

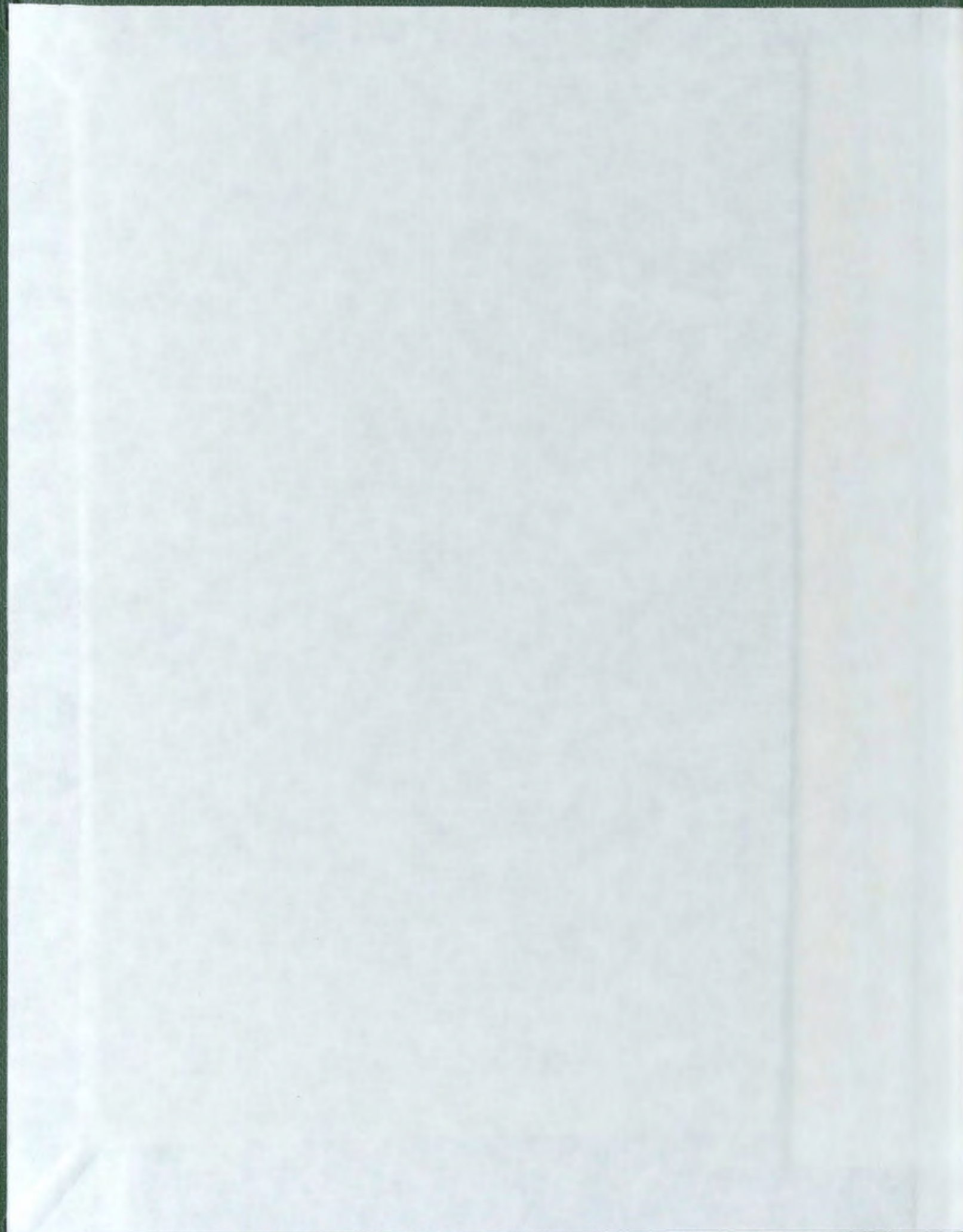
THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
AN INTERNSHIP REPORT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
AN INTERNSHIP REPORT**

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report was to examine the roles and duties of an assistant principal in a specific school setting.

Chapter One outlines the internship setting, goals of the internship, on-site supervision, and the internship study. Chapter Two contains a review of the literature pertinent to the roles and duties of the assistant principal. Chapter Three reports the internship experience.

As part of the internship experience the assistant principal was assisted when it was feasible to do so. As well, using Mintzberg's method of structured observation, the daily activities of the assistant principal were documented over a period of 35 teaching days between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

This report not only detailed the roles and duties of an assistant principal in a specific situation, but also discussed the roles and duties of an assistant principal from the perspectives of researchers, principals, assistant principals, and teachers. These differing perspectives were then compared to the situation observed and similarities and differences were identified. The major finding was that the assistant principal at the internship school was not an instructional leader and that his time was largely taken up with management

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the staff of the co-operating school for allowing me to intrude and be part of their daily activities. Their friendliness and co-operation made my stay at the school an especially pleasant one.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the principal of the school who allowed me to invade his office and who showed me every courtesy. A very special thanks to the assistant principal who permitted me to watch a master administrator at work and who was very tolerant of my being his constant shadow for 35 days.

Special thanks also go to my internship supervisors Drs. Jean Brown and Bruce Sheppard for their invaluable assistance and encouragement throughout this whole process.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNSHIP

The Internship Setting

Memorial Collegiate (a fictitious name) is an inner city senior high school. The school has an enrollment of 700 students in Levels 1 - 3. There are 40 instructors who deliver the curriculum as outlined by the provincial Department of Education. The school has a very active extra-curricular program in place as well as an active school council.

The school has a full time principal who is relatively new as this is his second year in the position. The assistant principal has halftime teaching duties, as well as his assigned administrative responsibilities. The assistant principal has been assistant principal at two other schools within the city. Two years were spent at another inner city high school and three were spent as assistant principal of a junior high.

Goals of the Internship

The primary goal of the internship was to allow me to become part of the administrative team as a participant/observer. The main focus was to observe the team from the perspective of the assistant principal. Specifically the goals were to:

1. develop an understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal within this specific setting;
2. become, as much as possible, an active participant in these duties;

3. observe the daily interaction of the administrative team in relation to themselves, teachers, students, parents, board personnel, support staff, and any other individuals with whom the team came into contact.

On-Site Supervision

Dr. Jean Brown and Dr. Bruce Sheppard were my co-supervisors and we conferenced regularly as to progress of the internship.

Internship Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal within this particular environment. Findings related to the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal at the study school were compared with those that were identified in an extensive review of the literature dealing with the assistant principal. When differences occurred between this particular situation and the images identified in the literature, an attempt was made to identify why this was so.

Data were collected using Mintzberg's method of structured observation (Mintzberg, 1973). The activities of the assistant principal were monitored each day for a period of eight weeks commencing at 8 a.m. and concluding at 4 p.m. Each activity was recorded in a log and observations were limited to activities that were outside any regularly assigned teaching duties. These were not assumed to be part of the administrative mandate.

This study also included a literature review that investigated the role of the assistant principal. The focus of this review was to look at the various duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal as seen through the eyes of other professionals such as researchers, principals,

assistant principals, and teachers. This review was used to provide the background necessary for this study. A reference list is also provided to enable interested readers to investigate further the information contained in this study.

Limitations

In the structured observations of the assistant principal, there were times when it was impossible to observe directly, or to be privy to what transpired as the matters were considered to be of a highly confidential and sensitive nature. In these instances, only the category and the length of time were recorded. The study attempted to recognize the fact that work is also performed after hours, and for this information, the assistant principal was relied upon to report the kind and duration of duties performed at these times as direct observation was not feasible. It was also realized that this study only documents a small segment of the school year of an assistant principal (from Sept. 8 to Oct. 31), and it is recognized that the duties vary as to type and duration at different times during the year. However, the length of time the assistant principal was observed during this internship does give a significant indication of responsibilities as it covers almost 20% of the school year. This period provided sufficient time to identify trends and consistencies in the duties and responsibilities assigned to the assistant principal. The intent was to provide one clearly documented image of an assistant principal's practice. Although there may be similarities with the literature reviewed and with other schools, there is no attempt to generalize.

Ethical Considerations

The name of the school used in this report has been changed. It was also understood that there would be times when the nature of the business being conducted would be so sensitive in nature that it would not be possible to have direct observation of what was transpiring. The assistant principal reserved the right to request that I not be in attendance during these times.

Organization of the Report

The report contains three main chapters. Chapter One is an overview of the internship experience. Chapter Two contains an extensive literature review of the role and duties of the assistant principal. Chapter Three is the internship study which is the required research component of the internship containing data and analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

While there is much attention in literature given to the role of the principal, the role of the assistant principal (also referred to as vice-principal) by comparison is for the most part ignored (Marshall & Greenfield, 1985). Calabrese (1991) sees assistant principals as, "a neglected variable in the effective schools equation" (p.51). Gorton, Schneider and Fisher (1988), in The Encyclopedia of School Administration and Supervision, under the heading "administrative roles" fails to recognize the assistant principal at all, and Boyan (1988) in one of the most respected handbooks in educational administration, The Handbook of Research on Educational Administration, has no listing for the assistant principalship in either its index or Table of Contents. Boyan provides one paragraph which mentions the role as simply a stepping stone to higher office.

