, there may be a way schools can match resources to needs. In other words, school divisions may be able

to differentiate the support provided to new assistant principals based on where these new

leaders seek advice and guidance as a means of improving their instructional leadership

capacity.

Figure 1
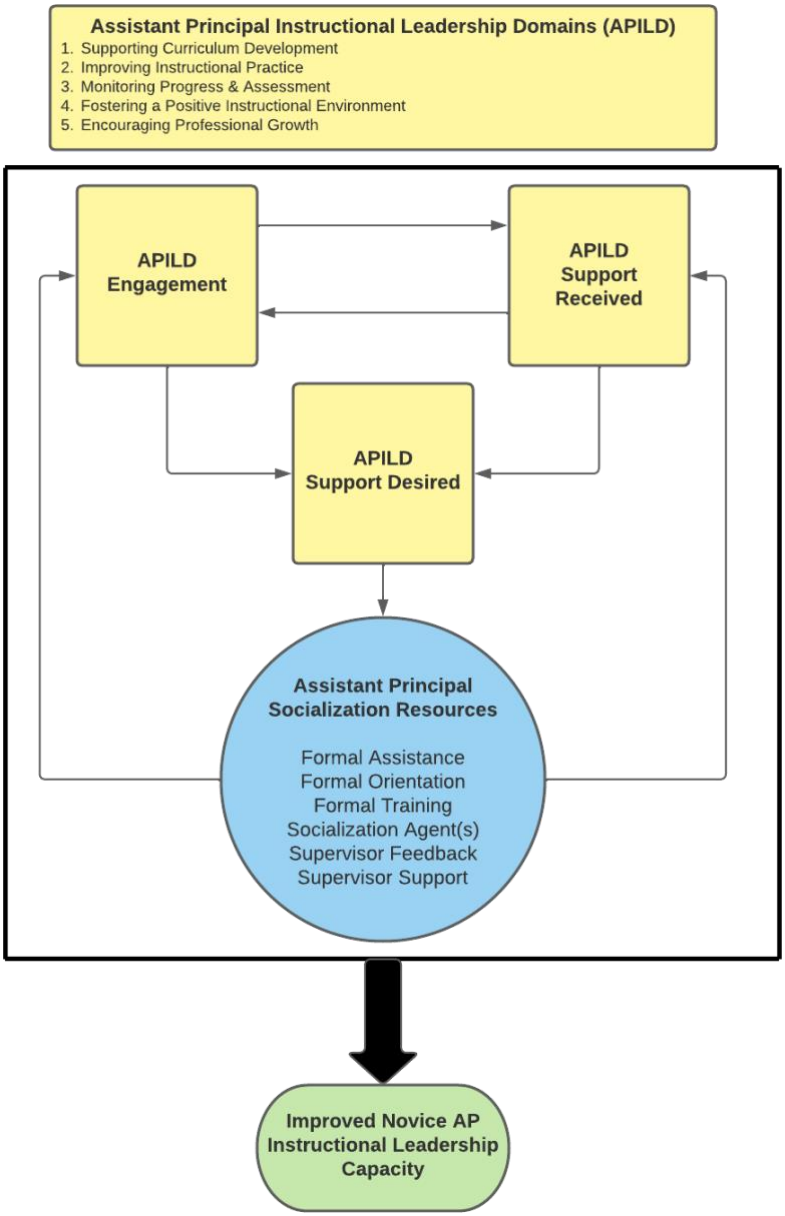
Conceptual Framework Outlining Relationship Between APILD and SRT

Research Questions

Keeping this conceptual framework in mind, the following research questions served to guide this study:

1. In which instructional leadership practices do new assistant principals most often engage?

2. What instructional leadership practices do new assistant principals identify as areas requiring support?

3. Which socialization resources are most helpful to new assistant principals in their development as instructional leaders?

Research Design

Sample

This study deployed quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. For this research, purposeful sampling was utilized to select the three participating school districts based on size, student demographics, and approach to leadership development. First, each school district was selected as they are larger school districts in the state. Banner School District (BSD) is a suburban school district serving close to 90,000 students across nearly 100 schools and centers. Logan School District (LSD) is a suburban, and somewhat rural, school district serving over 80,000 students in nearly 100 schools. Lastly, McCoy County School District (MCSD) serves close to 180,000 students in a suburban setting with nearly 200 schools and centers. For this research, only schools within a specific region of MCSD were surveyed due to the parameters for conducting research within this district. However, the region of MCSD being surveyed still consists of nearly 50 schools. The

number of assistant principals in each school district ranges from approximately 100-170, which allowed for greater potential to obtain a significant sample for data analysis.

Next, selecting school districts that serve a diverse student population was important to this study. Utilizing diverse school districts provided information on how to build instructional leadership capacity to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. Banner School District has a diverse student population with Hispanic students accounting for the largest percentage of students (35%), followed by White (30%), Black (20%), and then Asian (10%) students. The racial and ethnic group breakdown of LSD consists of over 40% of students identified as White, followed by Asian (25%), Hispanic (20 %), and Black (8%). In MCSD, racial demographics breakdown as White (35%), Hispanic (30%), Asian (20%), and Black (10%). The subset of schools in MCSD surveyed has slightly adjusted percentages from the whole school district as Hispanic students are the largest percentage of students (35%), followed by White (30%), Asian (20%), and Black (8%).

Finally, each school district was selected based on its approach to supporting new assistant principals. Each school district has a well-articulated, multi-year professional orientation and leadership development program to build skills and knowledge for new assistant principals. The results of this study may inform each school district as to how their program can further support assistant principals' growth specifically as instructional leaders.

Participants

All assistant principals within Banner School District and Logan School District, as well as all assistant principals within a specific region of McCoy County School

District, were sent the survey electronically and any completed survey was used for data analysis. To be included in the data analysis, participants needed to complete all questions within a designated section of the survey. The goal of this study was to receive at least 100 responses, which is considered the minimum sample size for larger populations (Alreck & Settle, 2004).

Data Collection

Data for this research was collected through a cross-sectional survey, which provides numerical descriptions of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population by examining a sample of that population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey designs allow researchers to answer descriptive and relational questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the case of this capstone, the first two research questions sought to describe current practices and opinions of new assistant principals surrounding instructional leadership, while the third research question sought to understand the relationship between instructional leadership practices and socialization resources of new assistant principals. Utilizing a survey design also provided an opportunity to gather information on the tendencies of many people (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

The survey was created utilizing the survey design software Qualtrics and was sent directly to each assistant principal via school district designated emails. To narrow the scope to new assistant principal instructional leadership needs, novice assistant principals were asked to respond to the survey questions based on their current experience as a new administrator, whereas veteran assistant principals' responses were based on their reflections from their time as a new assistant principal. The survey (Appendix A) was divided into four sections to address each of the research questions.

The purpose of the first three sections was to establish the lived experience of the participants by determining "what is/has been", whereas the fourth section aimed to address "what could be". A description of the survey components follows.

Survey Components

The first section of the survey collected demographic information about the participants, such as primary grade level served (elementary, middle, or high) and years completed as an assistant principal, which was used to analyze subgroup data. Since this research aimed to understand the instructional leadership development needs of novice assistant principals, information about years of experience assisted in differentiating the opinions of new assistant principals versus veteran assistant principals. Additionally, the instructional leadership needs of new assistant principals may differ based on the grade level served.

The second section of the survey served several purposes. First, participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they engaged in the 16 outlined assistant principal leadership practices based on a four-point verbal frequency scale (not very often, not often, often, very often). Although verbal frequency scales usually consist of five words (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always) to indicate how often an action is taken (Alreck & Settle, 2004), I utilized the four-word scale to avoid extreme answers and neutral responses. Also, given the assistant principalship consists of numerous tasks (Barnett et al., 2012; Marshall & Hooley, 2006), the concept of these school leaders being able to "always" engage in a specific task seems unlikely.

Next, participants were asked to indicate the level of support they received as a new assistant principal in developing their ability to perform each of the 16 instructional

leadership practices on a four-point verbal frequency scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often). The goal of this question was to establish a baseline for the level of assistance participants received as new administrators to build instructional leadership capacity. Utilizing the four-point verbal frequency scale was beneficial for this question as it allowed a participant to indicate if they never received assistance in developing an instructional leadership practice. Once again, the "always" response was removed for both consistency of the four-point scale, and since support cannot be "always" provided.

The final question in this section asked assistant principals to indicate their level of agreement with statements about their instructional leadership development needs. Participants were asked if they would benefit from additional support in developing each of the 16 instructional leadership practices, responding based on a four-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Once again, the four-point scale was used for consistency among questions and to avoid neutral responses. Whereas the previous question served to establish baseline information about the level of support provided to new assistant principals, responses to this question provided a greater understanding of the instructional leadership development needs of these school leaders.

The third section gathered information on which of the six socialization resources were provided to participants as new administrators. Each question began with formally defining each of the six socialization resources (formal assistance, formal orientation, formal training, socialization agents, supervisor feedback, and supervisor support). Participants then indicated if each resource was provided to them as a new assistant principal by answering "yes" or "no". Gathering this information built an understanding

of what percentage of participants received these socialization resources to assist with transition and capacity building.

The final section of the survey sought to establish the relationship between socialization resources and instructional leadership development. Using a forced ranking scale, participants ranked the six socialization resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6) based on how helpful they believe the resource would be in building their capacity on each of the 16 instructional leadership practices regardless of whether the resource was provided to them or not. A forced ranking scale compares each socialization resource relative to each other (Alreck & Settle, 2004), which would provide schools and districts with new assistant principals' preferred socialization resources for building capacity to execute specific instructional leadership practices. Although a forced ranking scale is limited since it does not measure absolute standing or the interval between items, this system is preferred to avoid ties between items (Alreck & Settle, 2004). Considering the goal was to find the most helpful resource for each instructional practice, having the socialization resources ranked against each other seems appropriate. From this information, an analysis was conducted to determine any connections between instructional leadership practices and each socialization resource.

Data Analysis

Several statistical measures were utilized to analyze the survey data and are summarized in Table 5. The first set of statistical analyses investigated responses regarding engagement in instructional leadership practices. Each option in the four-point verbal frequency scale represented a number from one to four (i.e., not very often = 1, not often = 2, etc.). Through this conversion, the median, mean, and standard deviation were

calculated for each instructional leadership practice and a composite mean score was found for each APILD. These scores represented, on average, how frequently assistant principals engaged in each instructional leadership practice. The standard deviation is informative in this circumstance as it numerically defined variability among the group (Ravid, 2020).

Table 5

Summary of Statistical Analyses

Survey Question	Research Question Addressed	Response Scale	Numerical Scale	Statistical Analyses
As a new assistant principal, how often do you (did you) engage in the following instructional leadership practices?	1	Not very often Not often Often Very often	1-4	Median Mean Standard Deviation
As a new assistant principal, I receive (received) support in developing my ability to perform the following instructional leadership practices.	2	Never Rarely Sometimes Often	1-4	Median Mean Standard Deviation
As a new assistant principal, I would benefit (would have benefitted) from further assistance in developing my ability to perform the following instructional leadership practices.	2	Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree	1-4	Median Mean Standard Deviation t-Test for Independent Samples
As a new assistant principal, were you provided (socialization resource) as a resource?	3	Yes No	N/A	Percentage of Participants
How helpful would each resource listed be (have been) in developing your ability to (conduct instructional leadership practice)?	3	Ranking from Least Helpful to Most Helpful	1-6	Median Mean Standard Deviation Chi-square Test for Independence

As seen in Table 5, the second research question was analyzed in a similar manner to the previous research question. Responses regarding the level of support received and support desired were converted to a numerical response from one to four. Once again, the median, mean, and standard deviation of the responses were calculated. The average value of support received and support desired for each instructional leadership practice can thus be compared and ranked.

Additionally, a composite score for each APILD was calculated by finding the mean of the responses to instructional leadership practices within each APILD to conduct a *t*-test for independent samples. For example, *Supporting Curriculum Development* has three instructional leadership practices that comprise this APILD, therefore the responses for those three practices for each participant were averaged to find a composite score for this APILD. Calculating the composite scores in this manner, in conjunction with the survey not being validated, led to calculating Cronbach's alpha (α) for each APILD as it relates to each section of the survey (engagement, support received, support desired). A *t*-test was then used to compare the means of each group to determine if the means are statistically significant between the groups (Ravid, 2020). In the context of this study, the *t*-test helped determine if there was a significant difference between the responses of new assistant principals and veteran assistant principals, as well as between the grade level served by the assistant principals. To ensure the *t*-test was comparing two groups, three separate *t*-tests were conducted to compare the responses of new assistant principals based on grade level served (elementary v. middle, middle v. high, and elementary v. high).

The final statistical analysis conducted examined data comparing the socialization resources to each instructional leadership practice. To determine the current state of support being delivered to assistant principals, the percentage of participants receiving the outlined socialization resources was reported. Additionally, once participants ranked the helpfulness of each socialization resource in relation to each instructional leadership practice, those rankings were converted to a numerical value between one, least helpful, and six, most helpful. The median, mean, and standard deviation will be calculated, which represented the average ranking of each socialization resource for the instructional leadership practice. Furthermore, a chi-square test of independence was conducted comparing the frequency of each socialization resource ranking to the primary grade level served by the assistant principal (elementary, middle, and high school). The purpose of conducting this analysis was to determine if the variables are related to, or independent of, each other (Ravid, 2020). By exploring the relationship between socialization resources and the primary grade level of the assistant principal, the results could lead to a better understanding of the specific support needed for new assistant principals based on the population of students and teachers they serve. With this information, schools and districts can more accurately tailor their support to develop new assistant principals as instructional leaders.

Methodological Limitations

There are several limitations to this study to be addressed. Below, I outline limitations related to validity, reliability, and researcher bias.

Validity

The survey developed for data collection in this research was based on instructional leadership practices for assistant principals which are not universally defined, which called into question the content validity of the survey. Ravid (2020) indicates content validity can be established by examining and comparing the content of the instrument to the content it is supposed to measure. Considering the instructional leadership practices outlined in this research were synthesized from prominent research on effective leadership practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006), and fit into categories of tasks outlined in the literature on assistant principal work-life, some level of content validity can be established.

An additional consideration for the validity of the instrument is the survey's construct validity. Since the survey was not pre-established, steps were taken to ensure the instrument measured and provided accurate information about, the characteristics of instructional leadership (Ravid, 2020). I conducted pilot testing of the first draft of the instrument with a small focus group consisting of six individuals who met the criteria of the sample for this research. The pilot testers were asked to complete the first draft of the survey and then participate in a semi-structured focus group to discuss the survey format and survey content. Information obtained from the focus group helped to establish content validity, evaluate internal consistency, and improve the survey format (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Reliability

Addressing the validity of the survey alone is insufficient in establishing credibility. Additionally, the reliability of the survey needs to be established. As

mentioned previously, Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) was calculated for each APILD in each section of the instrument in which a composite score for the leadership domain was given. These values were calculated to address the internal consistency, or accuracy of individual scores across the instrument (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Cronbach's coefficient alpha provides a coefficient, between 0 and 1, to estimate the consistency of scores across the instrument (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Generally, an alpha greater than .9 is considered excellent, greater than .8 is good, greater than .7 is acceptable, greater than .6 is questionable, greater than .5 is poor, and less than .5 is unacceptable (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Through this calculation, I was able to assess whether the instrument scale items were assessing the same underlying construct (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A full analysis of the α values will be provided in Chapter Four.

Researcher Bias

As a former assistant principal, I have my own opinions and experiences that impact how I view the assistant principalship. As a result, it is possible my interpretation of the data was seen through this lens which does not reflect all perspectives of the participants of my survey. Therefore, I attempted to word the survey items in such a way as to not obtain certain results, nor did I analyze the results toward any one conclusion (Alreck & Settle, 2004). My engagement with pilot testers aided to combat the potential bias in my phrasing of questions and interpretation of results.

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to explore how new assistant principals engage as instructional leaders and what support, if any, they need in building their capacity in this area. Additionally, this study sought to determine which socialization resources could

support assistant principals in developing their instructional leadership capacity.
Quantitative methods were deployed through a cross-sectional survey delivered to
assistant principals across three school districts. Various statistical analyses were utilized
to examine the engagement, and potential support needs, of new assistant principals. This
study aimed to better understand new assistant principal instructional leadership
development needs to potentially allow for a tailored approach in aiding these school
leaders through preferred socialization resources.

Chapter IV – Findings

Assistant principals are critical to the daily functioning of schools, and while instructional leadership is vital to the success of schools, these school leaders are often unable to engage in this work due to the vast array of tasks they are assigned. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which new assistant principals engage in instructional leadership practices and investigates the level of support these school leaders receive, and further desire, in building their instructional leadership capacity. Furthermore, this study explored which socialization resources new assistant principals deemed helpful in building their instructional leadership capacity across each of the proposed instructional leadership practices.

This study deployed quantitative methods utilizing a cross-sectional survey of assistant principals across three large school districts. I analyzed this survey data seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. **Research Question 1 (RQ1):** In which instructional leadership practices do new assistant principals most often engage?

2. **Research Question 2 (RQ2):** What instructional leadership practices do new assistant principals identify as areas requiring support?

3. **Research Question 3 (RQ3):** Which socialization resources are most helpful to new assistant principals in their development as instructional leaders?

This chapter presents the findings and provides an analysis of these findings. Before addressing the research questions, an overview of the participants and response

rate will be provided along with any implications for data analysis. Next, the findings related to assistant principal engagement in instructional leadership practices will be shared and analyzed (RQ1). Similarly, the results exploring assistant principal support received and desired on each of the instructional leadership practices will be shared (RQ2). Finally, I will provide the findings related to the connection between instructional leadership practices and socialization resources (RQ3). These results include which socialization resources were provided to the assistant principals as they entered the role, as well as the assistant principal's perceived helpfulness of each of the six socialization resources as it related to each of the 16 instructional leadership practices.

The 16 instructional leadership practices identified in the conceptual framework have been abbreviated for ease of reading and clarity (Table 6). Additionally, throughout the reporting of results, the term "leadership practice" is utilized to reference the 16 assistant principal instructional leadership practices.