Even though the literature does not pay a great deal of attention to the role of the assistant principal, it is this same assistant principal who is in daily contact with teachers and in many instances, it is the assistant principal who teachers go to for assistance (Marshall & Greenfield, 1985). Greenfield (1985) states that, "the assistant principal generally is acknowledged to be an important actor on the school scene despite the rather limited attention given to that role by educational researchers" (p.7). Pellicer, Anderson, Keefe, Kelly, and McCleary (1988) see the assistant principal as a "vital part of the school administration team" (p.51). They make the point that as schools and schooling become more complex, assistant principals will assume increasing responsibility in the overall administration of the school.

In this chapter there will be an attempt to identify concerns that have emerged through an investigation of the literature dealing with the assistant principal. Themes to be dealt with are: roles and duties, instructional leadership, role conflict, career objectives, training and selection. Each of these will be explored in turn and the ideas expounded in the literature will be reported.

Roles and Duties of the Assistant Principal

Member of Administrative Team

Traditionally the role of the assistant principal was just that - an assistant to the principal. In that scenario, principals wield total control and anything assigned to the assistant is at their discretion. However, what are the roles and duties of the assistant principal today and who is responsible for assigning them? Dinnedahl (1996) reports that the assistant principal's duties are those assigned by the principal and Pellicer et al.(1988) in their study of high school leaders, state that 37% of the assistant principals reported that the principal, with the assistant principal in conference, was the person most responsible for the assignment of their duties. The latter study also found that 29% of the time the principal alone assigned the duties and 9% of the time the school board was reported as being involved. Pellicer et al. went on to state that, in over half the responses, it was reported that there was some consultation when it came to assignment of duties.

In a look at recent literature, this unilateral assignment of duties to the assistant principal, while obviously still evident in certain schools, seems to be changing. The trend today is more towards the principal and assistant principal working together as a team (Brown, 1994; Cantwell, 1993; Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd, 1991). Pellicer and Stevenson (1991), in their study, state that

the role of the assistant principalship can best be described as a 'sharing role' and there must be partnership developed between the assistant principal and principal. They go on to say that while principals tend to be personally involved to some extent in all aspects of their school, there is heavy reliance on their assistant principals and they are given considerable latitude in the discharging of these duties. Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) found that sharing is important to the new assistant principals as they felt that the camaraderie they shared with other administrators to be one of the greatest rewards of the position.

Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) raise an interesting point regarding the sharing of the leadership role between the assistant principal and principal. They contend that sharing of the leadership sends a message to the staff that the assistant principal is considered to be an important part of the leadership team. Allowing the assistant principal to be a part of curriculum development, teacher evaluation, public relations, things that were once considered to be the exclusive domain of the principal, was also found by them to be important.

Rowbotham (1995) sees the development of a new model of decision making in schools. In this model there would be a flattening out of leadership. The same responsibilities would exist, but as to who carries them out, that would be less delineated. In this new model, principals are seen as people who empower rather than delegate and would be able to relinquish some of their traditional powers. She goes on to say that in order for this to occur there must be established, "an environment of trust --- a safe, nonthreatening climate where vice-principals are able to grow and develop self-confidence" (p.28).

While this new world of shared responsibility seems to reflect research findings, there is however, one factor that remains the same. That is the fact that no matter how much principals empower and share their responsibility, in the final analysis, it is the principal who is held

accountable for what happens in the school. Assistant principals must remain cognizant of this fact when they look for shared responsibility roles within their schools.

Brown (1994) reported that principals and assistant principals considered themselves as team players. However, the degree of responsibility was seen as at the discretion of the principal. The assistant principals in the schools she investigated were aware of, and had no difficulty with, the realization that the principal was legally accountable for what occurred in the schools. They considered themselves not as another administrator in the school but rather as an extension of the principal.

One of the duties identified was that, as a member of the administration team, the assistant principal is expected to be supportive of the decisions of the principal (Hess, 1985). Hess sees the assistant principal as being "obligated to cooperate with, support, and be loyal to the principal" (p.96). He, however, goes on to say that, due to the fact that in many cases the principal is responsible for assignment of duties, there may be the temptation on the part of principals to assign the more interesting and attractive jobs to themselves, leaving the assistant principal the more mundane tasks associated with the administration. Marshall (1992) states that, "to the person on the street, the assistant principal is thought of as the person who handles disruptive kids and does every unwanted administrative job" (p.87).

The most common theme to emerge in the literature is that the role of the assistant principal is somewhat ambiguous in nature (Greenfield, 1985). Greenfield makes the point that assistant principals are called upon to address a variety of tasks without any general direction or design. Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) observe that there is, "little consistency in what constitutes an assistant principalship" (p.22). They go on to state that the duties also vary depending on the particular environment as roles may change from district to district and from

school to school. Marshall (1992) also identifies the ambiguity of the role. She states that it is something that does not have, "a consistent well defined job description, delineation of duties, or way of measuring outcomes from accomplishments of tasks" (p.6). She continues by saying that the assistant principals', "roles and duties include many 'grey areas'--- ill-defined, inconsistent, and at times incoherent responsibilities, roles, and resources" (p.6).

Manager

Another consistent theme running through the literature on assistant principals is that they are, for the most part, managers who are primarily focused on maintaining organizational stability (Greenfield, 1985; Hartzell, 1983; Innaccone, 1985; Marshall, 1985; Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe, & Melton, 1993). Valentine et al. (1993) state that, "assistants were responsible for the more traditional managerial tasks" (p.47), and Hartzell (1993) remarks that, "the assistant principals are often required to commit great amounts of time and energy to management duties" (p.17). In keeping with this managerial motif, they are even referred to as "street level bureaucrats" (Marshall, 1985, p.46).

The primary duty of the assistant principal within this umbrella of management is consistently identified as having to do with maintaining discipline within the school. Calabrese (1991) states that, "student discipline has traditionally been the assistant principal's major role" (p.52). Bonnell (1990) considered discipline to be the first priority in the assistant principal's basic function, as did Lane (1984) who found that 192 principals considered maintenance of discipline as the most common task that was the responsibility of the assistant principal. Gorton and Kettman (1985), in their study of 420 assistant principals, discovered that maintaining discipline took up most of their time, as did Pellicer et al. (1988) who, in their national survey of

principals and assistant principals, found that 82% of assistant principals ranked discipline as of major or most importance. Twa (1991) sees the assistant principal as what he refers to as 'the wall', where student's inappropriate behavior must be halted and positively modified. Others such as Brown (1994), Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991), and Valentine et al. (1993) also identified discipline as a major function of the assistant principal's duties.

Many might see the role of the assistant principal as disciplinarian as far from being a positive experience since they are often looked upon as being a police or law enforcement officer (Reed and Himmler, 1985; Twa, 1991). However, there is perhaps a positive side. Marshall (1992), Hartzell et al. (1995), and Reed and Himmler (1985) all make the point that in order for assistant principals to be effective disciplinarians, it is necessary that they be highly visible to the students. This high visibility allows the assistant principals, when not enforcing, to establish a rapport with the students. Assistant principals have the opportunity to combat their enforcer image by engaging in friendly conversation with the students dealing with such things as their impressions of the school, their hobbies, and their aspirations.

Although discipline does play an important role in any discussion of the assistant principal's duties, there is also a myriad of other duties that are considered to be part of their role. Dinnendahl (1996) identifies 90 duties that are related to the role of the assistant principal in a school. These range from school discipline, to interviewing support staff, collection of fees, ejecting unwelcome visitors, dealing with grievances, distributing and collecting keys and the list goes on. Pellicer et al. (1988), in a national survey, found that more than 50% of assistant principals considered such duties as school policies, student attendance, time-tabling, teacher selection, and special arrangements at the start of the year to be of major importance. Brown

(1994); Hartzell (1993); Hartzell et al. (1995); Marshall (1992); and Valentine et al. (1993), all identified similar duties.

Pellicer et al. (1988) in their study identified 33 administrative duties and these were ranked by assistant principals as to degree of responsibility. The top five duties identified were: student discipline, 88%; school policies, 83%; evaluation of teachers, 82%; special arrangements, 82%; and school attendance, 82%. In the same study these assistant principals were asked to rank their duties as to what they considered to be their degrees of importance. The top five duties were: student discipline, 82%; evaluation of teachers, 80%; school policies, 71%; student attendance, 71%; and the school master schedule, 67%.

Reed and Himmeler (1985) see one of the duties of the assistant principal as being supportive of the school spirit and culture. The assistant principal is seen as attending and participating in traditional school events such as "crazy hat days", and "dress down days". The assistant principal attends sports events, dances, and plays a traditional role in traditional ceremonies, such as athletic banquets, awards nights and graduation exercises. Reed and Himmeler go on to say that, "it is an assistant principal, from the students perspective, who must be 'seen' to get things done" (p.73).

Instructional Leadership

Sheppard (1996) reports that there are two general concepts of what constitutes instructional leadership and he refers to them as the narrow and the broad views. According to Sheppard, the narrow view of instructional leadership is defined as, "those actions that are directly related to teaching and learning" (p. 326). The broad view is seen as entailing, "all leadership activities that affect student learning. Routine managerial behaviors are considered to

contribute as much to improved teaching and learning as to direct instructional behaviors” (p.326). Calabrese (1991) also promotes this broad view of instructional leadership as he states that, “effective assistant principals recognize that instructional leadership is involved in discipline, staff development, supervision, student activity programs, community relations or curriculum development” (p.54). DeBevoise (1984) using the broad view of instructional leadership sees it as, “these actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others to promote growth in student learning” (p.15). In spite of these differing perspectives of instructional leadership, it is apparent that literature relating to the instructional leadership role of the assistant principal is primarily employing the narrow definition.