Table 6

Summary of Abbreviated Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practices

Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practice	Abbreviated Practice
Supporting Curriculum Development	
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	Support culturally responsive learning
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	Ensure rigorous curriculum
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	Ensure curriculum alignment
Improving Instructional Practices	
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	Display instructional knowledge
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice	Advance instructional practice
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	Provide instructional feedback
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	Lead instructional discussion
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	
Support in the development of high-quality assessments	Support assessment development
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	Ensure assessment alignment
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement	Analyze school improvement data
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	
Build trusting relationships with staff and families	Build relationships

Foster a collaborative culture	Foster collaboration
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	Maintain safe instructional climate
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice	Celebrate instructional practice
Encouraging Professional Growth	
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	Provide professional development
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	Promote collective growth

Overview of Survey Responses

The survey was sent electronically to assistant principals across three school districts: Banner School District (BSD), Logan School District (LSD), and McCoy County School District (MCSD). In total, the survey was sent to 409 assistant principals across these school districts with the goal of obtaining at least 100 responses or roughly a 25% response rate. Overall, there was a 19.1% ($n = 78$) response to at least one section of the survey for analysis and a 15.2% ($n = 62$) adjusted response rate for participants who completed all sections of the survey to be included in each analysis. The lower response rate serves as a limitation to this study, particularly for the chi-square analyses, which will be described in depth in later sections. Of all the possible assistant principals eligible to complete the survey, MCSD had the highest response rate (43.6%), followed by BSD (12.8%), and then LSD (10.6%). The different response rates of each school district were likely impacted by the amount of time the survey was available for each district, due to the specific research study restrictions of each district, and the time of year the survey was distributed. Also, the level of district-level leadership involvement with this research varied in each district, which may account for differences in response rate. For example, in MCSD district-level leadership required outreach from district leaders to assistant principals prior to distribution of the survey, which may explain the higher response rate in this school district.

Given assistant principals in MCSD responded to the survey at higher rates, it is not surprising that assistant principals in this school district accounted for over half (53%) of the total responses in the sample (Table 7). Consequently, the results of the analysis are skewed toward the experiences of assistant principals within MCSD. Novice assistant principals, or those serving less than three years in the role, account for 38% of the responses whereas veteran assistant principals represent 62% of the responses. Finally, elementary assistant principals accounted for the largest percentage of responses at 42% ($n = 33$), followed by high school assistant principals (31%, $n = 24$) and middle school assistant principals (27%, $n = 21$). The implications of these breakdowns will be considered within each analysis.

Table 7

Overall Survey Response Breakdown by District, Years Served, and Grade Level Served

	Total		Banner		Logan		McCoy County	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Overall	78	100%	21	27%	16	20%	41	53%
Years Complete								
Novice (0-2)	30	38%	11	14%	5	6%	14	18%
Veteran (3+)	48	62%	10	13%	11	14%	27	35%
Grade Served								
Elementary	33	42%	11	14%	4	5%	18	23%
Middle	21	27%	5	7%	4	5%	12	15%
High	24	31%	5	7%	8	10%	11	14%

Note. Percentages reported in the table represent the percent of the total responses. Responses in the table above represent the maximum number of responses, as the number of responses fluctuated by section of the survey.

Research Question 1: In Which Leadership Practices Do New Assistant Principals Most Often Engage?

In the first section of the survey, the assistant principals were asked to share their experiences with how frequently they engaged in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices as a new assistant principal on a scale from not very often (1) to very often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent engaging in the instructional leadership practice less often, and above 2.5 would indicate more frequent engagement in the instructional leadership practice. For responses to be included in the analysis, participants needed to respond to the level of engagement in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices. Since a composite score for each instructional leadership domain was to be calculated by averaging the responses to each instructional leadership practice within the domain, including incomplete responses would skew the average of the composite scores.

Overall Engagement in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains and Practices

As noted in Table 8, assistant principals reported engaging most often in tasks within the instructional leadership domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .444$). In other words, as new assistant principals, participants reported engaging in this instructional leadership domain "often" to "very often". More specifically, within this domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, the three instructional leadership practices new assistant principals most frequently engaged in were building relationships ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .455$), maintaining a safe instructional climate ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .488$), and fostering collaboration ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .594$).

Table 8

Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Assistant Principal Engagement in Proposed Instructional Leadership Practices

	n (77)	M	Mdn	SD
Supporting Curriculum Development		**2.44**	**2.33**	**.681**
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences		2.30	3	.859
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students		2.53	2	.926
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas		2.51	3	.821
Improving Instructional Practices		**3.01**	**3**	**.566**
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge		2.96	3	.768
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice		3.03	3	.668
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices		3.10	3	.699
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams		2.94	3	.713
Monitoring Progress and Assessment		**2.68**	**2.67**	**.575**
Support in the development of high-quality assessments		2.31	2	.847
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes		2.51	3	.737
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement		3.23	3	.667
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment		**3.52**	**3.5**	**.444**
Build trusting relationships with staff and families		3.71	4	.455
Foster a collaborative culture		3.57	4	.594
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment		3.70	4	.488
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice		3.09	3	.729
Encouraging Professional Growth		**2.97**	**3**	**.640**
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally		2.95	3	.686
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth		2.99	3	.752

Note. *M* represents the mean, *Mdn* represents the median, and *SD* represents the standard deviation. Values in bold represent the mean, median, and standard deviation of the composite scores of each proposed Instructional Leadership Domain.

The instructional leadership domain new assistant principals are least engaged in is Supporting Curriculum Development (*M* = 2.44, *SD* = .681). Based on this composite score, new assistant principals engaged in these practices between "not often" and "often", with a slight leaning toward "not often". In fact, three of the five least engaged in leadership practices by new assistant principals are within Supporting Curriculum Development (i.e., supporting culturally responsive learning (*M* = 2.30, *SD* = .859); aligning curriculum (*M* = 2.51, *SD* = .926); and, ensuring rigorous curriculum (*M* = 2.53, *SD* = .821)).

Monitoring Progress and Assessment (M = 2.68, SD = .575) represented the domain closest to the middle in terms of time spent engaging in these practices. However,

within this domain are two instructional leadership practices that are least often engaged in by new assistant principals: supporting assessment development ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .847$), and ensuring assessment alignment ($M = 2.51$, $SD = .737$). Within this domain of Monitoring Progress and Assessment, despite reporting low engagement in supporting assessment development and alignment, participants reported analyzing school improvement data ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .667$) as the fourth most frequently engaged in practice as a new assistant principal. Therefore, instructional leadership practices within this domain have the largest range in the level of engagement among the leadership practices.

For the two remaining assistant principal instructional leadership domains, Improving Instructional Practices ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .681$) and Encouraging Professional Growth ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .640$), participants reported, on average, engaging in these domains "often". Within the domain of Improving Instructional Practice, providing instructional feedback ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .668$) was the fifth most engaged in practice by new assistant principals.

Engagement in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practices by Grade Level

As outlined in Table 9, elementary assistant principals reported spending the least amount of time supporting assessment development ($M = 2.15$) as new assistant principals. Whereas novice middle school ($M = 2.29$) and high school ($M = 2.17$) assistant principals indicate engaging the least amount of time in supporting culturally responsive learning. Regardless of grade level, new assistant principals most often engaged in building relationships and maintaining a safe instructional climate. When analyzing the domains of Improving Instructional Practices and Fostering a Positive

Instructional Environment, elementary assistant principals reported engaging in each

practice within these domains slightly more than middle school and high school assistant

principals.

Table 9

Average Assistant Principal Engagement in Proposed Instructional Leadership Practices by Grade Level Served

	n	*Elem* (33)	*Mid* (21)	*High* (23)
Supporting Curriculum Development				
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences		2.39	2.29	2.17
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students		2.55	2.62	2.43
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas		2.52	2.62	2.39
Improving Instructional Practices				
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge		3.03	2.81	3.00
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice		3.15	2.90	2.96
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices		3.30	2.95	2.96
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams		2.97	2.95	2.87
Monitoring Progress and Assessment				
Support in the development of high-quality assessments		2.15	2.52	2.35
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes		2.39	2.71	2.48
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement		3.36	3.05	3.22
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment				
Build trusting relationships with staff and families		3.76	3.62	3.74
Foster a collaborative culture		3.67	3.43	3.57
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment		3.76	3.62	3.70
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice		3.18	2.95	3.09
Encouraging Professional Growth				
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally		2.88	3.00	3.00
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth		2.94	2.90	3.13

Note: Numbers inside the parenthesis represent the number of responses from participants in each grade level.

Summary of Findings for Research Question One

In general, new assistant principals most frequently engaged in instructional

leadership practices in the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment.

Specifically, new assistant principals engaged in building relationships with staff and

families, fostering collaboration, and maintaining a school climate that is conducive to

instruction. The engagement level of these three practices was high regardless of grade

level served. In fact, new elementary, middle, and high school assistant principals all report the highest level of engagement in these leadership practices.

On the other hand, new assistant principals do not often engage in instructional leadership tasks within the domain of Supporting Curriculum Developing or Monitoring Progress and Assessment. As it relates to Supporting Curriculum Development, new assistant principals reported not often participating in supporting teachers with developing culturally responsive learning, ensuring rigorous curricula for all students, and ensuring curriculum alignment across grade levels or content areas. In terms of Monitoring Progress and Assessment, new assistant principals spend little time supporting teachers in developing and aligning assessments. Once again, there was consensus across grade level served, as elementary, middle, and high school assistant principals reported the lowest engagement in these five practices as new administrators.

In the next section, I will present the data related to the second research question, which focuses on the instructional leadership practices that new assistant principals require support in developing.

Research Question 2: What Instructional Leadership Practices Do New Assistant Principals Identify as Areas Requiring Support?

To identify the instructional leadership practices in which new assistant principals require further support in developing, I examined two sources of data. First, I analyzed the level of support new assistant principals received in each of the instructional leadership practices. This data served as a baseline for understanding how much assistance these new administrators were provided. Then, I explored the support new assistant principals further desired in building their instructional leadership capacity.

Findings of the level of support received and the support desired will be shared in the following sections.

Support Received in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

To have a greater understanding of the context behind the support new assistant principals desire in building instructional leadership capacity, I first examined how much support they received as new assistant principals. Assistant principals in this study were asked how much support they received as new assistant principals in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from never (1) to often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent receiving little to no support in developing their instructional leadership skills in this practice, and above 2.5 would indicate receiving some to frequent support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice. For responses to be included in the analysis, participants needed to respond to the support they received in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices. Since a composite score for each instructional leadership domain was to be calculated by averaging the responses to each instructional leadership practice within the domain, including incomplete responses would skew the average of the composite scores.

Overall Support Received in APILD. As new assistant principals, participants indicated (Table 10) they received the least support in the domain of Supporting Curriculum Development ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .764$), followed closely by the domain of Monitoring Progress and Assessment ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .652$). In other words, new assistant principals were "rarely" or "sometimes" supported in developing instructional leadership practices within these domains. In the domain of Monitoring Progress and

Assessment were the two least supported leadership practices: supporting assessment

development ($M = 2.29$, $SD = .835$) and assessment alignment ($M = 2.47$, $SD = .827$).

Also, all three leadership practices in the domain of Supporting Curriculum Development

were reported as receiving lower levels of support: supporting culturally responsive

learning ($M = 2.52$, $SD = .875$); ensuring rigorous curriculum ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .919$) and

curriculum alignment ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .902$).

Table 10

Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Support Received by Assistant Principals in
Proposed Instructional Leadership Practices

	n (75)	M	Mdn	SD
Supporting Curriculum Development		**2.56**	**2.67**	**.764**
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences		2.52	3	.875
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students		2.56	3	.919
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas		2.59	3	.902
Improving Instructional Practices		**2.99**	**3**	**.661**
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge		2.80	3	.805
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice		2.99	3	.797
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices		3.21	3	.741
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams		2.95	3	.804
Monitoring Progress and Assessment		**2.62**	**2.67**	**.652**
Support in the development of high-quality assessments		2.29	2	.835
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes		2.47	2	.827
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement		3.09	3	.791
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment		**3.10**	**3**	**.708**
Build trusting relationships with staff and families		3.12	3	.915
Foster a collaborative culture		3.15	3	.849
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment		3.25	3	.773
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice		2.88	3	.753
Encouraging Professional Growth		**2.95**	**3**	**.713**
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally		3.00	3	.788
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth		2.91	3	.774

Note: *M* represents the mean, *Mdn* represents the median, and *SD* represents the standard deviation. Values in bold represent the mean, median, and standard deviation of the composite scores of each proposed Instructional Leadership Domain.

Participants indicated receiving the most support in the domain of Fostering a

Positive Instructional Environment ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .708$). More specifically, three

instructional leadership practices in this domain fall within the top five most supported

practices: maintaining a safe instructional climate (*M* = 3.25, *SD* = .773); fostering

collaboration (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = .849), and building relationships (*M* = 3.12, *SD* = .915). It

is important to note that Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment was not only the

domain in which new assistant principals most frequently engaged, but also the domain in

which new assistant principals received the most support in building their capacity.

Improving Instructional Practices (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = .661) and Encouraging

Professional Growth (*M* = 2.95, *SD* = .713), were reported as having similar levels of

support provided to new assistant principals. Within the domain of Improving

Instructional Practices, participants indicated they received the second most amount of

support in developing their capacity to provide instructional feedback (*M* = 3.21, *SD* =

.741).

Support Received in APILD by Grade Level. As noted in Table 11, assistant

principals in elementary (*M* = 2.16), middle (*M* = 2.48), and high (*M* = 2.32) all reported

receiving the least amount of support as new assistant principals in supporting assessment

development. Participants reported "rarely" receiving support in building their capacity in

supporting assessment development regardless of grade level served. Middle school

assistant principals also expressed receiving the least amount of support as new

administrators in supporting culturally responsive learning (*M* = 2.48).

Table 11

Average Support Received by Assistant Principals in Proposed Instructional Leadership Practices by Grade Level Served

	n	*Elem* (32)	*Mid* (21)	*High* (22)
Supporting Curriculum Development				
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences		2.53	2.48	2.55
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students		2.44	2.76	2.55
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas		2.53	2.81	2.45

Improving Instructional Practices			
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	2.66	3.00	2.82
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice	3.03	2.95	2.95
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	3.47	2.95	3.09
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	2.97	2.76	3.09
Monitoring Progress and Assessment			
Support in the development of high-quality assessments	2.16	2.48	2.32
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	2.38	2.62	2.45
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement	3.28	2.86	3.05
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment			
Build trusting relationships with staff and families	3.09	3.14	3.14
Foster a collaborative culture	3.22	3.00	3.18
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	3.25	3.14	3.36
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice	2.94	2.81	2.86
Encouraging Professional Growth			
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	2.97	2.95	3.09
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	2.91	2.90	2.91

Note: Numbers inside the parenthesis represent the number of responses from participants in each grade level.

Elementary assistant principals indicated receiving the most support as new assistant principals in providing instructional feedback ($M = 3.47$), whereas new high school assistant principals received the most support in maintaining a safe instructional climate ($M = 3.36$). Middle school assistant principals reported two leadership practices with the highest average of support received as new administrators: maintaining a safe instructional climate ($M = 3.14$) and building relationships ($M = 3.14$). For middle school and high school assistant principals, leadership practices within the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment received the most support. In fact, the top three most supported practices for new middle school and high school assistant principals were practices within Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment.

There are some instructional leadership practices in which the different grade levels reported notable differences in the level of support. As noted previously, elementary assistant principals reported receiving high levels of support in developing their capacity to provide instructional feedback ($M = 3.47$); however, middle school assistant principals reported receiving less support than their elementary counterparts in

providing instructional feedback to teachers ($M = 2.95$). In other words, new elementary assistant principals received support in providing instructional feedback "often", whereas middle school assistant principals received support "sometimes".

Support Desired in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

After participants reported the received support in each instructional leadership practice, assistant principals were asked whether they would have benefited from further support as new administrators in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 signify new assistant principals would have little to no benefit from further developing the applicable leadership practice, and values above 2.5 indicate new assistant principals would benefit from further support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice. Although participant responses represent the level of benefit from additional support in each instructional leadership practice, these responses will be used to determine the areas new assistant principals desire support. In other words, the higher the agreement with benefitting from further development in the outlined leadership practice, the more support they desire to develop that practice. As a result, both "benefit from" and "support desired" will be used synonymously throughout this analysis.

Like the previous two analyses, for responses to be included in the analysis participants needed to respond to the support they received in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices. Since a composite score for each instructional leadership domain was to be calculated by averaging the responses to each instructional leadership practice within the domain, including incomplete responses would skew the average of the

composite scores. This is particularly important as the composite scores in this section

were used to complete a *t*-test for independent samples, which compares the two means

of two groups.

Overall Support Desired in APILD. Participants reported they would benefit

from further support in building their instructional leadership capacity in every leadership

domain and practice, as evidenced by each instructional leadership domain and practice

having a score above 3 (Table 12). Furthermore, the difference between the leadership

practice with the highest level of desired support (i.e., supporting culturally responsive

teaching, *M* = 3.37) and the leadership practice with the lowest level of support desired

(i.e., building relationships, *M* = 3.04) is minimal. In other words, there is not a

substantial difference between the leadership practices in the desired level of support

from new assistant principals in building instructional leadership capacity.

Table 12

Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Support Desired by Assistant Principals in Proposed Instructional Leadership Practices

	n (75)	*M*	*Mdn*	*SD*
Supporting Curriculum Development		**3.23**	**3**	**.600**
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences		3.37	3	.610
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students		3.14	3	.728
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas		3.22	3	.707
Improving Instructional Practices		**3.24**	**3.25**	**.578**
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge		3.12	3	.682
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice		3.27	3	.580
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices		3.29	3	.693
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams		3.27	3	.741
Monitoring Progress and Assessment		**3.12**	**3**	**.686**
Support in the development of high-quality assessments		3.12	3	.805
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes		3.09	3	.738
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement		3.16	3	.772
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment		**3.10**	**3**	**.693**
Build trusting relationships with staff and families		3.04	3	.779
Foster a collaborative culture		3.09	3	.791
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment		3.16	3	.717
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice		3.09	3	.701

Encouraging Professional Growth	**3.13**	**3**	**.648**
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	3.13	3	.664
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	3.12	3	.677

Note: *M* represents the mean, *Mdn* represents the median, and *SD* represents the standard deviation. Values in bold represent the mean, median, and standard deviation of the composite scores of each proposed Instructional Leadership Domain.