While most of the literature recognizes the role of the assistant principal as manager of a school whose primary roles are discipline and organizational stability, there is a growing awareness that the assistant principal should also be seen as an instructional leader who becomes much more involved in curriculum development and instructional improvement. Greenfield (1985) states that if there is a growing expectation for schools to establish standards and to monitor outcomes, there will be a necessity for a shift to the idea of the assistant principal as an instructional leader working in tandem with the principal. Cantwell (1993) also reinforces the idea that the assistant principal needs to be more intensively involved in the area of instructional improvement. In his study of 72 assistant principals and principals, he found that both groups identified the need for greater involvement in curriculum and instruction and placed less emphasis on the traditional duties they were currently assigned. It is perhaps significant to note that in the same study the assistant principals considered this to be of more importance than the principals.

Hess (1985) sees the establishment of the assistant principal in the role of educational leader as a priority which should be identified at the district level. Valentine et al. (1993) gave further credence to the idea of assistant principals as instructional leaders when they found in their study that principals, assistant principals, and other leadership team members recognized the importance of the instructional leadership role for the assistant principal. Hartzell et al. (1995) make the point that many assistant principals begin their career thinking they will make a difference in curriculum development and instruction.

Although studies reveal a recognition that the assistant principal is to play a greater role in instructional leadership, a further look into the literature shows that in most instances this is not occurring. Valentine et al. (1993) found that assistant principals did not seem to be active in the instructional operation of the school and Innaccone (1985) recognized the absence of instructional responsibilities in the role of the assistant principal.

The reason for the disparity between what should be and what is with regard to the role of the assistant principal is that the assistant principal's role is still the role of the "school manager." Even though it is recognized by many stakeholders that the assistant principal can play an important role in instructional leadership, most studies suggest that they don't. In analysis of the daily activities of the assistant principal, it is evident that, even though the assistant principals recognize the importance of instructional leadership, their role is consumed by the need to 'manage' the school (Greenfield, 1985; Gross, 1987; Marshall, 1992; Reed and Himmeler, 1985). In many instances these 'managerial duties' prevent assistant principals from developing into instructional leaders.

Hartzell et al. (1995) state that, "the nature of the assistant principalship and the skills required to be successful as assistant principal are oriented much more toward management than

toward leadership, a condition that does not promote the development of visionary leadership” (p.158). Marshall (1992) goes on to say that, “under current traditions and structures, the assistant can be an instructional leader in only rare instances” (p.14). The growing need to establish organizational stability within schools, especially large urban schools, creates situations where the dispensing of discipline becomes a priority far outweighing the idea of assistant principal as an instructional leader (Hartzell et al., 1995; Marshall, 1992; Reed and Himmler, 1985).

Sheppard (1996) argues that the narrow view of instructional leadership is not functional or appropriate for principals or assistant principals. He contends that the literature is in considerable agreement as to what constitutes specific instructional leadership behaviors. From a review of literature and using the broad view of instructional leadership, Sheppard identifies ten instructional leadership behaviors for effective schools. These are: framing goals, communicating goals, supervising instruction, coordinating curriculum, protecting instructional time, high visibility, incentives for teachers, professional development, academic standards, and incentives for learning. Sheppard (1996) goes on to say, “leadership behaviors that have been accepted as appropriate by teachers in effective schools - instructional leadership behaviors - are more likely to gain support and be transformational” (p.329).

Leithwood (1994) also sees the broad definition of instructional leadership as containing the basis of transformational leadership. The term “transforming leadership” is purported to have originated with James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Burns (1978) gives the definition of such leadership as:

The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But, beyond that, the transforming leader looks for

potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into followers (p.4).

Leithwood, Jantzi, and Dart (1991) accepted Burns's definition in their work on transformational leadership, which they see as the type of leadership required to bring about change. They identify six behaviors consistent with transformational leadership. They are: identifying and articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, providing individualized support, and intellectual stimulation.

If one accepts that the assistant principal's role should reflect a higher emphasis on instructional leadership, as is defined by the narrow view, and as this is not presently happening, then perhaps what is needed is a redefinition of the role of the assistant principal. Spady (1985) states that as the role is now defined, there is little chance that it will produce leaders with instructional capabilities. Greenfield (1985) discusses the idea of a rethinking of the role of the assistant principal. He sees the role of the assistant principal to be, "extended to include a focus upon instructional matters and that in doing so could result in a more effective use of administrative resources available to schools without sacrificing the student supervision and scheduling functions that need to be addressed" (p.85). However Greenfield does not address the issue of time that would be required. Research findings indicate that the assistant principal's day is now filled with managerial and teaching duties.

Marshall (1985) also recognizes the need for the role to change but makes the

point that in order for this to occur, there must be a systematic change. According to her the system must go from one of, “control and policing, suppressing conflict and muddling through with scarce resources, making people satisfied, calming their fears and hiding the secrets,” to a system where there is a shift toward, “valuing instructional leadership” (p.134).

Role Conflict

A reality for assistant principals seems to be that of conflicting roles. Glanz (1994) recognizes one of the basic role conflicts in the assistant principalship as the unresolved dilemma between the necessity to conduct personnel evaluation and the desire to genuinely assist teachers in the instructional process (p.578). Tanner and Tanner (1987) and Hartzell et al. (1995) also stress that assistant principals, in order to assist teachers, must promote a collegial relationship that will facilitate smooth working relationships. These relationships can be damaged if the same assistant principals are responsible for teacher evaluation. Tanner and Tanner (1987) state that, “no doubt, many teachers are afraid to ask for help from supervisors because they believe that by exposing a problem with their teaching they are inviting a low evaluation of their work” (p.105).

Another role of the assistant principal identified by Hess (1985) is one of loyalty to the administration team, be it in the school or district. This need for loyalty can, in certain instances, cause role conflict as assistant principals may not agree with what is being said or done, but in order to maintain a show of solidarity, they must remain silent. Marshall and Greenfield (1987) state that, “assistant principals must live constantly with the stress between their sense of what is right and good for education, their need to display loyalty to the administrative group, and their observing other educators doing things that are, in their minds, wrong or stupid. Expressions of loyalty are essential for mobility and also for working as a team” (p.44).

Hess (1985) also makes the point that, "as a junior actor, the assistant principal is obligated to cooperate with, support, and be loyal to the principal" (p.96). Assistant principals must not display shock when what is being done goes against their sense of professionalism but must maintain a united front even when it is against teachers, parents, or district office (Marshall and Greenfield, 1987). Marshall (1985) states that, "keeping up a good front is often more important in school than attending to instructional programs, or that school district politics rather than pedagogy are often the deciding factor in setting priorities" (p.131). Considering the fact that these articles were written more than a decade ago, prior to the emphasis on administration teams and transformational leadership as espoused by such authors and researchers as Leithwood and Sergiovanni, perhaps these issues are no longer relevant. If one accepts the principles underlying transformational leadership, that moral questions of goodness, duty, and righteousness are important (Sergiovanni, 1990), then "professionals" cannot compromise what they consider to be right, if they wish to be transformational leaders.

Hartzell et al. (1995) report role conflict is also evident in the administering of discipline. There are times when an assistant principal must try to administer discipline to a student and support a teacher even when the assistant principal is aware that the teacher's position is indefensible. If the assistant principal supports the teacher, he/she will send a clear message to the student, who will then see him or her as someone not to be trusted and who is not fair or impartial. On the other hand, to support the student to the detriment of the teacher can possibly destroy any chance of a working relationship with that teacher, and if that teacher has influence with the rest of the staff, it may negatively impact the assistant principal's relationship with them as well.

Another conflict, especially for new assistant principals, is what can probably be termed as "separation anxiety". They find that they are looked upon differently by other teachers who, in some cases, they have been working with over a considerable period of time. Hartzell et al. (1995) found that assistant principals reported that, as a result of their position, relationships with teachers were, "almost always fundamentally and permanently altered" (p.76). Marshall (1985) also referred to this situation by making the point that, "one essential task for new assistant principals is the process of separation from teachers as a reference group and affiliation with administrators instead" (p.44). This separation is more evident in provinces where administrators can no longer belong to the teachers' association (as, for example, in British Columbia), than in provinces where administrators continue to belong to teachers' unions (as is the case in Newfoundland and Labrador).

Teachers aspiring to become administrators should be aware of these inherent conflicts in the role and be prepared to come to grips with them. For those in an administrative position, the need to make decisions guarantees that they will not please everyone, and anyone attempting such will create much internal anguish. Hartzell et al. (1995) state, "regardless of the good intentions and responsiveness, assistant principals make decisions that anger others and sometimes engender continuing enmity" (p.12).

Career Objectives

For most applicants, while they are applying for the assistant principal's position, it is really the principal's or superintendent's positions to which they aspire. The assistant principal's position is seen by most as an entry level position (Gorton and Kettman, 1985; Hartzell et al., 1995; Lane, 1984; Marshall, 1992). In a study of 400 assistant principals, Gorton and Kettman

(1985) reported that almost half of the assistant principals surveyed aspired to the principalship; 29% wished to advance to central office; and only 25% wished to remain as assistant principals. Valentine et al. (1993) in a national survey of middle school leaders found that 80% of the principals surveyed had been assistant principals and Wyles (1983), in a survey of 661 elementary assistant principals in Ontario, found that 57.6% of them reported that the primary reason for becoming an assistant principal was to prepare for the principalship. He also went on to note that 79.1% of the assistant principals surveyed did not consider the position to be a terminal career position. Greenfield (1985) further reinforces this in his statement that, "the role of the assistant principal as it is primarily conceived is not particularly attractive as a terminal career position" (p.92).

Marshall and Greenfield (1985) note that upward mobility is seen by many assistant principals as a way of getting out of the tedium of control and maintenance inherent in the assistant principal's position. The principalship is seen as being much more attractive as it seems to contain more discretionary power, status, and reward. Marshall (1992) cautions that this fixation on upward mobility may cause assistant principals to focus just on things that will promote their chance of promotion.

While historically the assistant principal's position may have been considered to be a stepping stone to higher administrative duties, the demographics of today's schools may cause a rethinking of this perspective and create a greater focus on the idea of the assistant principalship as a terminal career objective. Pellicer et al. (1988) found that the average length of time for principals remaining in their careers has increased between 1965-1988 and more high school principals than ever are considering remaining there. Therefore persons at the assistant

principalship levels can expect to wait much longer to be promoted and perhaps should begin to consider the assistant principalship as a viable terminal career objective.

This phenomenon is perhaps further exacerbated by the current trend to downsizing and school amalgamation due to limited finances and declining enrollments. If, as Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) found in their study, high school leaders think that the assistant principalship is extremely important to the administrative team, then something must be done to attract qualified people to these positions and as potential terminal career positions. Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) argue that, "with insufficient pay and little hope for advancement, fewer and fewer qualified persons will seek to fill assistant principalships in the future unless the position can be regarded as a legitimate terminal career objective" (p.60). Gray-Grant (1996) also reported that in British Columbia during the past two or three years, there has been difficulty in obtaining qualified persons who wish to apply for assistant principalships.

If this is becoming the case, and there is a belief that the assistant principal is an integral part of any administration team, then something will have to be done in order to make the position more attractive (Pellicer and Stevenson, 1992). Marshall (1992) continues with this same idea when she states that it is necessary, "to find ways to attract and sustain competent and caring educators to fill the positions. The promise of upward mobility cannot be the only motivator" (p.56).

Training of Assistant Principals

If one wishes to aspire to the position of assistant principal, is it not reasonable to assume that one should seek training in that specific area? Would it also be reasonable to assume that this training would be a part of an educational administrative training program at a university or

college? This does not seem to be the case. Gorton and Kettman (1985) surveyed all university educational programs belonging to the UCEA, asking whether they offered courses specifically for the assistant principal. They found that there were none.

Hartzell et al. (1995), in a review of textbooks on certification programs, found that the focus was on the principalship, and there was hardly any mention of the uniqueness of the assistant principalship. Also a review of the graduate catalogues of over 80 universities revealed that there were no courses identified as being specific to the assistant principalship. Hartzell et al. make the point that in many instances, it seems that students are given the false impression that demands and duties of the assistant principalship are similar to the principalship. They also go on to say that in most professions the people who are selected for a job are usually trained and ready to face the challenges presented. However, the assistant principal arrives in many instances with little knowledge, inappropriate training and many misconceptions. According to this review, "earning an administrative credential at a university usually does not improve a teacher's understanding of the assistant principalship" (p.151).

Marshall (as cited in Marshall, 1992) also makes reference to the fact that little attention is given to the idea of training assistant principals. In her survey of 42 assistant principals, she found only 29% of the respondents were aware of any policy or program for improving the assistant principalship. Marshall (1992) states that, "the assistant principal frequently takes on a myriad of tasks without ever having any formal training and without anyone to help" (p.88).

Since it seems that the post secondary institutions do not recognize, to any great extent, the obligation to provide training specific to the role of the assistant principal, does this mean that there is no need for training? Wyles (1983) in his survey of 661 Ontario assistant principals commissioned by the Ontario Public School Teacher's Federation stated in his first

recommendation, " that inservice programs be established to develop the skills required to carry out the vice-principal's role" (p.30). Marshall (1992) goes on to say that, " the need for good training and selection is a pressing policy need" (p.11).

Perhaps the reason for such a lack of recognition of the need for formal training for the assistant principalship is that it has, for the most part, been considered as a training ground for the principalship and even higher administrative positions. However when one looks at the literature this does not seem to be the case. Bonnell (1990) states that, "while the assumption of many is that the vice-principalship is an on-the-job training program for the principalship, this is not often the case" (p.4). He goes on to give two reasons why this is not so, the first being the menial responsibilities traditionally assigned to the assistant principal and the second being the fact that the assistant principal gets very little formal 'leadership training'.

Lane (1984), in considering the role that is now assigned to the assistant principal, concludes that it would not provide a good training ground for the principalship, even though the assistant principal position often leads directly into it. Innaccone (1984) and Marshall (1992) also see this as a concern and Marshall questions that, " if the assistant principalship is a training ground for principals and superintendents, what kind of upper level administrators do we produce when the major function of the assistant principalship is to establish and maintain organizational stability" (p.133)?

If there is a need for training for the role of assistant principal and there is little or none available, then it would seem that there is a priority to identify the types of training that would be appropriate to offer. Marshall (1992) identifies four methods in which the training of assistant principals can be developed: 1. celebrations and conferences; 2. university and professional training; 3. sponsors, role models, mentors; and 4. internships. Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991)

give strong support to the idea of mentoring as they state that, "a mentoring relationship between the principal and assistant principal provides strong synergistic activity" (p.68). Hartzell et al. (1995) are also positively responsive to the idea of mentoring and make the point that this should be a part of an ongoing support provided to the assistant principals.

While internships, for the most part, are looked upon favorably, there are some concerns regarding this mode of training. Hess (1985) sees internships as useful but makes the point that there are limitations as frequently the intern is not able to reach the level of responsibility of these positions. Pellicer et al. (1988) found that principals and assistant principals only moderately support the idea of internship experiences. It is interesting to note that in their study they found that principals and assistant principals endorse the more traditional certification requirements. These were identified as including: specific administrative courses, a teaching certificate, a specific number of years of teaching experience, specific curriculum and development courses, and a master's degree. They give less support to more modern approaches such as assessment center performance and on-the-job monitoring.

Marshall (1992) endorses the idea of holding conferences and district staff development programs; however, she is quick to point out that there are rare instances where an assistant principal is able to participate in workshops or professional conferences that address their specific concerns. Bonnell (1990) also supports this idea when he states that assistant principals, "very rarely, if ever, meet to collectively discuss initiatives and problems" (p.4).

There does seem, however, to be a growing awareness by some districts of the need for professional development designed for the assistant principal. Cantwell (1993) states that the SuperCenter in New York provides a place where there is continuing professional development for assistant principals in all levels of schooling during their first years. Gray-Grant (1996)

reports that the Vancouver School Board in British Columbia has started a Leadership Development Program in order to encourage leaders to enter administration. The program offers teachers wishing to be assistant principals an opportunity to explore such things as: job information, program and staff development, the school district, and employee relations. She also states that Kamloops, in the same province, runs what it calls the Executive Development Program which lasts two years and contains both training and mentorship for persons interested in becoming assistant principals. Brown (1994) reported that one Ontario school board provided its own training program for all prospective administrators. Without this course, candidates could not be considered for administrative appointments.

Since evidence shows that there is an extremely low level of training and there has been a need identified for such training, the next logical step would be the development of programs designed to fulfill this need. It is important that any individual or organization attempting to design training for the assistant principal's position would ensure that this training is specific to the operational duties of the assistant principalship, since present training contains a large discrepancy between what is considered to be and what is (Hartzell et al., 1995; Hess, 1985). This is especially true at this time as many assistant principal positions will likely become terminal career positions and, even if this is not the case, often the assistant principal remains in that position for a considerable period of time before advancing to the principalship or other administrative level (Hartzell, 1993).

At present, the only training that seems to be available that is specific to the operational duties of the assistant principal is in the form of on-the-job training, and many assistants start their careers without any formal training or support, a situation that is surely fraught with stress (Marshall, 1992). There does seem to be some support given in certain circumstances as

Brown (1994) states that, “ for new vice-principals, the greatest support and learning was provided within the administrative team” (p.169) She found that the principals in her study saw the teaching and guiding of assistant principals as an integral part of their mandate. Marshall (1992) sums it up when she remarks, “With improvements in training and support, the assistant principalship can be altered to be less stressful, and those who fill the job can be more skilled, creative, and more able to work on long range planning” (p.89).

Selection of Assistant Principals

The next issue that seems logically to follow the aspect of training of the assistant principal is the issue of selection. How does one get to be chosen for the role of assistant principal? Hess (1985) in his discussion of the selection process states that, “ procedures for the selection of assistant principals are haphazard and unguided by coherent policies or criteria” (p.101). He continues by stressing the need for the establishment and application of criteria to address this need if the assistant principalship is to reach its full potential. Marshall (1992) reinforces this idea when she states that the, “ need for good training and selection guidelines is a primary policy issue” (p.11).