Despite the smaller range of values, there are some notable differences within the data. Improving Instructional Practices (*M* = 3.24, *SD* = .578) is the domain in which new assistant principals desire the most support in developing instructional leadership capacity, followed closely by Supporting Curriculum Development (*M* = 3.23, *SD* = .600). Participants reported the greatest desire to develop their ability to support culturally responsive learning (*M* = 3.37, *SD* = .610), followed by three practices within the domain of Improving Instructional Practices: providing instructional feedback (*M* = 3.29, *SD* = .693); advancing instructional practices (*M* = 3.27, *SD* = .580); and leading instructional discussions (*M* = 3.27, *SD* = .741). The remaining three instructional leadership domains are closely clustered in the level of support desired for new assistant principals: Encouraging Professional Growth (*M* = 3.13, *SD* = .648); Monitoring Progress and Assessment (*M* = 3.12, *SD* = .686); and Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment (*M* = 3.10, *SD* = .693).

Support Desired in APILD by Grade Level. When comparing the responses to the level of support desired by grade level (Table 13), elementary school assistant principals reported desiring less support than middle school and high school assistant principals in all 16 instructional leadership practices. The greatest difference between elementary assistant principals and secondary assistant principals in the level of support desired occurred in the domains of Monitoring Progress and Assessment, Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, and Encouraging Professional Growth.

Table 13

Average Support Desired by Assistant Principals in Proposed Instructional Leadership Practices by Grade Level Served

	n	*Elem* (32)	*Mid* (21)	*High* (22)
Supporting Curriculum Development				
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences		3.28	3.43	3.45
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students		3.00	3.38	3.09
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas		3.03	3.38	3.32
Improving Instructional Practices				
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge		3.00	3.24	3.18
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice		3.10	3.48	3.32
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices		3.09	3.48	3.41
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams		3.09	3.38	3.41
Monitoring Progress and Assessment				
Support in the development of high-quality assessments		2.94	3.33	3.18
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes		2.91	3.33	3.14
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement		2.84	3.43	3.36
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment				
Build trusting relationships with staff and families		2.75	3.29	3.23
Foster a collaborative culture		2.78	3.29	3.36
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment		2.81	3.38	3.45
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice		2.81	3.24	3.36
Encouraging Professional Growth				
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally		2.91	3.29	3.32
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth		2.87	3.33	3.27

Note: Numbers inside the parenthesis represent the number of responses from participants in each grade level.

Elementary school assistant principals (*M* = 3.28) and high school assistant principals (*M* = 3.45) reported they would most benefit from support in building their capacity as new assistant principals in supporting culturally responsive learning. In addition to supporting culturally responsive learning, high school assistant principals also indicated desiring high levels of support in maintaining a safe instructional climate (*M* = 3.45). Whereas middle school assistant principals reported benefiting most from greater support in advancing instructional practices (*M* = 3.48) and providing instructional feedback (*M* = 3.48).

In analyzing the level of support desired for building relationships as new assistant principals, the difference between the reported support desired for elementary assistant principals ($M = 2.75$) in comparison to middle school ($M = 3.29$) and high school ($M = 3.23$) assistant principals seemed noteworthy. To further explore the statistical significance of the difference in the perceived benefit of further support between these groups across leadership practices, an analysis was conducted using a *t*-test for independent samples.

Support Desired by Grade Level Using t-Test for Independent Samples. I conducted *t*-tests to compare the mean composite scores of each instructional leadership domain between grade levels served by the assistant principals. Since the *t*-test is used to compare the means of two independent groups (Ravid, 2020), there were three separate *t*-tests conducted to compare the mean composite scores of elementary school assistant principals to middle school assistant principals, elementary school assistant principals to high school assistant principals, and finally, middle school assistant principals to high school assistant principals. The null hypothesis (H_o) for each of these *t*-tests states the two means being compared are not statistically significant. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) states the means between the groups are statistically significant.

One of the assumptions for conducting a *t*-test for independent samples is the assumption of the homogeneity of variances (Ravid, 2020). In other words, when conducting a *t*-test for independent samples, the variances of the two groups are approximately the same. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was conducted for each analysis comparing the two groups. Values that are not statistically significant ($p > .05$) indicate equal variances can be assumed (Ravid, 2020). After conducting Levene's Test

for Equality of Variances, $p > .05$ in all cases, therefore equal variances can be assumed across all comparisons. The research hypothesis for these *t*-tests is also nondirectional since there is no prediction of the direction of the differences of the means (Ravid, 2020). As a result, the two-sided p-value was utilized to analyze each *t*-test between groups. The significance level for these tests was set at $p < .05$.

Elementary and Middle School Assistant Principals. First, a *t*-test was conducted comparing the average composite score of the reported support desired for each instructional leadership domain between elementary school assistant principals and middle school assistant principals (Table 14). In the domain of Supporting Curriculum Development, even though middle school assistant principals expressed benefitting from more support ($M = 3.40$, $SD = .490$) than did elementary school assistant principals ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .677$) there was no significant difference by grade level for this instructional leadership domain, $t(51) = -1.80$, $p = .078$. Similarly, in the domain of Improving Instructional Practice, there was no significant difference, $t(51) = -1.81$, $p = .076$, between the means of middle school assistant principals ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .521$) and elementary school assistant principals ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .649$).

Table 14

Results of t-Test for Independent Samples Examining Relationship between the Composite Score of Support Desired for each Proposed Instructional Leadership Domain and Grade Level Served (Elementary vs. Middle)

APILD	Elementary APs		Middle APs		$t(51)$	$p*$	Cohen's d
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
SCD	3.09	.677	3.40	.490	-1.797	.078	.611
IIP	3.09	.649	3.39	.521	-1.813	.076	.603
MPA	2.90	.805	3.37	.547	-2.337	.023	.715
FPIE	2.79	.749	3.30	.590	-2.621	.012	.691
EPG	2.89	.759	3.31	.559	-2.170	.035	.688

Note: Mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) of the composite scores of each domain shown for assistant principals serving elementary schools ($n = 32$) and assistant principals serving middle schools ($n = 21$). APILD represents the proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains, which are each

represented by an abbreviation: Supporting Curriculum Development (SCD), Improving Instructional Practice (IIP), Monitoring Progress and Assessment (MPA), Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment (FPIE), and Encouraging Professional Growth (EPG). The t-test statistic and p-values assume equal variances. *Two-tailed *p* values are provided.

However, a statistically significant difference exists, $t(51) = -2.34$, $p < .05$, $p = .023$, between the means of middle school assistant principals ($M = 3.37$, $SD = .547$) and elementary school assistant principals ($M = 2.90$, $SD = .805$) as it relates to Monitoring Progress and Assessment. Given the confidence interval (CI[-.872, -.066]) does not contain 0, it can be concluded that the difference in the means is significantly different from 0 at the .05 level of significance. Furthermore, with Cohen's $d = .715$, there is a large effect size on the difference between the means (Ravid, 2020). In other words, within the domain of Monitoring Progress and Assessment, new middle school assistant principals would benefit more significantly from support than new elementary assistant principals. Looking more closely within this domain, the data reveal that, as novice assistant principals, middle school assistant principals report desiring more support in analyzing school improvement data ($M = 3.43$) than elementary school assistant principals ($M = 2.84$).

For Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, the means of middle school assistant principals ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .590$) and the means of elementary school assistant principals ($M = 2.79$, $SD = .749$), are statistically significant, $t(51) = -2.62$, $p < .05$, $p = .012$. Since 0 is not contained within the confidence interval (CI[-.898, -.119]), the difference in the means is statistically significant at a .05 level of significance. With Cohen's $d = .691$, it can be concluded there is a large effect size on the difference between the means (Ravid, 2020). Again, new middle school assistant principals would benefit significantly more from support in developing their capacity in the domain of

Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment than elementary assistant principals.

Additionally, elementary assistant principals reported the lowest desired support in

developing the four leadership practices within the domain of Fostering a Positive

Instructional Environment.

Finally, there is also a statistically significant difference, $t(51) = -2.17$, $p < .05$, p

$= .035$, between the means of middle school assistant principals ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .559$)

and elementary school assistant principals ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .759$) as it relates to

Encouraging Professional Growth. Given the confidence interval (CI[-.807, -.031]) does

not contain 0, it can be concluded that the difference in the means is significantly

different from 0 at the .05 level of significance. Since Cohen's $d = .688$, it can be

concluded there is a large effect size on the difference between the means of middle

school and elementary school assistant principals in this instructional leadership domain.

Elementary and High School Assistant Principals. Next, a *t*-test was conducted

comparing the average composite score of the support desired for each instructional

leadership domain between elementary school assistant principals and high school

assistant principals (Table 15). Although high school assistant principals expressed a

Table 15

*Results of t-Test for Independent Samples Examining Relationship between the
Composite Score of Support Desired for each Proposed Instructional Leadership Domain
and Grade Level Served (Elementary vs. High)*

APILD	Elementary APs		High APs		$t(52)$	p*	Cohen's d
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
SCD	3.09	.677	3.29	.547	-1.146	.257	.628
IIP	3.09	.649	3.33	.478	-1.500	.140	.586
MPA	2.90	.805	3.23	.518	-1.701	.095	.704
FPIE	2.79	.749	3.35	.527	-3.043	.004	.668
EPG	2.89	.759	3.30	.427	-2.263	.028	.646

Note: Mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) of the composite scores of each domain shown for assistant
principals serving elementary schools ($n = 32$) and assistant principals serving high schools ($n = 22$).
APILD represents the proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains, which are each

represented by an abbreviation: Supporting Curriculum Development (SCD), Improving Instructional Practice (IIP), Monitoring Progress and Assessment (MPA), Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment (FPIE), and Encouraging Professional Growth (EPG). The *t* test statistic and *p* values assume equal variances. *Two-tailed *p* values are provided.

desire for more support in Supporting Curriculum Development (*M* = 3.29, *SD* = .547) than elementary school assistant principals (*M* = 3.09, *SD* = .677) there was no statistically significant difference by grade level served for this instructional leadership domain, *t*(52) = -1.15, *p* = .257. For the instructional leadership domain of Improving Instructional Practice, there was also no significant difference, *t*(52) = -1.50, *p* = .140, between the means of high school assistant principals (*M* = 3.33, *SD* = .478) and elementary school assistant principals (*M* = 3.09, *SD* = .649). Unlike the comparison of means between middle school and elementary school assistant principals in the domain of Monitoring Progress and Assessment, no statistically significant difference, *t*(52) = -1.70, *p* = .095 was found between the means of high school assistant principals (*M* = 3.23, *SD* = .518) and elementary school assistant principals (*M* = 2.90, *SD* = .805) in this instructional leadership domain. Therefore, the data reveal no significant difference in the level of support desired for new elementary and new high school assistant principals to develop their instructional leadership skills in the domains of Supporting Curriculum Development, Improving Instructional Practice, and Monitoring Progress and Assessment.

In the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment a statistically significant difference, *t*(52) = -3.04, *p* < .05, *p* = .004, exists between the mean composite scores of high school assistant principals (*M* = 3.35, *SD* = .527) and elementary school assistant principals (*M* = 2.79, *SD* = .749). The confidence interval (CI[-.935, -.192]) does not contain 0, thus the difference in the means is significantly different from 0 at the

.05 level of significance. Also, there is a large effect size (Cohen's d = .668) on the difference between the means of high school and elementary school assistant principals in this instructional leadership domain. As a result, new high school assistant principals would more significantly benefit from support in developing instructional leadership capacity in Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment. Maintaining a safe instructional climate was the leadership practice with the largest difference in the reported level of support desired between high school assistant principals (M = 3.45) and elementary assistant principals (M = 2.81).

Finally, the means of the composite scores in the instructional leadership domain of Encouraging Professional Growth of high school assistant principals (M = 3.30, SD = .427) and elementary school assistant principals (M = 2.89, SD = .759), were statistically significant $t(52)$ = -2.26, $p < .05$, p = .028. The confidence interval (CI[-.764, -.046]) does not contain 0, thus the difference in the means is significantly different from 0 at the .05 level of significance. Also, there is a large effect size (Cohen's d = .646) on the difference between the means of high school and elementary school assistant principals in this instructional leadership domain. Again, this data indicate that within the domain of Encouraging Professional Growth, new high school assistant principals would benefit more significantly from support in developing these leadership practices than new elementary assistant principals.

Middle and High School Assistant Principals. A *t*-test was also conducted comparing the average composite score of the support desired for each instructional leadership domain between middle school assistant principals and high school assistant principals. As seen in Table 16, no statistically significant difference was found between

the means of middle school and high school assistant principals across any of the instructional leadership domains, as evidenced by *p*-values all being significantly greater than .05. These results indicate the reported levels of support desired by middle school and high school assistant principals across each instructional leadership domain are similar. In other words, middle school and high school assistant principals agree they would benefit from further support in each instructional leadership domain at similar levels.

Table 16

Results of t-Test for Independent Samples Examining Relationship between the Composite Score of Support Desired for each Proposed Instructional Leadership Domain and Grade Level Served (Middle vs. High)

APILD	Middle APs		High APs		*t*(41)	*p**	Cohen's *d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
SCD	3.40	.490	3.29	.547	.687	.496	.520
IIP	3.39	.521	3.33	.478	.415	.680	.500
MPA	3.37	.547	3.23	.518	.848	.401	.532
FPIE	3.30	.590	3.35	.527	-.321	.750	.558
EPG	3.31	.559	3.30	.427	.093	.926	.496

Note: Mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) of the composite scores of each domain shown for assistant principals serving middle schools (*n* = 21) and assistant principals serving high schools (*n* = 22). APILD represents the proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains, which are each represented by an abbreviation: Supporting Curriculum Development (SCD), Improving Instructional Practice (IIP), Monitoring Progress and Assessment (MPA), Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment (FPIE), and Encouraging Professional Growth (EPG). The *t*-test statistic and *p*-values assume equal variances. *Two-tailed *p* values are provided.

Support Desired by Experience Level Using t-Test for Independent Samples.

An additional *t*-test was conducted comparing the means of the composite scores of support desired in each instructional leadership domain between novice assistant principals and veteran assistant principals. This comparison provided information on how the different groups viewed the instructional leadership development needs of new assistant principals across their varied levels of experience within the role.

Both novice and veteran assistant principals indicated "agreeing" that they would

benefit from further support in developing their instructional leadership capacity across

all instructional leadership domains. However, as seen in Table 17, the means of the

composite scores of support desired between novice assistant principals and veteran

assistant principals across all the instructional leadership domains had no statistical

significance, as evidenced by *p* values all being significantly greater than .05. In other

words, the reported level of support desired as a new assistant principal in each

instructional leadership domain did not differ significantly between current novice

assistant principals and more experienced assistant principals. Since all participants,

regardless of current experience level, were asked to indicate if they desired further

support as new assistant principals, this may have contributed to the lack of statistically

significant difference in the perceived level of benefit from more support.

Table 17

Results of t-Test for Independent Samples Examining Relationship between the Composite Score of Support Desired for each Proposed Instructional Leadership Domain and Years Served

APILD	Novice APs		Veteran APs		$t(73)$	$p*$	Cohen's d
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
SCD	3.16	.671	3.29	.549	-.916	.363	.600
IIP	3.18	.509	3.29	.621	-.834	.407	.579
MPA	3.08	.671	3.16	.702	-.478	.634	.690
FPIE	3.08	.627	3.11	.739	-.135	.893	.697
EPG	3.18	.580	3.09	.693	.616	.540	.651

Note: Mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) of the composite scores of each domain shown for novice assistant principals (*n* = 30) and veteran assistant principals (*n* = 45). APILD represents the proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains, which are each represented by an abbreviation: Supporting Curriculum Development (SCD), Improving Instructional Practice (IIP), Monitoring Progress and Assessment (MPA), Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment (FPIE), and Encouraging Professional Growth (EPG). The *t* test statistic and *p* values assume equal variances. *Two-tailed *p* values are provided.

Comparing Average Support Received to Average Support Desired

As a method for examining the instructional leadership development needs of assistant principals, the reported frequency of the support received by assistant principals was compared to the reported level of support desired for each instructional leadership practice (Table 18). Positive numerical differences indicate the level of support desired was rated higher than the level of support received by new assistant principals in the instructional leadership practice. Conversely, negative numerical differences indicate the level of support received was rated higher than the level of support desired for the instructional leadership practice. By comparing the level of support received with the level of support desired, the difference between these reported values indicates where the largest gaps exist between the support new assistant principals are receiving and the support they desire.

Table 18

Difference in Reported Average Support Received and Average Support Desired by Instructional Leadership Practice

	Support Received (M)	Support Desired (M)	+/-
Supporting Curriculum Development			
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	2.52	3.37	+0.85
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	2.56	3.14	+0.58
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	2.59	3.22	+0.63
Improving Instructional Practices			
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	2.80	3.12	+0.32
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice	2.99	3.27	+0.28
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	3.21	3.29	+0.08
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	2.95	3.27	+0.32
Monitoring Progress and Assessment			
Support in the development of high-quality assessments	2.29	3.12	+0.83
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	2.47	3.09	+0.62
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement	3.09	3.16	+0.07
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment			
Build trusting relationships with staff and families	3.12	3.04	-0.08
Foster a collaborative culture	3.15	3.09	-0.06
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	3.25	3.16	-0.09
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice	2.88	3.09	+0.21
Encouraging Professional Growth			
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	3.00	3.13	+0.13

Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	2.91	3.12	+0.21

Note: Positive values in the difference column represent the reported support desired in the instructional leadership practice is greater than that of the reported support received. Negative values in the difference column represent the reported support desired in the instructional leadership practice is less than that of the reported support received.

It should be noted that the values reported for support received and support desired do not directly correlate. Although both questions were asked on a 1-4 Likert scale, the values for support received represent never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), and often (4); whereas the values for support desired are strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4). As a result, there are limitations to comparing the averages against each other since the numerical output does not correlate to the same descriptive output. However, comparing the numerical values may still provide some insight into where the discrepancy lies between the support new assistant principals receive in these instructional leadership practices and what further support is still needed in these areas.

The five practices in which the lowest reported level of support received represent the instructional leadership practices in which the largest gap exists between the support received as a new assistant principal and the support desired. Supporting culturally responsive learning had the largest numerical difference (+0.85) between the support required for new assistant principals and the level of support being received. In other words, assistant principals report receiving support in this instructional leadership practice between "rarely" and "sometimes", but "agree" to "strongly agree" that they would benefit from further support in this area. Supporting assessment development was the next leadership practice with a large numerical discrepancy (+0.83) between support desired and support received. Participants reported "rarely" receiving support for this

instructional leadership practice, and slightly more than "agree" that they would benefit from further support in developing their capacity in this practice. Then, ensuring curriculum alignment (+0.63), assessment alignment (+0.62), and rigorous curricula (+0.58) were clustered close together in their differences between support received and support desired.