Success as a teacher and undergraduate and graduate level courses are identified in the literature as being one of the basic prerequisites for being selected as an assistant principal (Hess, 1985; Marshall, 1992). Pellicer et al. (1988) reported that 76% of first year principals saw success as a teacher as being important in their selection. Therefore, it is logical to assume that since most principals started as assistant principals then this is important to the selection of assistant principals as well.

Having someone for support is also considered to be important when it comes to being chosen as assistant principal. Marshall (1992) defines this 'sponsorship' as a situation that, "offers informal support, training, and an affective bond that assures the protégé the visibility, advice, and career direction needed to build a successful administrative career" (p.50). She recognizes the positive effect this can have and makes the point that absence of this sponsorship can have a negative impact on career development.

Marshall (1992) also refers to another selection technique which she refers to as the "inferential assessment process" (p.34). In this process the 'administrative grapevine' is very instrumental in the selection of administrators. According to Marshall this grapevine consists of, "conversations, asides, gossip, and phone calls within and among districts" (p.34). She goes on to identify this as perhaps wielding the most power and influence in assessment of candidates.

The popularity of this technique, according to Marshall, may be due to the ambiguity and confusion in defining what constitutes the role of an assistant principal. This may cause the selection to be made on the basis of a 'gut feeling' possibly influenced by the 'administrative grapevine'. It is assumed that the person selected will be able to 'fit in' and assume whatever duties are defined by the specific situation. In this case it is important that the candidate manifest the ideas and attitudes that are in line with the selectors and that the candidates have established a track record of loyalty and good work in their particular school or district.

While there is evidence of the informal 'old boys club' mentality when it comes to selection of the assistant principal, attempts are being made to define and formalize the tasks and skills required to fill the role (Marshall, 1992). She identifies what she considers to be four criteria that are important and should be developed for the recruitment and selection of assistant principals. The first is that the job should be seen as being open to all. Minorities, women and

others who do not necessarily fit the traditional stereotype of administrators must feel that they are truly wanted. Secondly, these positions should not be advertised locally but nationally as well. Thirdly, there should not be an expectation that the applicant be familiar with the district's political situation, but it is acknowledged that the applicant must be able to function in a political environment. Finally, districts should realize that in some instances they are hiring the principals, superintendents and assistant superintendents of tomorrow and be willing to invest time, money and personnel in administrator selection.

Conclusion

There is a need to define the role and duties of assistant principals in relation to the realities of today's schools. The assistant principals must be prepared to work in environments that are constantly changing and must be prepared to work with philosophies of leadership that are sometimes at odds with their own.

Aspiring and new assistant principals must be made aware of the conflicts existing in their roles. The conflicts that emerge when they find themselves embroiled in issues that test their loyalty to their fellow teachers and loyalty to their new administrative responsibilities and when they are forced to decide between the two. The assistant principals must be prepared to deal with these issues effectively.

There is a responsibility on the part of the education system to provide new and existing assistant principals with training and professional development which allows them better to realize their potential and to create a better awareness within them as to what is expected from them in today's school environment. This training and professional development should take into account the idea that the position of assistant principal can no longer be considered to be

transitory, a stepping stone on the road to higher levels of administration, but rather it should be looked at as a possible terminal career position. The role position should not allow the assistant principal to become a frustrated potential principal or superintendent. Selection of assistant principals should also be less of a haphazard procedure and guidelines and policies should be developed so that the selector and selectee know what is required in order for successful placement to occur.

Assistant principals must also be aware that this may be a terminal career position and be prepared to avail themselves of any training or professional development that is offered. They need to work as a team member and be prepared to transcend the traditional role of the assistant principal, and be ready to take on more of an instructional leadership role. As Calabrese (1991) states,

assistant principals must become activists. They must assert themselves on a district, regional, and national level to become effective assistant principals who work with principals who have moved beyond the policies of the past to horizontal forms of leadership and shared governance (p.57).

Assistant principals must see leadership as transformative in nature where, as Sergiovanni (1990) claims, "leaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher-level goals common to both. Both want to become the best. Both want to shape the school in a new direction" (p.24).

CHAPTER THREE

THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Purpose of Internship Study

Assistant principals in today's schools are considered to be important participants in the school's leadership team (Brown, 1994; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991; Cantwell, 1993; Pellicer et Stevenson, 1991; Rowbotham, 1995). As part of this leadership team, there should be significant involvement by the assistant principal in such areas as the development of school vision, goals, instructional leadership, policy development and public relations. (Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd, 1991; Cantwell, 1993; Valentine et al., 1993). While it is recognized that the assistant principal needs to be involved in such areas, the reality of the situation does not seem to reflect this. In some schools, the assistant principal's role seems to be one that is more in line with the job description of a manager who is traditionally concerned with organizational functioning and stability (Hartzell, 1993; Valentine et al., 1993).

The purpose of this internship study, therefore, was to examine in as much detail as possible the administrative roles and duties of an assistant principal on a daily basis over an extended period of time. The study identified the areas in which the administrator under examination spent his time, and the extent of his involvement. A comparison was made of his actual role and duties and the themes identified in the literature. The study also attempted to ascertain if there is evidence that suggests that the role of the assistant principal is indeed more in line with the position of a manager than in providing instructional leadership.

Methodology

The study was done using Mintzberg's method of structured observation (Mintzberg, 1973). This form of study has been successfully used by researchers in examining the role of the school administrator: Willis (1980) examined the work activity of principals in Australia; Chung and Miskel (1989) did a comparative study of Korean and American principals; Martin and Willower (1981) looked at the managerial behavior of high school principals; Kmetz and Willower (1982) investigated elementary school principal's work behavior in the United States; and Reed and Himmeler (1985) used this method as part of their investigation of the assistant principal and his work.

This study examined the role of an assistant principal in an urban high school with a student population of 700 in levels I to III (Grades 10-12) with 40 teachers and 4 support staff. The assistant principal was observed in the performance of duties, other than assigned teaching duties, that were part of his administrative mandate. These were documented daily as to type and duration. The period of observation was from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm inclusive and extended over a period of 35 days, during the months of September and October.

The first concern of the study was to identify the duties of the assistant principal and it was soon discovered that this was no simple task as there was a myriad of tasks identified in the literature. Dinnendahl (1996) identified 90 responsibilities and Lane (1984) stated that, "if a complete listing of all duties delegated to assistant principals in school districts throughout the nation could be made it would prove impossible to fully prepare" (p.67). There are however consistencies that emerge in the literature, and for this study, the duties of the assistant principal were drawn from two sources in particular: the national report on secondary school leaders (Pellicer et al., 1988), and Wyles's (1985) report on assistant principals as commissioned by the

Ontario Public School Teacher's Federation (OPSTF). A third source, the report on roles and responsibilities of school administrators done for the Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association and the School Administrator's Council (Sharpe and Harte, 1996), was also used as it provided a direct link to the Newfoundland school administration situation, the province in which this study was done.

There were six categories of duties to emerge from the reports by Wyles (1985) and Pellicer (1988). These categories were: school management, student services, student activities, curriculum instruction, staff personnel, and community relations (see Table 1). The themes discussed in Chapter Two fall under these six broad categories so these six categories were used as a framework for the observation of the assistant principal. The category of School Management included the day to day operation of running a school and providing operational necessities for the educational program. Staff Personnel referred to duties related to obtaining and maintaining human resources and instrumental in the running of an educational institution. Curriculum Instruction dealt with activities related directly to the courses of study and instruction made available by the school. Also included is the improvement and/or revision of curricular, and staff inservice. Community Relations were duties associated with interaction between school and community. Student Activities were activities related to students that were non-class in nature. Student Services related to problems and concerns of students including their personal and physical well being.

The duties of the assistant principal that were observed were then assigned to the appropriate category. Tables and figures were created showing a breakdown of the percentage of time spent on each duty within each category. Each category was then examined in relation to total time available. Those duties that were identified were assigned to their appropriate

categories and an examination was carried out within each category as well as between categories in an effort to fulfill the original mandate of the study.

Table 1

Categories of Assistant Principal Administrative Duties and Specific Duties

Categories	Specific Duties
School Management	clerical services, building use, fund raising, yearbook/pictures, emergency procedures, school policies, busing, teacher duty schedule, equipment/supplies
Student Services	discipline, attendance, student progress, personal problems, student personal timetable, course selection, orientation
Student Activities	co/extracurricular activities, assemblies, school club programs, school ceremonies
Curriculum/Instruction	instructional methods, curriculum development, school master schedule, teacher evaluation, innovations, experiments, research
Staff/Personnel	faculty meetings, substitute teachers, support staff, teacher personal problems, teacher incentives/motivation
Community Relations	school public relations, administrative representative in community functions

Results/Analysis

Overall Use of Time

The total observed time in this study covered 35 days for a period of eight hours per day. This time was converted into minutes for a total observed time of 16,800 minutes. The

total observed time was then categorized and each category was broken down into percentages of time in relation to total time available as demonstrated in Figure 1. The categories were: student