Reliability of Results

As noted previously in this capstone, the survey given in this research was not a previously established survey. Given the survey was not vetted and data analysis included composite scores of each APILD, Cronbach's alpha (α) was calculated on the participant's responses to the level of engagement, the support received, and the support desired in each instructional leadership domain. The α values represent how well the leadership practices within each domain correlate to each other (Ravid, 2020). The α calculations are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19

Cronbach's Alpha Summary in APILD Engagement, Support Received, and Support Desired

	ENG (77)	SPR (75)	SPD (75)
Supporting Curriculum Development	**.684**	**.808**	**.837**
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	.637	.902*	.890*
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	.569	.601	.706
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	.563	.657	.673
Improving Instructional Practices	**.804**	**.861**	**.872**
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	.760	.868*	.824
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice	.713	.782	.857
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	.739	.828	.830
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	.805*	.808	.833
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**.639**	**.714**	**.867**
Support in the development of high-quality assessments	.347	.578	.812
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	.351	.444	.696
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement	.784*	.795*	.914*
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**.771**	**.881**	**.944**
Build trusting relationships with staff and families	.737	.796	.939

	ENG	SPR	SPD
Foster a collaborative culture	.652	.802	.918
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	.723	.851	.915
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice	.747	.918*	.935
Encouraging Professional Growth	**.736**	**.798**	**.928**
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	-	-	-
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	-	-	-

Note. *ENG* represents assistant principal engagement in APILD, *SPR* represents the support received by assistant principals in APILD, and *SPD* represents support desired by assistant principals in APILD. The values in bold represent Cronbach's alpha for the instructional leadership domain. The values for each leadership practice represent the Cronbach's alpha value if that practice was removed from the domain. Values with an * represent practices that if removed would increase the Cronbach's alpha in the APILD.

Supporting Curriculum Development. In the domain of Supporting Curriculum Development, the alpha coefficients indicate good internal consistency for support received ($\alpha = .808$) and support desired ($\alpha = .837$) in this domain. It should be noted removing the leadership practice of supporting culturally responsive learning from this domain would improve the reliability in both support received and support desired subscales. The α value in the engagement subscale for this domain fell into the questionable range ($\alpha = .684$).

Improving Instructional Practices. In the domain of Improving Instructional Practices, the engagement subscale ($\alpha = .804$), support received subscale ($\alpha = .861$), and support desired subscale ($\alpha = .872$) all indicate good internal consistency. Removing leading instructional discussions from this domain would increase the internal consistency in the engagement subscale; while removing displaying instructional knowledge would improve reliability in the support received subscale. It should be noted removing these leadership practices from their respective subscales would only slightly increase internal consistency.

Monitoring Progress and Assessment. When examining the Monitoring Progress and Assessment domain, the engagement subscale ($\alpha = .639$) falls in the questionable range, the support received subscale ($\alpha = .714$) is in the acceptable range,

and the support desired subscale (α = .867) shows good internal consistency. Removing the leadership practice of analyzing school improvement data from this domain would improve the reliability of all subscales to the acceptable or excellent range.

Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment. In the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, the engagement subscale (α = .771) shows acceptable internal consistency, while the support received (α = .881) and support desired (α = .944) show good and excellent internal consistency, respectively. By removing celebrating instructional practice from this domain, the reliability of the support received subscale would improve from good to excellent.

Encouraging Professional Growth. Calculations of α in the domain of Encouraging Professional Growth indicate the engagement subscale (α = .736) and support received subscale (α = .798) fall within the acceptable range, whereas the support desired subscale (α = .928) shows excellent internal consistency. Since there are only two leadership practices within this domain, calculations for α when a practice is removed could not be calculated.

Summary of Findings for Research Question Two

Within the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, three leadership practices in which new assistant principals most frequently engaged were building relationships, fostering collaboration, and maintaining a safe instructional environment, which were also three of the leadership practices in which new assistant principals received the most support. In the domain of Improving Instructional Practices, providing instructional feedback was also a highly supported leadership practice for new

assistant principals, particularly for new elementary assistant principals as they received the most support in this leadership practice.

The data revealed practices in the domains of Supporting Curriculum Development and Monitoring Progress and Assessment were the least supported practices for new assistant principals. Supporting assessment development and alignment emerged as the least supported leadership practices. New assistant principals also received minimal assistance in developing their ability to support culturally responsive learning and ensure rigorous and aligned curricula. Of note, these were the five least engaged in practices by new assistant principals and represent the practices with the largest reported difference between the level of support received and the level of further support desired by new administrators.

In general, participants agreed they would have benefitted from more support in developing leadership capacity across all instructional leadership practices. However, the top five leadership practices in which more support was desired fall into the two domains of Improving Instructional Practices (i.e., providing instructional feedback, advancing instructional practice, and leading instructional discussions) and Supporting Curriculum Development (i.e., supporting culturally responsive learning and aligning curriculum). These two domains were also the two in which there was not a statistically significant difference in the level of support desired between grade levels. Whereas, in the domains of Monitoring Progress and Assessment and Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment new middle and new high school assistant principals reported a desire for more support than their elementary counterparts at statistically significant levels.

In the next section, I will analyze data related to the third research question, which explores the socialization resources new assistant principals report as the most helpful in their development as instructional leaders.

Research Question 3: Which Socialization Resources are Most Helpful to New Assistant Principals in their Development as Instructional Leaders?

The previous section described the instructional leadership practices new assistant principals desire further support in developing. Socialization resources may provide specific methods to support these new assistant principals in growing their instructional leadership capacity. The following sections address the third research question by outlining which socialization resources were provided to the participants as new assistant principals and how helpful participants found each of the socialization resources in relation to each instructional leadership practice. Furthermore, a chi-square test for independence was conducted to determine if the helpfulness ranking of each socialization resource was dependent on the grade level served by the new assistant principal.

Socialization Resources Provided to New Assistant Principals

Participants were asked to state whether they received each of the six socialization resources upon entering the assistant principalship by stating "yes" they received the resource or "no" they did not (Table 20). The data show that Supervisor Support was provided to 85% ($n = 64$) of the participants. Supervisor Support refers to the extent to which one's immediate supervisor exhibits behaviors that demonstrate they value the newcomer and actively assist newcomers with adjustment (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Thus, most of the participants reported having a direct supervisor, typically the principal, who supported their transition into the assistant principal role.

Table 20

Number and Percentage of Assistant Principals Provided each Socialization Resource upon Entering the Assistant Principalship

Socialization Resource	Resource Provided		Resource Not Provided	
	n	%	*n*	%
Formal Assistance	34	45%	41	55%
Formal Orientation	58	77%	17	23%
Formal Training	55	73%	20	27%
Socialization Agents	36	48%	39	52%
Supervisor Feedback	62	83%	13	17%
Supervisor Support	64	85%	11	15%

Similarly, 83% (*n* = 62) of the participants reported receiving Supervisor Feedback, which focuses on providing newcomers with accurate and timely feedback on job-performance and work-related behavior (Saks & Gruman, 2012). In other words, assistant principals indicated their building principal provided evaluative feedback targeted toward improving work performance. Both Formal Orientation and Formal Training were additional socialization resources available to many of the participants with 77% (*n* = 58) and 73% (*n* = 55) receiving these resources, respectively, upon becoming an assistant principal, suggesting that most participants received some type of induction program before entering their role as an assistant principal and were provided professional development on aspects of the assistant principalship.

Slightly less than half (48%, *n* = 36) of the participants had access to Socialization Agents, which refers to administrator colleagues, instructional coaches, or educational specialists other than the principal, as a resource to support them as new assistant principals. Given the highest percentage of participants were elementary school assistant principals, and often elementary schools have only one assistant principal, the percentage of participants provided this resource seems reasonable. Finally, 45% (*n* = 34) of

participants indicated receiving Formal Assistance, or an assigned mentor within or outside of the school building to assist with transitioning into the role of the assistant principalship.

Understanding what support participants received can provide insight into how they rank the helpfulness of each resource in their development as an instructional leadership. Although participants were asked to rank the helpfulness of each socialization resource regardless of whether they received the resource as a new assistant principal, if participants have no experience with the socialization resource it may impact how they ranked the helpfulness of that resource. The following section dives into how participants ranked the helpfulness of these socialization resources.

Ranking of Socialization Resources

Assistant principals were asked to rank how helpful the six socialization resources would be in building their capacity on each of the 16 instructional leadership practices from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6). The participant rankings for each socialization resource were then averaged to find the overall helpfulness ranking of the socialization resource for each instructional leadership practice (Table 21). Given this scale, values under 3.5 would indicate the socialization resource would not be as helpful in building capacity for that instructional leadership practice, and above 3.5 would indicate the socialization resource would be more helpful in building capacity for the outlined instructional leadership practice. For responses to be included in the analysis, participants needed to rank each socialization resource for the instructional leadership practice. Since the socialization resources were being ranked against one another, each resource needed to have a distinct value. This is particularly important for completing the chi-square test

Table 21

Average Helpfulness Ranking of Each Socialization Resource for Each Proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practice

	n	FA	FO	FT	SA	SF	SS
Supporting Curriculum Development							
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	66	2.92	2.70	3.32	3.39	4.05	4.62
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	66	2.80	2.56	3.76	3.73	3.89	4.26
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	67	2.67	2.73	4.15	3.76	3.73	3.96
Improving Instructional Practices							
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	66	2.68	2.39	3.76	3.79	4.02	4.36
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice	66	2.80	2.48	3.80	3.47	4.02	4.42
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	64	2.92	2.20	3.56	3.47	4.38	4.47
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	64	2.88	2.38	3.84	3.55	3.94	4.42
Monitoring Progress and Assessment							
Support in the development of high-quality assessments	66	2.85	2.48	4.39	3.70	3.48	4.09
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	67	2.70	2.46	4.15	3.78	3.64	4.27
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement	64	2.77	2.56	4.23	3.61	3.55	4.28
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment							
Build trusting relationships with staff and families	63	2.92	2.03	3.05	4.05	4.00	4.95
Foster a collaborative culture	63	2.83	2.14	3.16	4.02	3.89	4.97
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	64	2.70	2.25	3.39	3.77	3.97	4.92
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice	63	2.86	2.33	3.40	3.78	3.87	4.76
Encouraging Professional Growth							
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	63	2.56	2.44	4.00	3.60	3.63	4.76
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	62	2.82	2.19	3.42	3.82	3.87	4.87

Note: *n* represents the number of participants who ranked the helpfulness of each socialization resource within the instructional leadership practice. The socialization resources are represented by the following abbreviations: Formal Assistance (FA), Formal Orientation (FO), Formal Training (FT), Socialization Agents (SA), Supervisor Feedback (SF), and Supervisor Support (SS).

so the number of rankings for the instructional leadership practice were the same for each socialization resource.

      Formal Assistance. When comparing the six socialization resources, Formal Assistance was ranked as the second least helpful socialization resource across 15 of the 16 instructional leadership practices and was ranked the least helpful resource for ensuring curriculum alignment ($M = 2.67$). When evaluating the helpfulness of Formal Assistance in building capacity across all instructional leadership practices, participants reported Formal Assistance would be least helpful in expanding new assistant principals' ability to provide professional development ($M = 2.56$). Whereas supporting culturally responsive learning, providing instructional feedback, and building relationships tied for the highest individual helpfulness ranking for Formal Assistance ($M = 2.92$). However, Formal Assistance did not have an average helpfulness rank above three in any instructional leadership practice, indicating this resource as less helpful in building instructional leadership capacity.

      Formal Orientation. Formal Orientation was ranked as the least helpful resource in 15 of the 16 instructional leadership practices. Rankings for Formal Orientation were lowest in the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, and particularly for building relationships ($M = 2.03$) and fostering collaboration ($M = 2.14$). Ensuring curriculum alignment was the leadership practice in which Formal Orientation had the highest average helpfulness rank ($M = 2.73$), but of the six socialization resources was still the second least helpful resource for this leadership practice. Overall, Formal Orientation was reported as the least helpful resource in building instructional leadership capacity for new assistant principals.

Formal Training. There were two instructional leadership practices in which Formal Training was ranked as the most helpful resource for building instructional leadership capacity: ensuring curriculum alignment ($M = 4.15$) and supporting assessment development ($M = 4.39$). Additionally, Formal Training had an average helpfulness ranking above four for ensuring assessment alignment ($M = 4.15$) and analyzing school improvement data ($M = 4.23$). This means that Formal Training was found to be one of the most helpful resources for building capacity in each instructional leadership practice in the domain of Monitoring Progress and Assessment.

On the other hand, Formal Training was reported by participants as less helpful in building instructional leadership capacity in the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, as each instructional leadership practice within this domain had an average ranking less than 3.5. Across all leadership practices, participants reported Formal Training as the least helpful in developing novice administrators' ability to build relationships ($M = 3.05$) and foster collaboration ($M = 3.16$).

Socialization Agents. Socialization Agents were not ranked as the most or least helpful resource in building instructional leadership capacity for any of the leadership practices. In 13 of the 16 leadership practices, Socialization Agents had an average helpfulness ranking above 3.5, indicating this resource as slightly helpful in building instructional leadership capacity in these practices. Overall, Socialization Agents was ranked to be the most helpful in the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment. Socialization Agents was the second most helpful resource in developing new assistant principals' ability to build relationships ($M = 4.05$). Socialization Agents had the lowest average helpfulness ranking in supporting culturally responsive learning

($M = 3.39$), advancing instructional practice ($M = 3.47$), and providing instructional feedback ($M = 3.47$).

Supervisor Feedback. Although Supervisor Feedback was not ranked as the most helpful resource for any of the instructional leadership practices, it was ranked as the second most helpful resource in 10 of the 16 instructional leadership practices. Providing instructional feedback ($M = 4.38$) and supporting culturally responsive learning ($M = 4.05$) are the instructional leadership practices in which Supervisor Feedback had the highest average helpfulness rankings. Overall, the data suggests Supervisor Feedback would be the most helpful for the leadership practices within the Improving Instructional Practices domain, since the average helpfulness rankings for the practices within this domain are all around or above four. The only leadership practice with a helpfulness ranking less than 3.5 is supporting assessment development ($M = 3.48$). In other words, Supervisor Feedback was ranked to be more helpful than not in building instructional leadership capacity across 15 of the 16 instructional leadership practices.

Supervisor Support. Supervisor Support was ranked as the most helpful resource in building instructional leadership capacity in 14 of the 16 instructional leadership practices and was ranked as the second most helpful resource in supporting assessment development ($M = 4.09$) and ensuring curriculum alignment ($M = 3.96$). In fact, curriculum alignment is the only instructional leadership practice in which Supervisor Support had an average helpfulness ranking below four. Overall, Supervisor Support was ranked by participants as the most helpful resource in developing instructional leadership capacity across all practices.

Supervisor Support has the highest individual helpfulness rankings in the

practices within the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment. Fostering

collaboration ($M = 4.97$), building relationships ($M = 4.95$), and maintaining a safe

instructional climate ($M = 4.92$), all have average helpfulness rankings close to five,

meaning participants believe Supervisor Support would be extremely helpful in

developing new assistant principal instructional leadership capacity in these areas.

Socialization Resource Helpfulness by Grade Level using Chi-Square Test for

Independence

A chi-square test for independence was performed using SPSS to examine the

relationship between the grade level served by the assistant principal and the helpfulness

ranking of each socialization resource for each instructional leadership practice. So, the

ranked value between one and six of each socialization resource was counted and

separated by grade level served by the assistant principal for each of the 16 instructional

leadership practices. An example of one such chi-square table is given in Table 22. Since

there were six socialization resources and 16 instructional leadership practices, a chi-

square test for independence was performed 96 times to examine the relationship between

the grade level served by the assistant principal and the helpfulness ranking of the

socialization resource for each specific instructional leadership practice.

Table 22

Frequencies and Percentage of Helpfulness Rankings for Formal Assistance in
Supporting Culturally Responsive Learning by Grade Level Served by Assistant Principal

| | Formal Assistance Helpfulness Ranking – SCD1* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | Total | |
Grade	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Elem	10	41.7%	4	50.0%	4	40.0%	5	62.5%	1	20.0%	4	36.4%	28	42.4%
Middle	6	25.0%	4	50.0%	1	10.0%	2	25.0%	2	40.0%	2	18.2%	17	25.8%
High	8	33.3%	0	0%	5	50.0%	1	12.5%	2	40.0%	5	45.5%	21	31.8%
Total	24	100%	8	100%	10	100%	8	100%	5	100%	11	100%	66	100%

Note: SCD1 correlates to the first instructional leadership practice within the Supporting Curriculum Development, which is supporting teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences. Grade refers to the grade level served by the assistant principal.

One of the assumptions required to apply a chi-square test is that 80% of the expected values in each cell of the chi-square test should be greater than or equal to five. Given the larger degrees of freedom ($df = 10$) for the comparison in this study, and the lower response rate, this assumption was not met for each of the 96 chi-square tests. Therefore, a Likelihood ratio (*LR*) was utilized as the test statistic to interpret the results. The *LR* utilizes the ratio of observed frequencies to expected frequencies to calculate the test statistic when the expected value in each cell is less than five in more than 20% of the cells. It should be noted that the *LR* has been argued to provide a more advantageous test statistic than the chi-square test statistic (Ozdemir & Eyduran, 2005). In other words, the *LR* has the potential to show results that are more significant than a typical chi-square statistic. As a result, utilizing the *LR* is a limitation of this study and the interpretations of the results of the chi-square test may be less accurate.

Considering the large quantity of chi-square tests conducted, the following sections will discuss the results of chi-square tests that produced a statistically significant relationship between the grade level served by the assistant principal and the helpfulness ranking of the socialization resource for the specific instructional leadership practice. A summary of these results can be found in Table 23.

Table 23

Summary of Statistically Significant Chi-Square Results for Helpfulness Ranking of Socialization Resources in Proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practices by Grade Level Served

Socialization Resource	Instructional Leadership Practice	n	$\chi^2 (10)*$	p	V

Formal Assistance				
	Support in the development of high-quality assessments	66	23.87	.008	.398

Formal Orientation				
	Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	66	19.52	.034	.351
	Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	67	18.31	.050	.350
	Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	64	20.88	.022	.375
	Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	62	18.77	.043	.361

Socialization Agents				
	Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	64	19.97	.030	.381

Supervisor Feedback				
	Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	64	21.94	.015	.382
	Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	64	19.43	.035	.371

Supervisor Support				
	Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice	66	20.05	.029	.370
	Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	64	27.11	.002	.424

Note. *Values represent the Likelihood Ratio as the χ^2 value since the response rate did not produce the minimum values within the chi-square table to meet the assumptions of a chi-square test. Only statistically significant values ($p < .05$) are represented in this table. n represents the number of assistant principals who provided helpfulness rankings for the socialization resource for the specific leadership practice, and V represents Cramer's V to determine effect size.

Formal Assistance. When examining the helpfulness rankings of Formal

Assistance across the 16 instructional leadership practices, there was one instance in

which the chi-square test indicated a statistically significant result. The relationship

between grade level served and the helpfulness ranking of Formal Assistance was

significant χ^2 (10, $N = 66$) = 23.87, $p < .05$, $p = .008$, as it related to supporting

assessment development. High school assistant principals ranked Formal Assistance as

the least helpful resource in building their capacity in supporting assessment development

at a higher-than-expected rate. Similarly, elementary school assistant principals ranked

Formal Assistance in the lower half of helpfulness in developing their skills for this

instructional leadership practice at higher-than-expected rates. Whereas middle school

assistant principals ranked Formal Assistance in the top half of helpfulness at higher

rates. In other words, both elementary and high school assistant principals found Formal Assistance to be less helpful in improving their ability to support assessment development than middle school assistant principals.

Formal Orientation. There were several instructional leadership practices, two of which fall within the Supporting Curriculum Development domain, where the helpfulness ranking of Formal Orientation was statistically significant by grade level served. First, high school assistant principals were more likely than elementary and middle school assistant principals to find Formal Orientation less helpful, χ^2 (10, $N = 66$) $= 19.52, p < .05, p = .034$, in developing their ability to ensure rigorous curriculum. Specifically, high school assistant principals ranked Formal Orientation as the least and second least helpful resource at higher-than-expected values. In terms of building new assistant principals' capacity to ensure curriculum alignment, elementary school assistant principals were more likely to rank Formal Orientation as more helpful and high school assistant principals were more likely to rank Formal Orientation as less helpful, χ^2 (10, $N = 67$) $= 18.31, p = .05$.

Both middle school and high school assistant principals ranked the helpfulness of Formal Orientation lower than elementary school assistant principals χ^2 (10, $N = 64$) $= 20.88, p < .05, p = .022$, in providing instructional feedback. More specifically, middle school assistant principals ranked Formal Orientation as the least helpful resource, and high school assistant principals ranked Formal Orientation as the second least helpful resource, at higher-than-expected values. Finally, there is a relationship between grade level served and the helpfulness ranking of Formal Orientation in improving the ability of new assistant principals to promote collective growth, χ^2 (10, $N = 62$) $= 18.77, p < .05, p$

= .043. High school assistant principals reported Formal Orientation as the least, or second least, helpful socialization resource in building new assistant principals' capacity in this instructional leadership practice at higher-than-expected values.

Socialization Agents. Both high school assistant principals and elementary school assistant principals were more likely to have a higher helpfulness ranking for Socialization Agents than middle school assistant principals, χ^2 (10, $N = 64) = 19.97$, $p < .05$, $p = .03$, as it related to building new assistant principals' capacity in maintaining a safe instructional climate. Elementary school assistant principals ranked Socialization Agents as the second most helpful, and the second least helpful, resource in developing an ability to maintain a safe instructional climate at higher-than-expected values.

Supervisor Feedback. As it relates to providing instructional feedback, both elementary school and high school assistant principals report Supervisor Feedback to be more helpful in developing capacity in this leadership practice than middle school assistant principals, χ^2 (10, $N = 64) = 21.94$, $p < .05$, $p = .015$. For high school assistant principals, Supervisor Feedback had helpfulness rankings in the top of half of resources at higher-than-expected values. Elementary school assistant principals ranked Supervisor Feedback as the second most helpful resource at higher-than-expected rates in building instructional leadership capacity for providing instructional feedback. High school assistant principals also ranked Supervisor Feedback as more helpful than middle school and elementary school assistant principals, χ^2 (10, $N = 64) = 19.43$, $p < .05$, $p = .035$, in relation to building new assistant principal instructional leadership capacity in maintaining a safe instructional climate.

Supervisor Support. There are two instructional leadership practices, both within the Improving Instructional Practices domain, in which the helpfulness ranking of Supervisor Support had a statistically significant relationship with grade level served. First, there was a significant relationship between grade level served and the helpfulness ranking of Supervisor Support, χ^2 (10, $N = 66$) = 20.05 $p < .05$, $p = .029$, in improving new assistant principals' ability to advance instructional practice. Specifically, elementary assistant principals ranked the helpfulness of Supervisor Support in the top half of resources, including the most helpful resource, at higher-than-expected rates for this instructional leadership practice.

For building the capacity of new assistant principals in providing instructional feedback, both elementary school and high school assistant principals were more likely to have a higher helpfulness ranking for Supervisor Support, χ^2 (10, $N = 64$) = 27.11, $p < .05$, $p = .002$. Elementary school assistant principals ranked Supervisor Support as the most helpful resource, and high school assistant principals ranked Supervisor Support as the second most helpful resource, at higher-than-expected rates. In other words, Supervisor Support would be more helpful in developing the ability to provide instructional feedback for new elementary and high school assistant principals than new middle school assistant principals.

Summary of Findings for Research Question Three

In general, Supervisor Support was reported to be the most helpful resource for new assistant principals in developing instructional leadership capacity. The data show Supervisor Support was ranked as the most helpful or second most helpful resource across all 16 instructional leadership practices. Supervisor Support is particularly helpful

when new assistant principals are fostering collaboration, building trusting relationships, and maintaining a safe instructional climate, which are three leadership practices new assistant principals are most engaged in and receive the most support in developing. Supervisor Support was found to be significantly helpful for new elementary assistant principals as they develop the ability to advance instructional practices, and for both new elementary and high school assistant principals in building their capacity for providing instructional feedback.

Supervisor Feedback was also found to be helpful in building instructional leadership capacity, particularly in the domains of Improving Instructional Practices and Supporting Curriculum Development. New elementary and high school assistant principals reported higher helpfulness rankings of Supervisor Feedback in providing instructional feedback at statistically significant levels. New high school assistant principals also indicate Supervisor Feedback as significantly more helpful in maintaining a safe instructional climate than their elementary or middle school counterparts.

Conversely, the data revealed new assistant principals deemed Formal Orientation and Formal Assistance as the least helpful resources for building instructional leadership capacity across all leadership practices. Formal Orientation was significantly less helpful for new high school assistant principals in ensuring rigorous curricula, aligning curriculum, providing instructional feedback, and promoting professional growth.

Summary

Quantitative data was collected to explore a) in which instructional leadership practices new assistant principals most often engage, b) what instructional leadership practices new assistant principals identify as areas requiring support, and c) which

socialization resources are most helpful to new assistant principals in their development as instructional leaders. Assistant principals across three school districts were surveyed to collect data on these research questions. Statistical analyses provided insight on the level of engagement, support received, and support desired by new assistant principals on 16 specific instructional leadership practices. Additionally, data revealed which of the six socialization resources were deemed most helpful in building instructional leadership capacity.

Analyses of the data collected in this study illuminate three main themes which correlate to the three research questions:

1. New assistant principals engage more in building school culture rather than in supporting teachers with instructional planning and delivery.

2. Although new assistant principals require support across all instructional leadership practices, supporting cultural responsiveness and providing instructional feedback are the greatest areas in need of support.

3. For new assistant principals, support and feedback from the principal are critical in advancing instructional leadership capacity.

In the following chapter, I will offer a discussion of these findings in relation to these three themes. The discussion will consider the data collected, as well as the conceptual framework for this study and the review of literature previously presented in Chapter II. Further, the subsequent chapter will present implications and recommendations for schools to improve new assistant principals' instructional leadership.

Chapter V – Discussion

As a former assistant principal, I recall the feelings of transitional unease, the challenges of managing a multitude of tasks, and the desire to engage, and receive support, in instructional leadership tasks. The evidence of the positive impact of instructional leadership on schools has been well documented (Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Valentine & Prater, 2011), and yet the role of the assistant principal as an instructional leader remains less defined (Marshall & Hooley, 2006) despite calls for these school leaders to have a more substantial role in instructional leadership (Armstrong, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012). The purpose of this study was to better understand how new assistant principals engage as instructional leaders, what support is needed to develop instructional leadership in these school leaders, and what resources best meet the needs of instructional leadership development.

In the previous chapter, findings were outlined addressing the instructional leadership engagement, support desired, and resources needed for new assistant principals. In this chapter, I discuss these findings as they relate to the conceptual framework for this research, which combines literature from assistant principal responsibilities and effective leadership practices, and Socialization Resources Theory. From this analysis emerged three major themes, which are outlined in the next sections. Finally, I offer implications for further research followed by five recommendations for school districts and principals to consider enhancing instructional leadership skills in new assistant principals.

Discussion of Themes

Theme One: Engagement in Instructional Leadership through School Climate (RQ1)

The first major theme relates to how new assistant principals spend their time as instructional leaders. There is a clear delineation of the domains in which new assistant principals most frequently engage as instructional leaders. Namely, new assistant principals engage more as instructional leaders by building a school climate conducive to instruction rather than supporting teachers with instructional planning and delivery, particularly as it relates to curriculum and assessment.

Building School Culture for Instruction. The leadership domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment held three leadership practices with the highest level of engagement as new assistant principals. Participants reported engaging most frequently in building relationships ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .455$), maintaining a safe instructional climate ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .488$), and fostering collaboration ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .594$). Notably, building relationships and maintaining a safe instructional climate were the two practices with the highest level of engagement regardless of grade level served. These three highly engaged in tasks form a triad of instructional leadership practices that could be associated with student discipline (trusting relationships, collaborative culture, and maintaining a safe climate), thus confirming research indicating assistant principals are seen, and often engage, primarily as disciplinarians (Barnett et al., 2012; Bukoski et al., 2015; Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Glanz, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Morgan, 2018; Sun, 2011) and managers of students and families (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a; Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Despite the considerable evidence in literature pointing to assistant principals as disciplinarians (Armstrong, 2004; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Sun, 2011), assistant principals have also been associated with promoting a student-centered learning environment (Kwan, 2009). Rather than assistant principals acting strictly as disciplinarians, I contend they serve as instructional leaders who cultivate an optimal instructional culture for students to learn. For example, safe and orderly school environments have been linked to higher levels of academic learning (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006). Building strong relationships with staff and families has been positively linked with improved school climate, student outcomes, and student learning (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012). Additionally, a strong collaborative environment is critical to improve student learning, achieve school goals, and cultivate professional learning communities (Leithwood, 2012). Although serving as disciplinarians is part of the work of assistant principals, data from this study shows new assistant principals engage as instructional leaders by developing a school-wide culture conducive to student learning through building relationships, fostering collaboration among staff, and maintaining a safe instructional climate.

While new assistant principals reported engaging most frequently in building relationships, fostering collaboration, and maintaining a safe instructional climate, these leadership practices are also three leadership tasks in which new assistant principals received the most support in developing. This study did not investigate the directional nature of whether new assistant principals received greater support in these leadership practices leading to higher engagement, or if greater engagement in these leadership practices thus necessitated greater levels of support. Regardless of whether engagement

impacted the level of support received or vice versa, it is evident that building relationships, fostering collaboration, and maintaining an optimal instructional climate constitute a significant amount of the instructional leadership tasks in which new assistant principals engage.

Lack of Engagement in Curriculum and Assessment. The least frequently engaged in leadership practices by new assistant principals fell within the domains of Supporting Curriculum Development and Monitoring Progress and Assessment. More specifically, supporting culturally responsive learning ($M = 2.30$, $SD = .859$), assessment development ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .847$) and alignment ($M = 2.51$, $SD = .926$), and curricular alignment ($M = 2.51$, $SD = .926$) and curricular rigor ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .821$), represent the instructional leadership practices in which new assistant principals least often engage. Interestingly, these same five leadership practices are also the five leadership practices in which new assistant principals received the least support in developing: assessment development ($M = 2.29$, $SD = .835$), assessment alignment ($M = 2.47$, $SD = .827$), supporting culturally responsive learning ($M = 2.52$, $SD = .875$), ensuring rigorous curriculum ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .919$), curriculum alignment ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .902$). Even when broken down by grade level served by the assistant principal, these five practices were the least supported. Further still, these instructional leadership practices represent the practices with the largest discrepancy between reported support received and reported support desired.

Results from this study contribute to the evidence from previous research indicating assistant principals infrequently conduct leadership tasks associated with curriculum development (Armstrong, 2004; Sun, 2011). Sebring et al. (2016) suggest

instructional leaders who do not devote time to curriculum alignment may negatively impact students' learning since potential repetitions and gaps in curriculum may exist and not be addressed. Effective instructional leaders also emphasize the importance of curricular rigor and high expectations for all students (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006) and devote time to ensuring school staff are committed to this goal (Leithwood, 2012). However, new assistant principals report infrequently ensuring teachers implement an aligned and rigorous curriculum.

Similarly, effective instructional leaders dedicate time to ensuring assessments are aligned to curriculum and instruction and hold staff accountable to designing aligned assessments (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Assessment alignment ensures students are being asked to demonstrate knowledge of the curriculum standards being delivered through instruction. Literature also suggests strong instructional leaders support teachers in the design, implementation, and monitoring of assessment to ensure student learning (Murphy et al., 2006). The results of this study show new assistant principals not only engage rarely in supporting assessment development and alignment, but they also receive the least amount of support, regardless of grade level served, in building their capacity in this leadership practice.

When analyzing these five instructional leadership practices, they relate to supporting teachers with the development and alignment of curriculum and assessment, which are part of the evaluation standards of teachers in the three school districts surveyed. Yet, new assistant principals reported not frequently engaging in these leadership practices which support improving teachers' instructional practice. If the previously outlined research indicates effective instructional leaders engage in curriculum

and assessment alignment and development, and new assistant principals are not engaged in this work, the question arises of who is engaged in this work and who should be engaged in this work. However, participants reported often engaging in the leadership practice of providing teachers meaningful and actionable feedback. Perhaps new assistant principals are indirectly performing the instructional leadership practices involving curriculum and assessment within the context of providing instructional feedback.

Theme Two: New Assistant Principals Need Support Across All Instructional Leadership Practices (RQ2)

The next theme relates to the support new assistant principals require in building instructional leadership capacity. Evidence suggests new assistant principals would benefit from support across all domains of instructional leadership. However, supporting teachers with integrating culturally responsive learning experiences and practices associated with improving and advancing teachers' instruction represent the leadership practices in the greatest need of support.

Broad Instructional Leadership Support. On average, participants reported a desire for support in building their instructional leadership capacity in all 16 proposed instructional leadership practices, which aligns to research indicating assistant principals require more support across a wide range of instructional leadership tasks (Oleszewski et al., 2012). The difference between the instructional leadership practice with the highest level of desired support, supporting culturally responsive learning ($M = 3.37$) and the leadership practice in which the least additional support was desired, building relationships ($M = 3.04$), was minimal. This could be due to new assistant principals feeling ill-prepared to serve as instructional leaders (Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et

al., 2012), and as a result these new administrators desire support across a broad range of instructional leadership tasks.

To further illustrate this point, consider the three leadership practices in which the least support was desired: building relationships ($M = 3.04$), maintaining a safe instructional environment ($M = 3.09$), and fostering collaboration ($M = 3.09$). Although these leadership practices represent the practices ranked at the bottom of support desired, the data still suggests new assistant principals agree that more support would be beneficial in improving their instructional leadership capacity. Despite high levels of engagement and support received for building relationships, maintaining a safe instructional climate, and fostering collaboration, new assistant principals desire more support in developing these skills. This is particularly true for new middle and high school assistant principals, as these school leaders reported desiring more support in these leadership practices at higher levels than elementary assistant principals.

One possible explanation for new assistant principals reporting a high desire for support across all instructional leadership practices may be due to the inability of new assistant principals to discern their leadership development needs. Research has shown new assistant principals struggle transitioning into their role as school leaders due to the innumerable and inconsistent tasks they are asked to perform (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). The data found in this study may be a result of new assistant principals feeling overwhelmed by their responsibilities, and as such report higher levels of desired support in building their capacity across all practices. These results also include veteran assistant principals reflecting on their needs as new administrators, meaning that even after

establishing clearer role identity and clarity these school leaders reported further support is needed for new assistant principals across all leadership practices.

Despite the high levels of support reported across the instructional leadership practices, there are a few practices that stand out as potential focal points for improving instructional leadership capacity in new administrators. These practices will be discussed in the following sections.

Supporting Culturally Responsive Learning. Supporting teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences is the instructional leadership practice new assistant principals desire the most support in developing ($M = 3.37$, $SD = .610$). This leadership practice also represents the least engaged in, and one of the least supported, instructional leadership practices. Although lower levels of engagement and support received are not necessarily indicative that higher support desired will be reported, supporting culturally responsive learning certainly represents the greatest discrepancy between low level of engagement ($M = 2.30$) and support received ($M = 2.52$), and high level of support desired ($M = 3.37$). Even when disaggregating data by grade level served, elementary school assistant principals ($M = 3.28$) and high school assistant principals ($M = 3.45$) reported they would most benefit from support in building their capacity as new assistant principals in supporting culturally responsive learning, and middle school assistant principals reported desiring the second highest level of support for this leadership practice ($M = 3.43$). Strong instructional leadership includes the ability to assist teachers in developing a learning environment that affirms, incorporates, and reflects the racial and cultural backgrounds of students (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006). Yet, new assistant principals reported

rarely receiving support in this area, and as a result would significantly benefit from greater assistance in cultivating their ability to engage teachers about culturally responsive learning.

Marshall and Khalifa (2018) suggest building trusting relationships with teachers before engaging in equity work. It is important to note that data from this study suggests new assistant principals spend more time building relationships than any other instructional leadership practice. Although building trusting relationships takes time, especially prior to culturally responsive work, as it takes sustained and deliberate effort from both the teacher and the leader (Marshall & Khalifa, 2018), this is an effective first step toward supporting teachers with developing culturally responsive learning experiences. Considering building relationships is a leadership practice that is highly engaged in and supported, it may help to highlight the connection between these two leadership practices to new assistant principals as a way of instilling greater confidence for engaging in culturally responsive work.