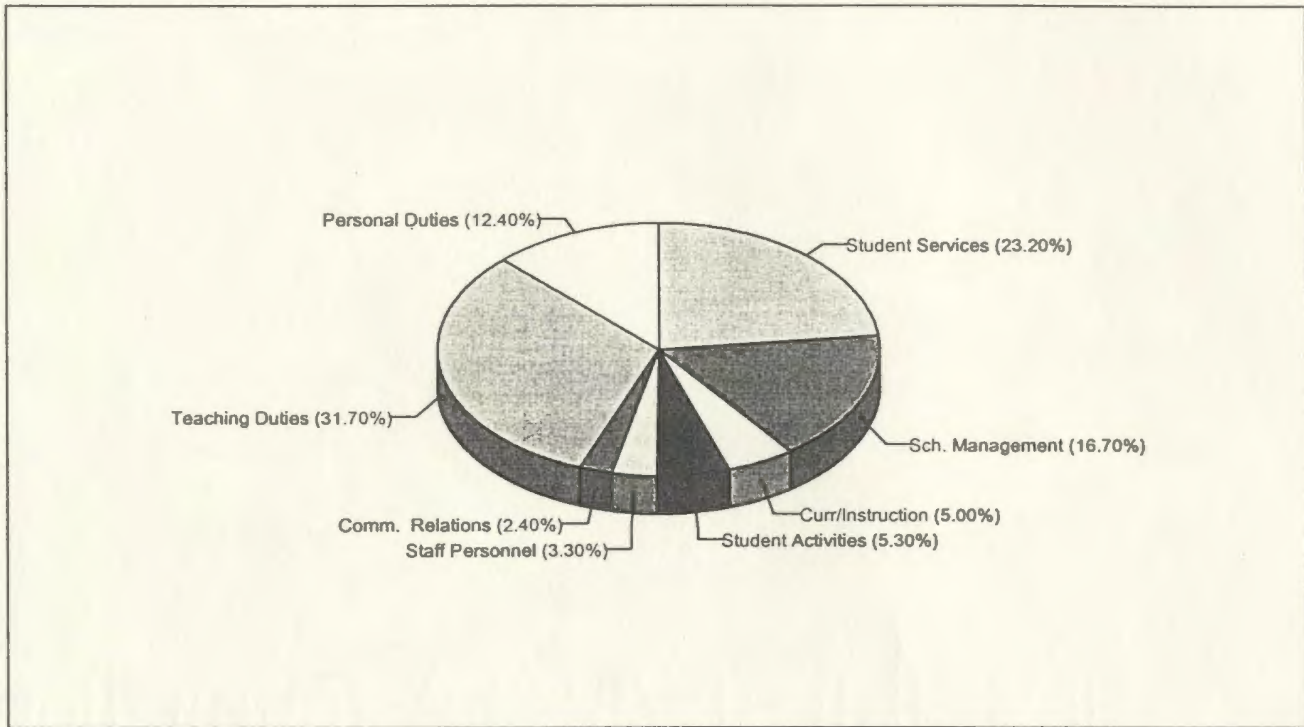


Figure 1. Overall use of time/total time available.

services, school management, curriculum/instruction, student activities, staff personnel, community relations, teaching duties, and personal activities.

As shown in Table 1, six of these categories were directly related to administration and are broken into specific tasks. There are two other categories involved in the examination of total time observed: time related to teaching duties and personal activities. Time related to teaching duties refers to all time, both assigned and non-assigned, that in anyway could be construed as relative to personal teaching assignment. Personal activities are activities that relate only to personal life and outside any school activities

Student Services

In observing the data generated, the category of assistant principal responsibility which involved the most time is that of student services. As shown in Figure 1, this category consumed 23.2% (Figure 1) of the total time available. The reason for this high amount is that within this

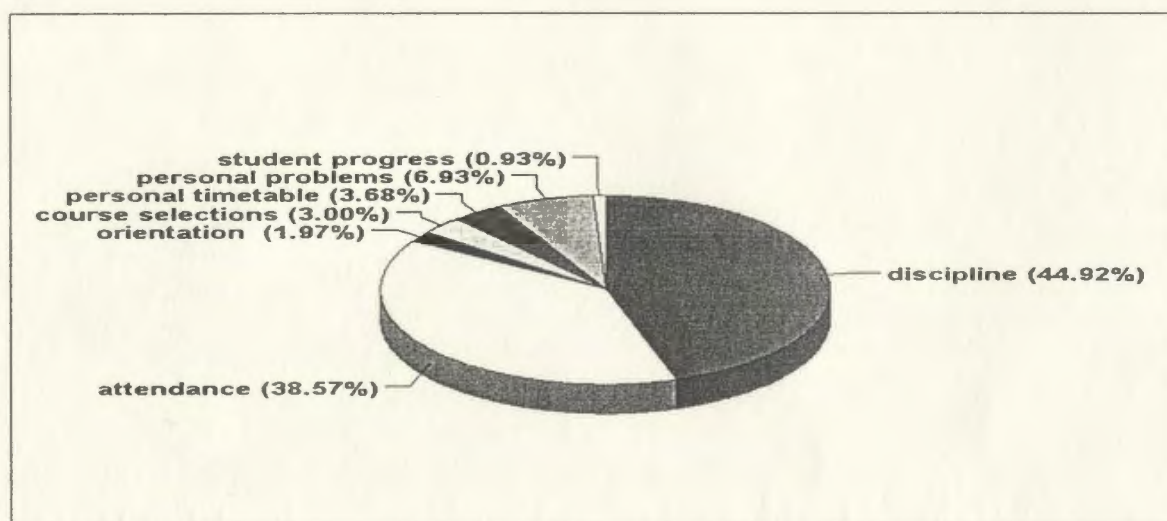


Figure 2. Student services

category were the duties related to school discipline and school attendance. Out of the 23.2% of the total that was taken up by this category, school discipline took up 46.6% of the time and school attendance, 37.0% (see Figure 2). These two responsibilities accounted for 83.6% of the category.

School discipline not only consumed the majority of time available within its category but it also was the duty, outside of teaching duties, that took up most of the total time available (10.8%). In this circumstance, discipline was considered to be both proactive and reactive. The reactive aspect involved dealing with situations which had happened or were ongoing, while the

proactive form consisted of monitoring student behavior through corridor, classroom, and school grounds supervision between and during class time.

This result is consistent with what has been identified in the literature as discipline is consistently identified as being the primary duty of the assistant principal (Bonnell, 1990; Calabrese, 1991; Gorton and Kettman, 1985; Lane, 1984; and Pellicer et al., 1988). In their national study of principals and assistant principals, Pellicer et al. (1988) found that 82% of assistant principals ranked discipline as of major or most importance.

Dealing with student attendance was also a major part of this category as it took up 37% of the time (see Figure 2). Examples of practices included are: missing school, skipping classes and late arrivals. It was of significance as it ranked third in total use of time available at 8.6%. Again this is in line with what has been reported in the literature. In the study by Pellicer et al. (1988), 82% of the assistant principals considered it important and placed it among their top five duties. Wyles (1983), in his study of assistant principals, ranked it in 14th position. A difference in the two studies is that Pellicer et al. examined high school administrators while Wyles was concerned with elementary school assistant principals. It seems to suggest that there are different focuses in duties between school levels and perhaps this might have ramifications when developing training for the assistant principalship.

The third area of significance within the student services category was in dealing with personal problems of students. As a percentage of the overall available administrative time, it was not terribly consequential, as it made up only 1.4% of the total time available (see Figure 1); however, it did take up 5.8% of its category. While it is usually the mandate of the school guidance department to deal with students' personal problems, it may be due to the disciplinarian role of assistant principals that they become involved, albeit to a much lesser extent.

Hartzell et al. (1995), Marshall (1992), and Reed and Himmler (1985) all make the point that in order for assistant principals to be effective disciplinarians they must be highly visible to the students. This high visibility allows the assistant principal, when not enforcing the rules, to establish a positive rapport with the students. This positive relationship may be the reason that students sometimes seek out the assistant principal to confide in when they are experiencing personal difficulties.

The remaining duties in this category did not utilize the assistant principal's time to any significant extent but were rather minor in nature. In the internship setting the duties of orientating new students, student transfers, student course selections, and manipulation of students personal time tables were for the most part handled by the guidance department.

School Management

This category was responsible for the second largest use of the total time available (see Figure 1). The duties falling under the umbrella of school management were responsible for utilizing 16.3% of total time available. As shown in Figure 3, in the school management category, clerical services (which included monthly annual returns, district forms, and substitute forms) were responsible for of the time spent. This is in line with what is reported in the literature as Sharpe and Harte(1996) found that 72% of assistant principals were involved in some or all of the completion of forms for the district office. Pellicer et al. (1988) ranked clerical duties as 22 out of 65 and Wyles (1973) reported that assistant principals ranked them 11 out of 20. The next responsibility of significance in this category was the choosing of the company to produce the yearbook and school photographs. While there is no specific mention in literature of the responsibility of the assistant principal to be involved in choosing the company to produce the