Supporting Skills to Advance Instruction. New assistant principals report a high desire for further support in developing their capacity in the domain of Improving Instructional Practice. Specifically, new assistant principals require assistance in improving their ability to provide instructional feedback ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .693$), support the advancement of instructional practice ($M = 3.27$, $SD = .580$), and lead instructional discussions with teacher teams ($M = 3.27$, $SD = .741$). The t-test for independent samples revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in the levels of support desired between the assistant principals at each grade level. In other words, data indicate new assistant principals would benefit from developing their capacity to advance instructional

practice, provide instructional feedback, and lead instructional discussions regardless of the grade level served.

In the initial years of the assistant principalship, these new school leaders are redefining their identity particularly as it relates to interactions with teachers (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Shifting role identity for new assistant principals involves how to navigate new relationship dynamics with teachers (Armstrong, 2015; Craft et al., 2016; Grodski, 2011; Hohner & Riveros, 2017). The transition to evaluator involves being able to provide meaningful feedback on instructional practices and advance instruction through targeted discourse on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Often new administrators struggle with conducting evaluations of teachers (Craft, et al., 2016) and data from this study highlights the desire from new assistant principals to receive further support in leadership practices aimed at improving teachers' instructional practice.

The ability to provide effective instructional feedback to teachers is essential to being an instructional leader (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008), and is evidenced in research as one of the primary responsibilities of the assistant principal (Barnett et al., 2012; Hausman et al., 2002; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Previous research indicates teacher evaluation was a top five task for assistant principals (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Sun, 2011), which is also true in this study. As new assistant principals, providing instructional feedback was the fifth most engaged in leadership practice. Not only did participants report providing instructional feedback as a top five most frequently engaged in leadership practice, but new assistant principals also received the second most amount of support in developing this skill. Despite the high levels of reported engagement and

received support for providing instructional feedback, further assistance in developing this leadership practice was still highly sought by new assistant principals, which may be an indication of the importance of this leadership practice on expanding instructional leadership capacity in novice administrators.

Theme Three: Principal Support and Feedback Critical to New Assistant Principals (RQ3)

The final theme highlights the socialization resources in which new assistant principals deemed the most helpful in building instructional leadership capacity. For new assistant principals, support and feedback from the principal are critical to advancing instructional leadership capacity. Support from the principal was reported as the most helpful resource for new assistant principals, followed by principal feedback.

Principal Support. Overall, Supervisor Support was received by 85% of the participants who completed the survey and was ranked as the most helpful resource for building instructional leadership capacity in novice administrators. More specifically, support from the principal was deemed the most helpful resource in 14 of the 16 instructional leadership practices, and the second most helpful in the remaining two practices.

Typically, within the first few months of transitioning into the assistant principalship, new administrators seek a support network (Armstrong, 2009, 2012). The first relationship novice administrators might seek out is with the building principal. As a supervisor, the principal is responsible for assigning tasks, allocating resources, and providing feedback to new administrators, which makes support from them essential to the socialization of novice assistant principals (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009; as cited in Saks

& Gruman, 2012). In fact, some research claims support and mentoring from the principal as one of the highest contributing factors for growth in new administrators (Armstrong, 2015). Data from this study confirms principal support is the most helpful resource for new assistant principals in building instructional leadership skills.

Interestingly, principal support was found in this study to be more helpful than providing new assistant principals with a formal mentor. Searby et al. (2017) claim new assistant principals need more mentoring in instructional leadership practices, and there is research indicating formal assistance from mentors has been shown to assist newcomers with organizational knowledge (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Specifically for new assistant principals, mentors have been linked to improved role transition (Cohen & Schechter, 2019a) and skill development (Lyons, 2019). However, results from this study indicate that mentoring would be more helpful coming from the principal rather than a formal mentor. Higher helpfulness rankings of the principal may be a result of greater accessibility to new administrators. District assigned mentors may not work alongside the new administrator limiting the opportunities to support them with instructional leadership skill development.

According to the data, principal support would be most advantageous in assisting new assistant principals in the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment, followed by Encouraging Professional Growth, and Improving Instructional Practice. The leadership practices within Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment were also the practices receiving the highest level of support for new assistant principals. Although participants were not asked how support for these practices was being provided, it may be new administrators were receiving greater levels of support from their principal and thus

rated this resource higher in its helpfulness for developing capacity with Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment.

Regarding Improving Instructional Practice, principal support is the most helpful resource for novice elementary administrators to build capacity in advancing, and providing feedback on, teachers' instructional practice. New high school assistant principals also rated principal support as significantly helpful in developing their ability to provide instructional feedback to teachers. It should be noted that these are some of the leadership practices in which new assistant principals desire the most support in developing. Therefore, principal support is the best resource for developing new assistant principal instructional leadership in high needs areas (i.e., advancing instruction and providing instructional feedback).

Principal Feedback. As a resource for improving instructional leadership practices, Supervisor Feedback was the second most helpful resource in 10 of the 16 leadership practices, and more helpful than not in 15 of the 16 leadership practices. This data indicates new assistant principals value principal feedback as a means for improving as instructional leaders. More specifically, feedback from the principal was deemed the most helpful with developing leadership practices in the domain of Improving Instructional Practice. Across the four leadership practices in this domain, principal feedback was second only to principal support in terms of its helpfulness in building instructional leadership capacity.

Saks and Gruman (2012) state supervisor feedback is one of the primary methods for new employees to determine, and adjust, their work performance. The results of this study yield similar findings, in that principal feedback was reported as one of the most

helpful resources for improving instructional leadership practice. It is important to note that the nature and intention of the feedback provided can impact the development of new assistant principals. More positive feedback relationships can contribute to higher levels of self-efficacy (Ennekling & Kleiner, 2017), and for new administrators can positively influence their development as school leaders (Hausman et al., 2002). However, new assistant principals receiving feedback from ineffective principals could result in the adoption of undesirable behaviors (Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Searby et al., 2017).

This study did not question participants on the nature of the feedback being provided. Rather, participants indicated a belief that principal feedback would be helpful as a new assistant principal in building instructional leadership capacity. There may be an underlying assumption among participants of a positive principal feedback relationship. Meaning participants who experienced a positive feedback relationship with the principal found the experience helpful, and thus rated this resource highly. On the other hand, participants who had a negative experience with principal feedback may have yearned for a more positive feedback experience, and thus rated this resource highly.

The data also reveal an interesting cycle related to the importance of feedback. The results indicate new assistant principals have a strong desire for more support in developing their ability to provide instructional feedback to teachers. New assistant principals also report receiving principal feedback is critical to their instructional leadership growth in this leadership practice. In other words, new assistant principals need to receive feedback from their evaluator on how to provide feedback as an evaluator. This connection creates an interesting cycle of feedback between principal,

assistant principal, and teacher for instructional leadership and instructional practice to improve.

Limitations

As previously noted, one limitation of this research is the narrow sample of assistant principals. The three school districts sampled are all large school districts, from the same region of a mid-Atlantic state, limiting the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the three school districts surveyed all have robust, multi-year assistant principal induction programs. Therefore, participants in this research may have received greater levels of initial support than new assistant principals in school districts without this type of program.

Other limitations of this study relate to the survey instrument. The survey developed for this research was not an established survey. Despite efforts to improve the validity of the survey through pilot testing, the survey instrument was not widely vetted. Although most of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients show acceptable to excellent internal consistency, some of the subscales indicate questionable reliability. Moreover, the proposed Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains and Practices are not widely accepted as a comprehensive list of instructional leadership practices for assistant principals. Rather, these practices were created by me, as the researcher, through a synthesis of major literature on assistant principal tasks and effective leadership practices. Given this method of developing these practices, there may be instructional leadership practices not represented in this study, or some leadership practices may be disputed by other researchers or practitioners.

Another significant limitation to this study is the response rate. This study only yielded a 19% response rate to any portion of the survey, and a 15% completion rate for the entire survey. The low response rate also contributes to the lack of generalizability of the results. The participants also self-reported their levels of engagement, received support, and desired support on instructional leadership practices. It is possible participants may inflate their own abilities or downplay the amount of support they need.

The lower response rate also had a direct impact on the statistical analyses being conducted. The chi-squared tests for independence were calculated to determine the relationship between specific instructional leadership practices and each socialization resource. The combination of low response rate and higher degrees of freedom for this statistical analysis required the utilization of the Likelihood ratio rather than the chi-square test statistic. As a result, the statistical values, and by extension the connection between leadership practices and socialization resources, may be overestimated.

Finally, this research was conducted during the time, and aftermath of, the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of data collection, new assistant principals had served in this role only during the pandemic, which could have a significant impact on their responses about the instructional leadership support they received and desired. As students returned to schools from virtual learning, there was a substantial emphasis placed on the social-emotional learning (SEL) of students. Many school leaders focused on simply welcoming students back to school and placed less emphasis on instructional leadership practices such as those outlined in this research. Thus, the results of this study could have been influenced by the circumstances of society and education at the time.

Implications for Research

Before addressing implications for research born from the findings of this study, there are a few research considerations based on the limitations of this study. First, additional research could be conducted to further define the leadership practices of assistant principals. The proposed APILDs in this study were the result of a synthesis, and crosswalk, of literature from assistant principal tasks and effective leadership practices, however further exploration of these practices would help solidify a definition of instructional leadership for new assistant principals, which is lacking in the literature on these school leaders. I have several recommendations for how this could be conducted.

I created the APILD framework and developed the survey specifically to address the instructional leadership practices in the framework. Based on the α values, this framework serves as a solid foundation for exploring instructional leadership in assistant principals. However, researchers may consider examining the organization, or redundancy, of the leadership practices within the domains. One potential method for improvement would be conducting qualitative validation of this research through a sequential mixed-methods approach. Future researchers could consider interviewing assistant principals after collecting survey data to gain context to their viewpoint on the instructional leadership practices. This may also help determine the directionality of whether engagement in these leadership practices leads to the support received, or vice versa. An exploration of this area may also include principals and district leaders' opinion on the instructional leadership development needs of assistant principals.

One other potential method for improving the legitimacy, and statistical validation of, the survey is by conducting an exploratory factor analysis. Using the instructional

leadership practices as the domain, and assistant principals as the population, researchers could explore the existence of internal attributes, or factors, that influence the responses of the participants. Executing an exploratory factor analysis would require a much larger sample size, which would only further serve to validate the APILD framework and address the limitation of the lower response rate for this study.

Another potential research consideration resulting from a limitation of this study is examining the instructional leadership support needs of new assistant principals in school districts without a leadership development program. Potentially researchers could investigate the instructional leadership needs of assistant principals in rural school districts, or districts with limited resources. Also, expanding the geographical location of the school districts participating in this research would assist with broader generalizability of the results.

Findings from this study indicate new assistant principals would benefit from assistance in developing instructional leadership skills broadly. Further research may want to consider a deeper investigation of the instructional leadership development needs of new assistant principals, considering the lack of discernable difference between the desired support among the leadership practices. Additional research may also consider exploring the differences in instructional leadership needs between the grade level served by new assistant principals. Data in this study suggest new elementary school assistant principals reported a lower desire for more support than new middle and high school assistant principals across all instructional leadership practices, including statistically significant differences in several of the leadership domains. A deeper exploration of these

differences may yield more information on how best to support the instructional

leadership development of these new school leaders based on the grade level they serve.

Finally, additional research exploring the dynamics of the principal and new

assistant principal relationship may be prudent. Data from this study reveal principal

support as a significantly positive resource for new assistant principals in their

development as instructional leaders. Additionally, the feedback principals provide to

new assistant principals was deemed as helpful across numerous instructional leadership

practices. Investigating these relationship dynamics may result in a deeper understanding

of the types of support and feedback principals can provide to new assistant principals to

expand their instructional leadership abilities.

Recommendations

The recommendations that follow serve to support the growth and development of

new assistant principals as instructional leaders. These recommendations are aimed at

assisting school districts and building principals with expanding the role of the assistant

principal to include greater opportunities for instructional leadership. These

recommendations were generated based on the results of this study in concert with

literature on the assistant principalship and effective leadership practices.

Since each of the school districts in this research have established assistant

principal induction programs, the recommendations below should be integrated into these

programs. For school districts without an established program supporting assistant

principal transition, these recommendations may serve as a foundation for program

development.

***Recommendation 1: Ensure Principals Emphasize, and Provide Support for, New
Assistant Principals Engaging in the Work of Collaborative Teacher Teams (RQ1,
RQ2, RQ3)***

This first recommendation addresses increasing new assistant principal
instructional leadership engagement and support desired with assistance from a preferred
resource. The instructional leadership practices least frequently engaged in, and most
desired for more support, involve assisting teachers with curriculum, instruction, and
assessment. When evaluating these instructional leadership practices against the main
ideas of teacher collaborative learning teams, connections can be established.

According to DuFour et al. (2010), first collaborative teams must ensure all
students learn at high levels which begins with a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Thus,
teams must build a rigorous and aligned curriculum, two instructional leadership
practices in which new assistant principals less frequently engage. Next, collaborative
teams determine how they know students learned the desired material (DuFour, et al.,
2010). To do so, collaborative teams ensure the development and alignment of high-
quality assessments. Again, the leadership practices of assessment development and
alignment are rarely engaged in by new assistant principals. By having new assistant
principals participate regularly in the work of collaborative teacher teams, these school
leaders have greater exposure to instructional leadership tasks in which they less
frequently engage.

Inherent in ensuring all students can learn at high levels is effective instruction
(DuFour & Marzano, 2011). As a result, one of the primary responsibilities of these
teams is the instructional planning and delivery of high-quality learning experiences

(DuFour & Marzano, 2011). New assistant principals reported a strong desire to receive support in instructional leadership practices surrounding the improvement of instructional practice. Engaging in the collaborative team process provides greater opportunity for new assistant principals to advance instructional practice by leading discussions about instruction and providing instructional feedback to teachers.

More opportunities to engage with collaborative teams around instructional work also yields more opportunity for new assistant principals to garner support in developing these skills from their principal. Principal support was reported as the most helpful resource in building skills in advancing instruction, leading instructional discussions, and providing instructional feedback. If principals emphasize the importance of engaging with collaborative teams and establish an environment in which new administrators can prioritize working with collaborative teams, then new assistant principals have a better chance at developing these instructional leadership skills. Greater engagement in the instructional work of collaborative teams would also give principals more opportunities to provide feedback to new assistant principals on their work in this area, which new administrators indicate as another helpful resource in building their instructional leadership capacity.

Recommendation 2: Integrate Cultural Responsiveness into New Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Development (RQ1, RQ2)

Literature establishes a connection between instructional leadership and culturally responsive leadership (Brown et al., 2022; Khalifa et al., 2016). Khalifa et al. (2016) articulate this connection by stating, "it is the job of instructional leaders to develop and improve teachers' craft in ways that result in improved student outcomes, but this must

be done with cultural responsiveness," (p. 1274). Although effective instructional

leadership includes cultural responsiveness, data from this study reveal supporting the

development of engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences was the least

engaged in leadership practice for new assistant principals, particularly for new middle

and high school assistant principals. Furthermore, supporting culturally responsive

learning was the leadership practice new assistant principals would benefit from the most

support in developing. Thus, culturally responsive instructional relationship represents a

clear developmental need for new assistant principals.

There are several indicators of culturally responsive leadership in the literature

that can be applied to new assistant principals. In their analyses of culturally responsive

leadership indicators in four countries, Brown et al., (2022) state, among other indicators,

school leadership must serve as curriculum leaders (i.e., design, implementation, and

assessment of curriculum) and organize on-going professional development for teachers

in culturally responsive practices. Both supporting curriculum development and

encouraging professional growth are aspects instructional leadership outlined in this

research for new assistant principals. However, these new school leaders need to be able

to advance the instructional practice of teachers in a manner that responds to the needs of

students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Brown et al., 2022).

One method for advancing culturally responsive leadership skills in new assistant

principals is by integrating ongoing exploration of mindset, assessment of systems, and

changing of conversations into their leadership development (Gutiérrez, 2021). This

could look like new assistant principals examining their own identities and biases,

gathering feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders, or confronting long-standing

practices collaboratively (Gutiérrez, 2021) during ongoing professional development programs. Research also suggests the establishment of positions within the district to support school leaders and teachers with culturally responsive pedagogy (Marshall & Khalifa, 2018).

Recommendation 3: Develop Skills in New Assistant Principals on How to Engage in Instructional Discourse with Teachers (RQ1, RQ2)

The level of engagement in instructional leadership practices in the domain of Improving Instructional Practices was second only to the practices in the domain of Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment. Namely, providing instructional feedback, advancing instructional practice, and leading instructional discussions, were among the top leadership practices engaged in by new assistant principals. Additionally, participants reported receiving higher levels of support for developing these practices as new assistant principals. Despite the high levels of engagement and support received, there is a high demand from new assistant principals for more support in building capacity with advancing instructional practice through feedback and discourse.

Assistant principals can have a significant impact on improving instructional practices through practices associated with evaluating teachers (Armstrong, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). However, Searby et al., (2017) found most assistant principals who were not ready to be instructional leaders requested support in improving the instructional program. Similarly, the data in this study revealed new assistant principals desire high levels of support in building their capacity in three of the four leadership practices focused on improving teachers' instructional practices. For new assistant principals to be effective instructional leaders they must be

involved in the design and implementation of the instructional program (Leithwood, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006, Robinson et al., 2008), and challenge teachers to expand their instructional practices (Sebring et al., 2006).

To address the instructional leadership development needs, new assistant principals reported principal support and feedback as the most helpful resource for improving their ability to engage in these three instructional leadership practices. A potential strategy for principals to support new assistant principals with developing instructional discourse skills comes from research on coaching conversations. Ortmann et al. (2021) suggest role-playing as an active learning strategy that provides an opportunity to practice and reflect on instructional feedback conversations. Utilizing this strategy to build instructional leadership skills in new assistant principals allows for these school leaders to garner direct support and feedback from the principal on how to engage teachers in meaningful instructional discourse.

Another strategy for building capacity for advancing instructional practices and providing feedback is the use of team learning walks. Principals and new assistant principals could conduct what Fisher and Frey (2014) define as a capacity-building learning walk, in which administrators collect evidence of effective instructional practices to gain insight and determine next steps. Administrative team walks develop a common vision for instruction and increase knowledge and skills needed to improve instructional practice (Finch, 2010). By conducting learning walks with the principal, new assistant principals gain clarity on effective instructional practice which may improve their ability to provide instructional feedback to teachers.

Recommendation 4: Provide Formal Training to New Assistant Principals on

Supporting Teachers with Curriculum and Assessment (RQ2, RQ3)

As previously noted, new assistant principals rarely engage in, and receive minimal support in, assisting teachers with curriculum and assessment development and alignment. Although these leadership practices were not the areas in highest need of support, new assistant principals did agree they would benefit from more support in developing leadership skills in these areas. Literature on effective instructional leadership emphasizes the importance of rigorous curricula (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006), curriculum alignment (Sebring et al., 2016), and assessment development and alignment (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Murphy et al., 2006). As a result, school districts should consider how to bolster instructional leadership skills in these areas for new assistant principals, especially if these school leaders will engage in conversations with collaborative teams around these practices as suggested in the first recommendation.

Participants reported Formal Training as one of the most, if not the most, helpful resources in building professional capacity for ensuring curriculum and assessment alignment, as well as assessment development. Given the structured nature of Formal Training, this resource is predominantly aimed at improving specific skills to perform job-related tasks (Saks & Gruman, 2012). When interpreting data from this study, the leadership practices in which Formal Training had high helpfulness rankings (i.e., curriculum alignment, assessment development and alignment) are more concrete tasks that require certain skills. To increase engagement and skill development in these leadership practices, school districts may want to consider offering targeted professional development to new assistant principals on supporting teachers with curriculum and

assessment development and alignment. Since school districts in this study have established assistant principal development programs, they may want to consider integrating these skills into their ongoing professional development.

Recommendation 5: Provide Training to Principals on How to Best Support and Develop Instructional Leadership in New Assistant Principals (RQ3)

The developmental growth of new assistant principals relies heavily on the ability of the principal to provide support and feedback to these school leaders. Participants in this study report principal support as the most helpful resource for positively influencing their instructional leadership growth. There is also research stating principals have a professional responsibility to train and develop their assistant principals (Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991; Hausman et al., 2002; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Searby et al., 2017). Considering new assistant principals indicate principal support and feedback as highly impactful to their instructional leadership development, it is imperative for school districts to ensure their principals are prepared to provide the support and feedback necessary to these new school leaders.

However, research suggests the level of support new administrators receive from their principal varies greatly (Grodski, 2011). Whereas the relationship between principal and assistant principal can positively influence professional growth (Hausman et al., 2002), the leadership style of the principal may also have the potential to limit the leadership development of the assistant principal (Armstrong, 2015). Thus, school districts must clearly articulate to principals the expectation for developing their assistant principals as instructional leaders, and then provide principals the training needed to meet

this expectation. Results from this study highlight some key areas in which principals

need to be knowledgeable and able to provide feedback to their assistant principals:

- Culturally Responsive Learning and Leadership
- Providing Actionable Instructional Feedback
- Leading Collaborative Teams in Instructional Discourse
- Innovative Instructional Practices that Advance Learning

Each of the aforementioned areas mirror the instructional leadership practices which new

assistant principals desire the greatest support, and in which principal support was

indicated as the most helpful resource for skill development. In essence, principals must

be strong instructional leaders for new assistant principals to be strong instructional

leaders. Then, as instructional leadership improves in new assistant principals, they can

go one to become principals with highly developed instructional leadership skills that can

be passed on to the next generation of new assistant principals.

Summary

In this section, I have outlined three major themes generated from an analysis of

the findings of this study and literature on assistant principal transition needs, assistant

principal roles and responsibilities, and effective leadership practices. From these themes,

along with a synthesis of the results and literature, I provide five recommendations for

improving instructional leadership skills in new assistant principals. The

recommendations attempt to provide principals and school districts with steps to increase

new assistant principal engagement in instructional leadership practices, address the areas

in which these new administrators require support, and leverage the resources deemed

most helpful by these new school leaders in building instructional leadership capacity.

Action Communications

In the next sections, I provide several documents which serve to communicate the findings, themes, and recommendations to the three school districts participating in this study. The first document is a briefing memo for principals and school district leaders outlining considerations for building instructional leadership capacity in new assistant principals. This document serves as a high-level overview of the study summarizing the major themes and recommendations based on the results of this study. My hope is for school districts to be able to use this information to improve instructional leadership in new assistant principals. The next three documents are specific to each school district. The documents outline the results of the engagement, support received, and support desired on the instructional leadership practices for the participants in each designated school district. The top two most helpful resources for each instructional leadership practices are also provided. Armed with this knowledge school districts can see the specific needs of, and better tailor the support provided to, these new school leaders.

Action Communication 1: Principal and School District Leader Briefing

Considerations for Building Instructional Leadership Capacity in New Assistant Principals

Subject: Considerations for principals and school district leaders surrounding building instructional leadership capacity in new assistant principals based on a study of three large school districts.

Problem of Practice: Instructional leadership is essential to successful schools and to being an effective school leader. Assistant principals are vital members of the school leadership team, and yet these leaders often lack sufficient time or capacity to engage as instructional leaders. For new assistant principals, the transition into school leadership further exacerbates the difficulties with developing instructional leadership skills.

Context: This study sought to determine the instructional leadership development needs of new assistant principals and what resources best met those needs. Assistant principals across three school districts reported how frequently they engage in instructional leadership practices, the level of support they received in developing these practices, and the level of support they further desire in developing these practices. Then, assistant principals indicated what resources would be the most helpful in building their instructional leadership capacity. The instructional leadership practices utilized in this study are provided below.

Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practice	Abbreviated Practice
Supporting Curriculum Development	
Support teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	Support culturally responsive learning
Ensure the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	Ensure rigorous curriculum
Align curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	Ensure curriculum alignment
Improving Instructional Practices	
Display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	Display instructional knowledge
Actively support the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practice	Advance instructional practice
Provide regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	Provide instructional feedback
Lead meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	Lead instructional discussion
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	
Support in the development of high-quality assessments	Support assessment development
Ensure teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	Ensure assessment alignment
Analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement	Analyze school improvement data
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	
Build trusting relationships with staff and families	Build relationships
Foster a collaborative culture	Foster collaboration
Maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	Maintain safe instructional climate
Recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practice	Celebrate instructional practice
Encouraging Professional Growth	
Provide opportunities for staff to grow professionally	Provide professional development
Learn alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	Promote collective growth

Major Themes: The following themes extend from statistical analyses conducted on the assistant principals' survey responses. By sharing these themes, I hope to provide

principals and school district leaders information about the current state of instructional leadership in new assistant principals and how to potentially support their developmental growth for the future.

- **Theme 1: New assistant principals engage more in building school culture rather than in supporting teachers with instructional planning and delivery.** Instructional leadership practices within *Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment* had the highest levels of engagement for new assistant principals. Whereas new assistant principals least frequently engaged in leadership practices within *Supporting Curriculum Development* and *Monitoring Progress and Assessment*.

- **Theme 2: Although new assistant principals require support across all instructional leadership practices, supporting cultural responsiveness and providing instructional feedback are the greatest areas in need of support.** New assistant principals reported needing support broadly in all instructional leadership practices. Specifically, there was a strong desire for developing the ability to support culturally responsive learning experiences. New assistant principals also indicated a strong desire to develop their skills in practices within *Improving Instructional Practices.*

- **Theme 3: For new assistant principals, support and feedback from the principal are critical in advancing instructional leadership capacity.** New assistant principals reported principal support and principal feedback as the most helpful resources in building their instructional leadership capacity across most of the leadership practices.

Recommendations: As a result of these findings, I propose five recommendations for principals or school district leaders to consider in building instructional leadership capacity in new assistant principals:

- **Ensure principals emphasize, and provide support for, new assistant principals engaging in the work of collaborative teacher teams.** By participating in the work of collaborative teams, new assistant principals increase their engagement and exposure to instructional leadership practices around curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

- **Integrate cultural responsiveness into new assistant principal instructional leadership development.** New assistant principals need to improve their ability to advance instructional practices of teachers in a manner that responds to the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- **Develop skills in new assistant principals on how to engage in instructional discourse with teachers.** For new assistant principals to be effective instructional leaders they must be involved in the implementation of the instructional program and challenge teachers to expand their instructional practices.

- **Provide formal training to new assistant principals on supporting teachers with curriculum and assessment.** To increase engagement and skill development in *Supporting Curriculum Development* and *Monitoring Progress and Assessment,* school districts should consider offering targeted professional development to new assistant principals on supporting teachers with curriculum and assessment development and alignment.

- **Provide training to principals on how to best support and develop instructional leadership in new assistant principals.** Considering new assistant principals indicate principal support and feedback as highly impactful to their instructional leadership development, it is imperative for school districts to ensure their principals are prepared to provide the support and feedback necessary to these new school leaders.

Collectively, these recommendations have the potential to increase new assistant principals' engagement in instructional leadership and improve their instructional leadership skills.

Attached are the data for your school district along with a summary of the results. This data provides more detail and context to the responses of assistant principals within your school district as a tool for further tailoring your approach to supporting these new school leaders.

Action Communication 2: Banner School District

Average Engagement in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	Banner School District Results
	Total *n* = 77	Total *n* = 20
Supporting Curriculum Development	**2.44**	**2.43**
Support culturally responsive learning	2.30*	2.30*
Ensure rigorous curriculum	2.53*	2.45*
Ensure curriculum alignment	2.51*	2.55*
Improving Instructional Practices	**3.01**	**2.89**
Display instructional knowledge	2.96	2.70
Advance instructional practice	3.03	2.80
Provide instructional feedback	3.10	3.20^
Lead instructional discussion	2.94	2.85
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**2.68**	**2.48**
Support assessment development	2.31*	1.85*
Ensure assessment alignment	2.51*	2.30*
Analyze school improvement data	3.23^	3.30^
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.52**	**3.40**
Build relationships	3.71^	3.60^
Foster collaboration	3.57^	3.55^
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.70^	3.60^
Celebrate instructional practice	3.09^	2.85
Encouraging Professional Growth	**2.97**	**2.75**
Provide professional development	2.95	2.70
Promote collective growth	2.99	2.80

Note: * represents the five leadership practices with the lowest engagement, ^ represents the five leadership practices with the highest engagement. Assistant principals were asked to share their experiences with how frequently they engaged in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices as a new assistant principal on a scale from not very often (1) to very often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent engaging in the instructional leadership practice less often, and above 2.5 would indicate more frequent engagement in the instructional leadership practice.

Average Support Received in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	Banner School District Results
	Total *n* = 75	Total *n* = 20
Supporting Curriculum Development	**2.56**	**2.62**
Support culturally responsive learning	2.52*	2.50*
Ensure rigorous curriculum	2.56*	2.60*
Ensure curriculum alignment	2.59*	2.75*
Improving Instructional Practices	**2.99**	**3.05**
Display instructional knowledge	2.80	2.80
Advance instructional practice	2.99	3.05
Provide instructional feedback	3.21^	3.35^
Lead instructional discussion	2.95	3.00
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**2.62**	**2.63**
Support assessment development	2.29*	2.15*
Ensure assessment alignment	2.47*	2.60*
Analyze school improvement data	3.09^	3.15^
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.10**	**3.20**
Build relationships	3.12^	3.35^
Foster collaboration	3.15^	3.35^
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.25^	3.25^
Celebrate instructional practice	2.88	2.85
Encouraging Professional Growth	**2.95**	**2.95**
Provide professional development	3.00	3.05
Promote collective growth	2.91	2.85

Note: * represents the leadership practices new assistant principals received the least support in developing, ^ represents the leadership practices new assistant principals received the most support in developing. Assistant principals were asked how much support they received as new assistant principals in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from never (1) to often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent receiving little to no support in developing their instructional leadership skills in this practice, and above 2.5 would indicate receiving some to frequent support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice.

Average Support Desired in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	Banner School District Results
	Total *n* = 75	Total *n* = 20
Supporting Curriculum Development	**3.23**	**2.94**
Support culturally responsive learning	3.37^	3.05
Ensure rigorous curriculum	3.14	2.89*
Ensure curriculum alignment	3.22^	2.95*
Improving Instructional Practices	**3.24**	**3.13**
Display instructional knowledge	3.12	3.10
Advance instructional practice	3.27^	3.10
Provide instructional feedback	3.29^	3.15^
Lead instructional discussion	3.27^	3.15^
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**3.12**	**3.12**
Support assessment development	3.12	3.25^
Ensure assessment alignment	3.09*	3.05
Analyze school improvement data	3.16	3.05
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.10**	**3.01**
Build relationships	3.04*	2.95*
Foster collaboration	3.09*	3.00*
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.16	3.05
Celebrate instructional practice	3.09*	3.05
Encouraging Professional Growth	**3.13**	**3.13**
Provide professional development	3.13	3.15^
Promote collective growth	3.12	3.10

Note: * represents the leadership practices new assistant principals desire the least support in developing, ^ represents the leadership practices new assistant principals desire the most support in developing. Assistant principals were asked if they desired more support as new administrators in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 signify new assistant principals would have little to no benefit from further developing the applicable leadership practice, and values above 2.5 indicate new assistant principals would benefit from further support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice.

Most Helpful Resources for Assistant Principals to Develop Instructional Leadership Capacity

	n	Socialization Resources	
		Most Helpful	**Second Most Helpful**
Supporting Curriculum Development			
Support culturally responsive learning	16	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Ensure rigorous curriculum	16	Principal Support	Principal Feedback Socialization Agents
Ensure curriculum alignment	16	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Improving Instructional Practices			
Display instructional knowledge	15	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Advance instructional practice	16	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Provide instructional feedback	16	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Lead instructional discussion	16	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Monitoring Progress and Assessment			
Support assessment development	16	Principal Support	Formal Training
Ensure assessment alignment	16	Principal Support	Formal Training
Analyze school improvement data	15	Principal Support	Formal Training
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment			
Build relationships	15	Principal Support	Socialization Agents
Foster collaboration	15	Principal Support	Socialization Agents
Maintain safe instructional climate	14	Principal Support	Socialization Agents
Celebrate instructional practice	14	Principal Support	Socialization Agents
Encouraging Professional Growth			
Provide professional development	13	Principal Support	Formal Training
Promote collective growth	14	Principal Support	Principal Feedback

Note: Formal Training - refers to the formal programs and professional development provided by the school district to new assistant principals after starting their position; *Socialization Agent(s)* - refer to administrators, coaches, or specialists, other than the principal or mentor, who work directly or indirectly with the new assistant principal by providing information, guidance, feedback, or resources; *Principal Feedback* - refers to the specific, evaluative feedback provided by the building principal on the new assistant principal's job performance and work-related behaviors; *Principal Support* - refers to the building principal's demonstration of availability and willingness to assist the new assistant principal.

Action Communication 3: Logan School District

Average Engagement in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	Logan School District Results
	Total *n* = 77	Total *n* = 16
Supporting Curriculum Development	**2.44**	**2.10**
Support culturally responsive learning	2.30*	2.00*
Ensure rigorous curriculum	2.53*	2.13*
Ensure curriculum alignment	2.51*	2.19*
Improving Instructional Practices	**3.01**	**2.86**
Display instructional knowledge	2.96	3.00
Advance instructional practice	3.03	3.00
Provide instructional feedback	3.10	2.94
Lead instructional discussion	2.94	2.50
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**2.68**	**2.52**
Support assessment development	2.31*	2.25*
Ensure assessment alignment	2.51*	2.19*
Analyze school improvement data	3.23^	3.13^
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.52**	**3.44**
Build relationships	3.71^	3.75^
Foster collaboration	3.57^	3.25^
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.70^	3.63^
Celebrate instructional practice	3.09^	3.13^
Encouraging Professional Growth	**2.97**	**2.81**
Provide professional development	2.95	2.81
Promote collective growth	2.99	2.81

Note: * represents the five leadership practices with the lowest engagement, ^ represents the five leadership practices with the highest engagement. Assistant principals were asked to share their experiences with how frequently they engaged in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices as a new assistant principal on a scale from not very often (1) to very often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent engaging in the instructional leadership practice less often, and above 2.5 would indicate more frequent engagement in the instructional leadership practice.

Average Support Received in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	Logan School District Results
	Total $n = 75$	Total $n = 15$
Supporting Curriculum Development	**2.56**	**2.42**
Support culturally responsive learning	2.52*	2.53*
Ensure rigorous curriculum	2.56*	2.40*
Ensure curriculum alignment	2.59*	2.33*
Improving Instructional Practices	**2.99**	**2.78**
Display instructional knowledge	2.80	2.80
Advance instructional practice	2.99	2.80
Provide instructional feedback	3.21^	2.93^
Lead instructional discussion	2.95	2.60
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**2.62**	**2.49**
Support assessment development	2.29*	2.20*
Ensure assessment alignment	2.47*	2.13*
Analyze school improvement data	3.09^	3.13^
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.10**	**3.07**
Build relationships	3.12^	3.13^
Foster collaboration	3.15^	3.13^
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.25^	3.20^
Celebrate instructional practice	2.88	2.80
Encouraging Professional Growth	**2.95**	**2.73**
Provide professional development	3.00	2.87
Promote collective growth	2.91	2.60

Note: * represents the leadership practices new assistant principals received the least support in developing, ^ represents the leadership practices new assistant principals received the most support in developing. Assistant principals were asked how much support they received as new assistant principals in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from never (1) to often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent receiving little to no support in developing their instructional leadership skills in this practice, and above 2.5 would indicate receiving some to frequent support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice.

Average Support Desired in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	Logan School District Results
	Total *n* = 75	Total *n* = 15
Supporting Curriculum Development	**3.23**	**3.31**
Support culturally responsive learning	3.37^	3.60^
Ensure rigorous curriculum	3.14	3.13*
Ensure curriculum alignment	3.22^	3.20
Improving Instructional Practices	**3.24**	**3.23**
Display instructional knowledge	3.12	3.13*
Advance instructional practice	3.27^	3.27^
Provide instructional feedback	3.29^	3.27^
Lead instructional discussion	3.27^	3.27^
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**3.12**	**3.27**
Support assessment development	3.12	3.33^
Ensure assessment alignment	3.09*	3.27^
Analyze school improvement data	3.16	3.20
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.10**	**3.18**
Build relationships	3.04*	3.07*
Foster collaboration	3.09*	3.27^
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.16	3.20
Celebrate instructional practice	3.09*	3.20
Encouraging Professional Growth	**3.13**	**3.10**
Provide professional development	3.13	3.07*
Promote collective growth	3.12	3.13*

Note: * represents the leadership practices new assistant principals desire the least support in developing, ^ represents the leadership practices new assistant principals desire the most support in developing. Assistant principals were asked if they desired more support as new administrators in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 signify new assistant principals would have little to no benefit from further developing the applicable leadership practice, and values above 2.5 indicate new assistant principals would benefit from further support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice.