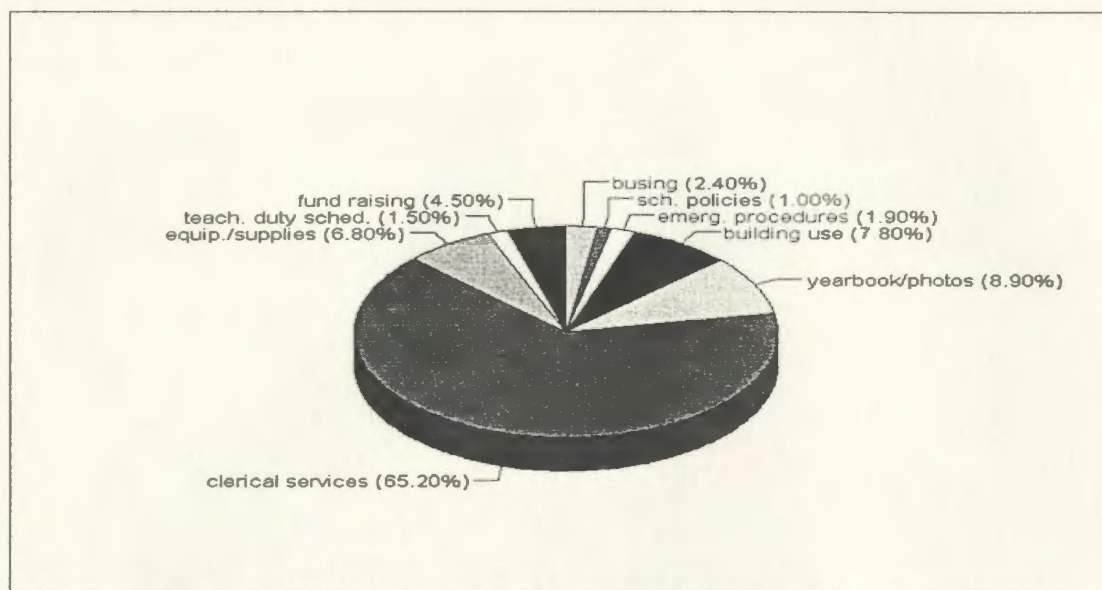


Figure 3. School Management.

yearbook and school photographs it was found in this study that it was responsible for 8.9% of the time in this category (see Figure 3). The reason for this is that there is considerable competition and price discrepancies between the different companies vying for the contract, therefore, attention must be paid to each proposal to ensure that the school is receiving the best service for their money.

Building use, use that was related to the direct operation of the school, was found to be responsible for 7.8% (see Figure 3) of the time in this section and includes such things as ensuring that washrooms are functioning properly, classrooms and labs are in good condition. Pellicer et al. (1988) reported that 70% of the assistant principals in their survey ranked this as 8 out of a possible 65.

The procurement of equipment and supplies took up 6.8% (see Figure 3) of the assistant principal's school management time which translates into 1.1% of total administration time

available. These percentages, when compared to the literature, seem low as Wyles (1973) found that elementary assistant principals ranked the obtaining of equipment and supplies in fifth position out of the top twenty duties identified in his study. Sharpe and Harte (1996) reported that 86.4% of assistant principals said they were responsible for some or all of textbook ordering and 58.6% were responsible for some or all of the instructional supplies. One of the possible reasons why in this study the time was low is that a person was hired to take care of the distributing and sale of textbooks. It may also have had to do with the time of the year encompassed in the study as much of the ordering of books and supplies is done in the Spring so that they are available as soon as school opens. Another possible factor may be that the increased use of computers for ordering and inventory control contributed to less time being necessary to be spent in this area, thereby freeing up the assistant principal for other duties.

In the area of fund raising, the study found that 4.5% (see Figure 3) of the school management category was involved which represented less than 1% of the total administrative time available. This low involvement is in line with some of the literature as neither Wyles (1973) nor Pellicer (1988) included this responsibility in their reports on assistant principal duties. It is however interesting to note that Sharpe and Harte (1996), on the other hand, found that of the group surveyed, 77.9% of the assistant principals in Newfoundland reported it as part of their responsibilities. Is it perhaps a reflection of the low socio-economic conditions that prevail in Canada's poorest province? In this particular study the low involvement in fund raising was most likely as a result of a new perspective in garnering funds for school activities. The school was in the process of having itself declared a charitable organization thereby allowing it to receive cash donations that would be tax deductible. This was in an attempt to do away with the time intensive methods of fund raising through activities such as sales of chocolates, magazines.

This study also found that only 1.0% of the time in this category was related to school policies. As compared to the total available time, this was insignificant. Sharpe and Harte (1996) did not report this as being one of the assistant principal's duties, however Pellicer et al. (1988) and Wyles (1973) saw school policies as being important. The assistant principals in the study done by Wyles ranked school policies as seventh out of the top twenty of their responsibilities and 83% of the assistant principals in the study done by Pellicer et al. rated it in second place out of their list of responsibilities.

While this study reported only a small percentage of time dedicated to school policies this does not necessarily mean, however, that this is not one of the more significant assistant principal responsibilities in this school. It must be remembered that this study covered only 35 days out of a school year or approximately 18% of the total time possible in that year. There was ample time remaining for the issue of school policies to consume a more significant amount of time in relation to the assistant principal's duties.

The final two duties in this category, responsibility for teacher duty schedule and emergency procedures did not significantly impact on the time available in this category as they involved only 1.5% and 1.9% respectively (see Figure 3). While Wyles (1973) and Pellicer et al. (1988) rank these duties in the top ten of actual responsibilities, it must be realized that once they are in place, there is usually little need to bother with them further to any great degree, as for the most part, they operate automatically. In the area of emergency procedures, once the procedure is spelled out, there is usually only a need to periodically hold a practice drill. This is the same with the teacher duty roster as usually only periodic monitoring is necessary.

Student Activities

This category ranked third out of the six categories (see Figure 1) but was responsible for taking up only 5.2% of the total administration time available. This represented a significant drop behind school management at 16.3% and student services at 23.2%. Within this category extracurricular activities at 60.7% (see Figure 4) took up most of the assistant principal's time, followed by assemblies at 22.5%, school ceremonies at 13.1% and school club programs at 3.7%.

The 60.7% of the time involved in the extracurricular activities was in the area of monitoring its in-school status and involvement at the district committee level. Items dealt with were for the most part in the realm of policy development and addressing any grievance arising from competition. The actual time spent in extracurricular activities (such as organization or training) was in most cases a teacher-sponsor responsibility. The study done by Wyles (1973) is the only one that makes mention of this area as an assistant principal's responsibility.

Much of the time involved with the responsibility for assemblies was in meeting with the teachers responsible for planning the assembly with a focus to reviewing the agenda and identifying any possible concerns that needed to be addressed by the assistant principal. Time was also spent ensuring that the gymnasium was ready to receive the students, faculty and any invited guests. It was also a part of the responsibility to ensure that the proper electronic aids were available and in good working order. In this particular study assemblies were for the most part a teacher responsibility. Pellicer et al. (1988) and Wyles (1973) mention assemblies as part of the assistant principal's responsibilities to varying degrees. In the study by Pellicer et al., it is ranked in 10th position by 66% of the assistant principals, while in the Wyles study it is mentioned as a responsibility but it is not listed in the top twenty. Sharpe and Harte (1996) make no mention of this responsibility whatsoever.

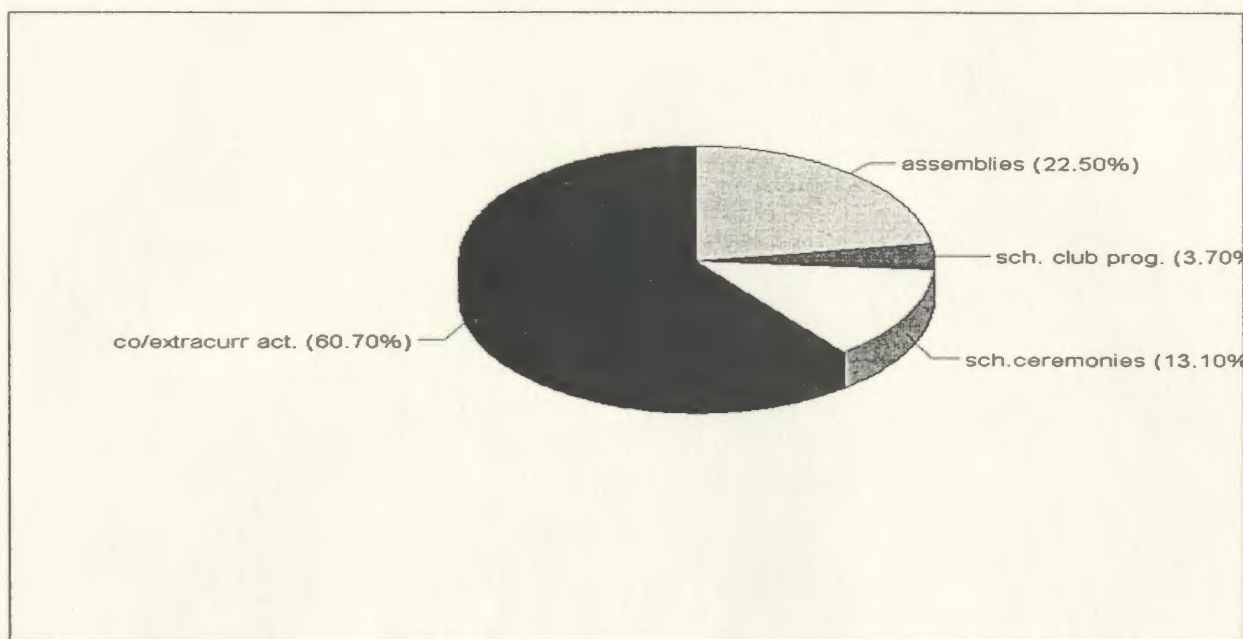


Figure 4. Student activities

School ceremonies such as graduation exercises, awards nights, concerts, etc. represented only 13.1% (see Figure 4) of the student activities category, and as with assemblies and extracurricular activities these events entailed considerable teacher involvement. While the percentage in this study seems to be low, Sharpe and Harte (1996), in their study, reported that 28.5% of assistant principals revealed that they were responsible for most or all of their school ceremonies and 43.1% reported some involvement. Pellicer et al.(1988) did not have a school ceremonies duty identified, however, 61% of assistant principals reported shared responsibilities with regard to graduation and 14% stated that they were fully responsible. The apparent low involvement in this study may not necessarily be truly representative of the time spent by the assistant principal in this area as many school ceremonies are specific to certain times of the year and this study only covers approximately 18% of the total year.