Most Helpful Resources for Assistant Principals to Develop Instructional Leadership Capacity

	n	Socialization Resources	
		Most Helpful	**Second Most Helpful**
Supporting Curriculum Development			
Support culturally responsive learning	14	Principal Support	Formal Training
Ensure rigorous curriculum	13	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Ensure curriculum alignment	13	Formal Training	Principal Support
Improving Instructional Practices			
Display instructional knowledge	13	Principal Support	Formal Training
Advance instructional practice	13	Formal Training	Principal Support
Provide instructional feedback	13	Principal Support	Formal Training
Lead instructional discussion	14	Formal Training	Principal Support
Monitoring Progress and Assessment			
Support assessment development	14	Formal Training	Principal Support
Ensure assessment alignment	14	Formal Training	Principal Support
Analyze school improvement data	13	Formal Training	Principal Support
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment			
Build relationships	13	Principal Support	Socialization Agents
Foster collaboration	14	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Maintain safe instructional climate	14	Principal Support	Formal Training
Celebrate instructional practice	13	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Encouraging Professional Growth			
Provide professional development	14	Principal Support	Formal Training
Promote collective growth	14	Principal Support	Formal Training

Note: Formal Training - refers to the formal programs and professional development provided by the school district to new assistant principals after starting their position; *Socialization Agent(s)* - refer to administrators, coaches, or specialists, other than the principal or mentor, who work directly or indirectly with the new assistant principal by providing information, guidance, feedback, or resources; *Principal Feedback* - refers to the specific, evaluative feedback provided by the building principal on the new assistant principal's job performance and work-related behaviors; *Principal Support* - refers to the building principal's demonstration of availability and willingness to assist the new assistant principal.

Action Communication 4: McCoy County School District

Average Engagement in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	McCoy County Results			
	Total *n = 77*	**Total** *n = 41*	**Elem** *n = 18*	**Middle** *n = 12*	**High** *n = 11*
Supporting Curriculum Development	**2.44**	**2.59**	**2.41**	**2.64**	**2.82**
Support culturally responsive learning	2.30*	2.41*	2.39	2.50	2.36
Ensure rigorous curriculum	2.53*	2.73*	2.44	2.75	3.18
Ensure curriculum alignment	2.51*	2.61*	2.39	2.67	2.91
Improving Instructional Practices	**3.01**	**3.12**	**3.17**	**3.00**	**3.18**
Display instructional knowledge	2.96	3.07	3.06	3.00	3.18
Advance instructional practice	3.03	3.15	3.17	3.00	3.27
Provide instructional feedback	3.10	3.12	3.33	2.83	3.09
Lead instructional discussion	2.94	3.15	3.11	3.17	3.18
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**2.68**	**2.85**	**2.72**	**2.81**	**3.09**
Support assessment development	2.31*	2.56*	2.33	2.58	2.91
Ensure assessment alignment	2.51*	2.73*	2.56	2.75	3.00
Analyze school improvement data	3.23^	3.24^	3.28	3.08	3.36
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.52**	**3.61**	**3.69**	**3.50**	**3.59**
Build relationships	3.71^	3.76^	3.83	3.67	3.73
Foster collaboration	3.57^	3.67^	3.78	3.58	3.73
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.70^	3.78^	3.89	3.67	3.73
Celebrate instructional practice	3.09^	3.20^	3.28	3.08	3.18
Encouraging Professional Growth	**2.97**	**3.13**	**3.00**	**3.17**	**3.32**
Provide professional development	2.95	3.12	3.06	3.17	3.18
Promote collective growth	2.99	3.15	2.94	3.17	3.45

Note: * represents the five leadership practices with the lowest engagement, ^ represents the five leadership practices with the highest engagement. Assistant principals were asked to share their experiences with how frequently they engaged in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices as a new assistant principal on a scale from not very often (1) to very often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent engaging in the instructional leadership practice less often, and above 2.5 would indicate more frequent engagement in the instructional leadership practice.

Average Support Received in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	McCoy County Results			
	Total *n* = 75	Total *n* = 40	Elem *n = 17*	Middle *n* = 12	High *n* = 11
Supporting Curriculum Development	**2.56**	**2.58**	**2.24**	**2.81**	**2.85**
Support culturally responsive learning	2.52*	2.53*	2.29	2.67	2.73
Ensure rigorous curriculum	2.56*	2.60*	2.12	2.92	3.00
Ensure curriculum alignment	2.59*	2.60*	2.29	2.83	2.82
Improving Instructional Practices	**2.99**	**3.03**	**2.99**	**3.04**	**3.09**
Display instructional knowledge	2.80	2.80	2.53	3.08	2.91
Advance instructional practice	2.99	3.03	3.00	3.00	3.09
Provide instructional feedback	3.21^	3.25^	3.47	3.00	3.18
Lead instructional discussion	2.95	3.05^	2.94	3.08	3.18
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**2.62**	**2.66**	**2.53**	**2.75**	**2.76**
Support assessment development	2.29*	2.40*	2.18	2.50	2.64
Ensure assessment alignment	2.47*	2.53*	2.35	2.67	2.64
Analyze school improvement data	3.09^	3.05^	3.06	3.08	3.00
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.10**	**3.06**	**2.96**	**3.13**	**3.16**
Build relationships	3.12^	3.00	2.82	3.17	3.09
Foster collaboration	3.15^	3.05^	3.00	3.08	3.09
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.25^	3.27^	3.18	3.25	3.45
Celebrate instructional practice	2.88	2.92	2.82	3.00	3.00
Encouraging Professional Growth	**2.95**	**3.04**	**2.88**	**3.08**	**3.23**
Provide professional development	3.00	3.03	2.94	3.00	3.18
Promote collective growth	2.91	3.05^	2.82	3.17	3.27

Note: * represents the leadership practices new assistant principals received the least support in developing, ^ represents the leadership practices new assistant principals received the most support in developing. Assistant principals were asked how much support they received as new assistant principals in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from never (1) to often (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 would represent receiving little to no support in developing their instructional leadership skills in this practice, and above 2.5 would indicate receiving some to frequent support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice.

Average Support Desired in Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Domains

	Sample	McCoy County Results			
	Total *n* = 75	Total *n* = 40	Elem *n = 17*	Middle *n* = 12	High *n* = 11
Supporting Curriculum Development	**3.23**	**3.35**	**3.20**	**3.56**	**3.36**
Support culturally responsive learning	3.37^	3.45^	3.35	3.58	3.45
Ensure rigorous curriculum	3.14	3.25	3.12	3.50	3.18
Ensure curriculum alignment	3.22^	3.35^	3.12	3.58	3.45
Improving Instructional Practices	**3.24**	**3.31**	**3.16**	**3.48**	**3.34**
Display instructional knowledge	3.12	3.13	3.00	3.33	3.09
Advance instructional practice	3.27^	3.36^	3.25	3.58	3.27
Provide instructional feedback	3.29^	3.37^	3.18	3.58	3.45
Lead instructional discussion	3.27^	3.33^	3.12	3.42	3.55
Monitoring Progress and Assessment	**3.12**	**3.08**	**2.78**	**3.36**	**3.21**
Support assessment development	3.12	2.98*	2.65	3.25	3.18
Ensure assessment alignment	3.09*	3.05*	2.76	3.42	3.09
Analyze school improvement data	3.16	3.20	2.94	3.42	3.36
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment	**3.10**	**3.11**	**2.84**	**3.29**	**3.32**
Build relationships	3.04*	3.07*	2.88	3.25	3.18
Foster collaboration	3.09*	3.08*	2.82	3.17	3.36
Maintain safe instructional climate	3.16	3.20	2.88	3.42	3.45
Celebrate instructional practice	3.09*	3.07*	2.76	3.33	3.27
Encouraging Professional Growth	**3.13**	**3.14**	**2.91**	**3.29**	**3.32**
Provide professional development	3.13	3.15	2.94	3.25	3.36
Promote collective growth	3.12	3.13	2.88	3.33	3.27

Note: * represents the leadership practices new assistant principals desire the least support in developing, ^ represents the leadership practices new assistant principals desire the most support in developing. Assistant principals were asked if they desired more support as new administrators in developing their capacity in each of the 16 instructional leadership practices on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Given this scale, values under 2.5 signify new assistant principals would have little to no benefit from further developing the applicable leadership practice, and values above 2.5 indicate new assistant principals would benefit from further support in developing their instructional leadership capacity for the outlined practice.

Most Helpful Resources for New Assistant Principals to Develop Instructional Leadership Capacity

	n	Socialization Resources	
		Most Helpful	**Second Most Helpful**
Supporting Curriculum Development			
Support culturally responsive learning	36	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Ensure rigorous curriculum	37	Principal Support	Principal Feedback Formal Training
Ensure curriculum alignment	38	Formal Training	Principal Feedback
Improving Instructional Practices			
Display instructional knowledge	38	Principal Support	Principal Feedback Socialization Agents
Advance instructional practice	37	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Provide instructional feedback	35	Principal Feedback	Principal Support
Lead instructional discussion	34	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Monitoring Progress and Assessment			
Support assessment development	36	Formal Training	Principal Support
Ensure assessment alignment	37	Principal Support	Socialization Agents
Analyze school improvement data	36	Principal Support	Formal Training
Fostering a Positive Instructional Environment			
Build relationships	35	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Foster collaboration	34	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Maintain safe instructional climate	36	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Celebrate instructional practice	36	Principal Support	Principal Feedback
Encouraging Professional Growth			
Provide professional development	36	Principal Support	Formal Training
Promote collective growth	34	Principal Support	Socialization Agents

Note: Formal Training - refers to the formal programs and professional development provided by the school district to new assistant principals after starting their position; *Socialization Agent(s)* - refer to administrators, coaches, or specialists, other than the principal or mentor, who work directly or indirectly with the new assistant principal by providing information, guidance, feedback, or resources; *Principal Feedback* - refers to the specific, evaluative feedback provided by the building principal on the new assistant principal's job performance and work-related behaviors; *Principal Support* - refers to the building principal's demonstration of availability and willingness to assist the new assistant principal.

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Appendix A: Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Survey – Final

Section A: Section A: Demographic Information
In this section, you will provide personal demographic and professional experience information. This information will be used to develop a representative sample for our study.

Q1 How many years have you completed as an assistant principal?
(Please enter a whole number response. For example, if you are in your first year as an assistant principal, enter 0. If you are in your tenth year as an assistant principal, enter 9)

Q2 What grade level have you primarily served as an assistant principal?

○ Elementary School

○ Middle School

○ High School

Section B: Section B: Assistant Principal Instructional Leadership Practices
In this section you are asked three questions related to 16 instructional leadership practices.

If you are within your first three years as an assistant principal, answer the questions based on your current experiences.

If you are beyond your first three years as an assistant principal, answer the questions based on when you first started in the role.

To begin this section, please go to the next page.

Q3 As a new assistant principal, how often do you (did you) engage in the following instructional leadership practices?

	Not Very Often	Not Often	Often	Very Often
Supporting teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	○	○	○	○
Ensuring the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	○	○	○	○
Aligning curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	○	○	○	○
Displaying thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	○	○	○	○
Actively supporting the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practices	○	○	○	○
Providing regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	○	○	○	○
Leading meaningful discussions about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	○	○	○	○
Supporting the development of high-quality assessments	○	○	○	○
Ensuring teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	○	○	○	○
Analyzing data to monitor student progress and school improvement	○	○	○	○
Building trusting relationships with staff and families	○	○	○	○
Fostering a collaborative culture	○	○	○	○
Maintaining a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	○	○	○	○
Recognizing and celebrating high-quality instructional practice	○	○	○	○
Providing opportunities for staff to grow professionally	○	○	○	○
Learning alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	○	○	○	○

Q4 As a new assistant principal, I receive (received) support in developing my ability to perform the following instructional leadership practices.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Supporting teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	○	○	○	○
Ensuring the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	○	○	○	○
Aligning curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	○	○	○	○
Displaying thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	○	○	○	○
Actively supporting the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practices	○	○	○	○
Providing regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	○	○	○	○
Leading meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	○	○	○	○
Supporting the development of high-quality assessments	○	○	○	○
Ensuring teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	○	○	○	○
Analyzing data to monitor student progress and school improvement	○	○	○	○
Building trusting relationships with staff and families	○	○	○	○
Fostering a collaborative culture	○	○	○	○
Maintaining a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	○	○	○	○
Recognizing and celebrating high-quality instructional practice	○	○	○	○
Providing opportunities for staff to grow professionally	○	○	○	○
Learning alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	○	○	○	○

Q5 As a new assistant principal, I would benefit (would have benefitted) from further assistance in developing my ability to perform the following instructional leadership practices.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Supporting teachers in developing engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences	○	○	○	○
Ensuring the creation of a rigorous curricular program for all students	○	○	○	○
Aligning curriculum across grade levels and subject areas	○	○	○	○
Displaying thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge	○	○	○	○
Actively supporting the development and advancement of teachers' instructional practices	○	○	○	○
Providing regular, actionable feedback to teachers on instructional practices	○	○	○	○
Leading meaningful discussion about instructional practice with teachers and collaborative teams	○	○	○	○
Supporting the development of high-quality assessments	○	○	○	○
Ensuring teachers' assessments are aligned to student learning and desired outcomes	○	○	○	○
Analyzing data to monitor student progress and school improvement	○	○	○	○
Building trusting relationships with staff and families	○	○	○	○
Fostering a collaborative culture	○	○	○	○
Maintaining a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment	○	○	○	○
Recognizing and celebrating high-quality instructional practice	○	○	○	○
Providing opportunities for staff to grow professionally	○	○	○	○
Learning alongside staff to promote collective professional growth	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Section B: Explanation

Start of Block: Section C: Socialization Resources

Section C Section C: Socialization Resources Provided
In this section you are given a description of six different resources for supporting assistant

principals as they transition to the role of assistant principal.

After reading each description, you will be asked if you were provided this resource when you began as an assistant principal

Q6 Resource #1: *Formal Assistance*

Formal Assistance refers to a school district assigned mentor for the new assistant principal, either inside or outside the school building of employment, who supports with skill development and problem-solving related to the assistant principalship.

Q7 As a new assistant principal, were you provided **Formal Assistance** as a resource?

○ Yes

○ No

Q8 Resource #2: *Formal Orientation*

Formal Orientation refers to a formal onboarding program, or series of events, delivered by the school district to orient new assistant principals to the role. Formal orientations could include one-time information sessions, or an on-going induction program over time, focused on supporting the transition to the assistant principalship.
Q9 As a new assistant principal, were you provided **Formal Orientation** as a resource?

○ Yes

○ No

Q10 Resource #3: *Formal Training*

Formal Training refers to the formal programs and professional development provided by the school district to new assistant principals after starting their position. Formal trainings are typically more conventional, highly planned programs aimed at developing specific skills and knowledge to effectively perform tasks.

Q11 As a new assistant principal, were you provided **Formal Training** as a resource?

○ Yes

○ No

Q12 Resource #4: *Socialization Agent(s)*

Socialization Agent(s) refer to administrators, coaches, or specialists, other than the principal or mentor, who work directly or indirectly with the new assistant principal by providing

information, guidance, feedback, or resources.

Q13 As a new assistant principal, did you engage with **Socialization Agents** as a resource?

○ Yes

○ No

Q14 Resource #5: **Supervisor Feedback**

Supervisor Feedback refers to the specific, evaluative feedback provided by the building principal on the new assistant principal's job performance and work-related behaviors.

Q15 As a new assistant principal, did you receive **Supervisor Feedback** as a resource?

○ Yes

○ No

Q16 Resource #6: **Supervisor Support**

Supervisor Support refers to the building principal's demonstration of availability and willingness to assist the new assistant principal. Supervisor support can be defined as the extent to which one's immediate supervisor exhibits behaviors that demonstrate they care about, value, and take action to assist the new assistant principal.

Q17 As a new assistant principal, did you receive **Supervisor Support** as a resource?

○ Yes

○ No

End of Block: Section C: Socialization Resources

Start of Block: Section D: Socialization Resource Ranking

Section D Section D: Socialization Resource Ranking
In this section, you will rank the six resources described from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6) based on how helpful you believe the resource would be in building your capacity on specific instructional leadership practices.

These rankings should be made regardless of whether or not you received the resource as a new assistant principal, but rather rank as though every resource was available and provided with high-quality. Think about ranking what you would want to receive most as a resource to improve your ability to perform the instructional leadership practice outlined.

Q18 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to support teachers in the development of engaging and culturally responsive learning experiences**?
(*Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6)*)
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q19 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to ensure the creation of rigorous curricula program for all students**?
(*Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6)*)
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q20 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to align curricula across grades/subjects**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q21 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to display thorough instructional and pedagogical knowledge**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q22 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to support the development and advancement of instructional practice**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q23 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to provide regular, actionable feedback on instructional practice**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q24 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to lead meaningful discussions about instructional practice with teachers**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q25 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to support the development of high-quality assessments**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q26 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to ensure assessments align to student learning and desired outcomes**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q27 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to analyze data to monitor student progress and school improvement**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q28 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to build trusting relationships with staff and families**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q29 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to build a collaborative culture**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q30 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to maintain a safe school climate that protects the instructional environment**? (Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))

_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q31 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to recognize and celebrate high-quality instruction**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q32 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to provide professional growth opportunities to staff**?
(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))
_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor
_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district
_____ Formal Training - professional development program
_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal
_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance
_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist

Q33 How helpful would each resource listed below be (have been) in developing your ability **to learn alongside staff**?

(Please rank the resources from least helpful (1) to most helpful (6))

_____ Formal Assistance - school district assigned mentor

_____ Formal Orientation - onboarding program delivered by school district

_____ Formal Training - professional development program

_____ Socialization Agent(s) - administrator colleagues other than mentor or principal

_____ Supervisor Feedback - principal feedback on work-related performance

_____ Supervisor Support - principal availability and willingness to assist