Responsibility for school club programs represented an insignificant amount of the assistant's time at only 3.7% (see Figure 4) and in relation to the total time available, it is

minuscule. The responsibility for the various school clubs was almost exclusively the domain of the teachers. Pellicer et al. (1988) was the only study that mentioned this role and only 53% of the assistant principals reported involvement.

Curriculum and Instruction

As shown in Figure 1, curriculum and instruction ranked in fourth position out of the six categories identified and was only involved in 5.0% of the total time available. The school master schedule, at 37.02%, (see Figure 5), was the most significant in this category. The school master schedule involves all aspects of teacher scheduling and student timetabling. Pellicer et al. (1988),

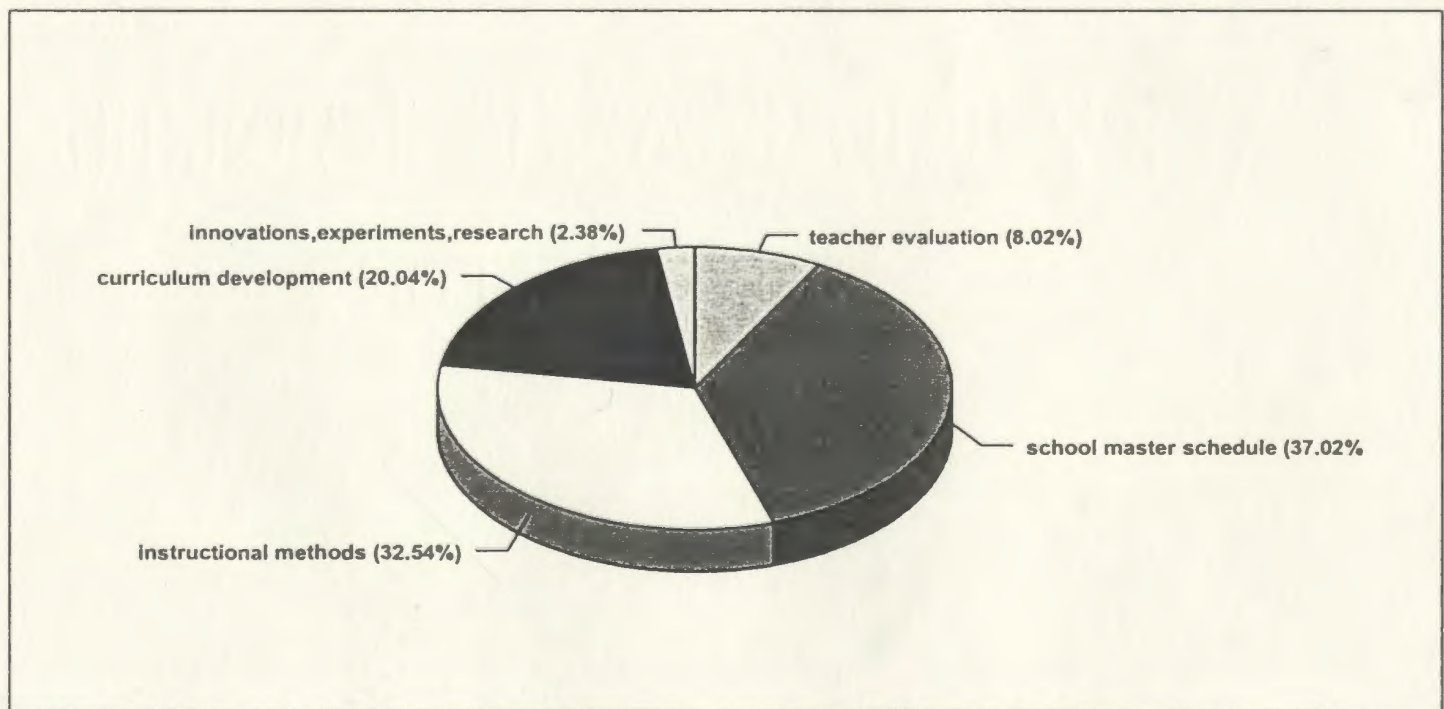


Figure 5. Curriculum and instruction.

Sharpe and Harte (1996), and Wyles (1973) all considered this to be part of the assistant principal's responsibilities, albeit in varying degrees. Pellicer et al. found that 36% reported

shared responsibility and 27% reported that they had full responsibility. Sharpe and Harte found that 51.9% stated that they had some responsibility and 38.5% reported full responsibility. The assistant principals in the Wyles study, however, gave it a low ranking at 16th position out of a possible twenty-five. This low ranking may possibly be attributed to the fact that he was reporting on elementary schools where the timetabling is not as complex as in secondary schools. During the internship, much of the time spent was due to glitches in a new computerized time tabling program being implemented in the school. It is to be believed that this program will permit much less time having to be spent in this area, thereby freeing the assistant for other duties.

Within the category of curriculum and instruction, instructional methods was involved in 32.54% of the time (see Figure 5). This percentage was due mainly to the fact that the assistant principal was directly responsible for the challenging needs area. The rest of the curriculum areas were departmentalized with their own department heads, with the principal being responsible for the special needs area.

It is interesting to note that this responsibility is only identified in the study done by Pelletier et al. in 1987 as 55% of the assistant principals reported some responsibility and 7% reported that they had full responsibility (Pellicer et al., 1988). Wyles (1973) and Sharpe and Harte (1996) make no mention of this area in their respective studies. Valentine et al. (1993) and Innaccone (1985) all recognized the seeming absence of the assistant principal in the instructional operations area of the school.

In this study the area of innovations, experiments, and research took up 2.38% of the time in this area (see Figure 5), hardly a significant number when it is recalled that this is 2.38% of a category that is only involved in 5.0% of total time available. Sharpe and Harte (1996) and Wyles (1973) did not consider this area to be part of the assistant principal's responsibilities. Pellicer et

al., (1988) do have it listed, however only 51% of the assistant principals considered it to be a part of their duties. In this study the assistant principal was involved in the development of the school's web page as well as using the Internet to research an area of professional interest, in this case being the attendance policies of schools in different provinces. One of the possible prime factors for the low involvement in this area is that innovation, research, and experiments usually cost time and money, two things that are usually at a premium in today's schools.

Curriculum development was involved in only 20.04% (see Figure 5) of time spent in this category. In the situation in this study the assistant principal was mostly involved in curriculum development through his mandate as challenging needs department head. If this had not been part of his responsibilities then the time spent would have been considerably less. It is apparent, that part of the reason for this is that curriculum development is seen as the responsibility of the provincial Department of Education, with some input from program specialists at the district level and some limited teacher involvement at the piloting stage. In most instances, school administrators have been bypassed, with new curriculum going directly to teachers. Schools have limited leeway in the development of school based programs. Pellicer et al. (1988) ranked curriculum development in the 20th position out of the top 65 responsibilities identified and that was by only 56% of the assistant principals surveyed. Neither Sharpe and Harte (1996) nor Wyles (1973) made mention of this area in their respective studies. It must again be stressed that while it was involved in 20.04% of the time in the category of instruction and curriculum, this was only 20.04% of 5.0% of total time available, which comes to approximately 1.0%, hardly a significant amount of involvement.

Teacher evaluation was involved in only 8.02% (see Figure 5) of the curriculum and instruction category. In this study the evaluation observed was of an informal nature. There was

no evidence of any formal evaluation during the duration covered by this report. There are two possible reasons for this: first, the study was representative of only a fraction of the school year; and second, the majority of the staff was comprised of mostly tenured teachers, in which case formal evaluation is not as frequent as with non-tenured staff. All previous studies reviewed on the assistant principal reported teacher evaluation as one of their responsibilities. Pellicer et al. (1988) stated that 82% reported involvement, with 66% of the assistant principals mentioning that they had some involvement in this area and 16% stating that they had full involvement. Sharpe and Harte (1996) found only 56.7% involvement, with 44.2% reporting some commitment, and 12.5% being fully involved. Wyles (1973) also reported it as an assistant principal's responsibility, however the 661 elementary assistant principals surveyed did not consider it to be one of the top twenty duties.

Staff/Personnel

As shown in Figure 1, while ranking in fifth position, the staff/personnel category did not occupy much of the total available time as it was involved in only 3.3% (see Figure 1) of the time. Within this category faculty meetings were responsible for 40.21% of the daily observed time (see Figure 6). Pellicer et al. (1988); Sharpe and Harte (1996); and Wyles (1973) all identify involvement in faculty meetings as an assistant principal duty, albeit to varying degrees.

In this study the procurement of substitute teachers was involved in 21.89% of the 3.3% of the total administration time available in this category (see Figure 6). This duty is recognized in all the literature investigated as a duty often attributed to the assistant principal. Sharpe and Harte (1996) stated that 80.7% of the assistant principals in their study reported some or all of the

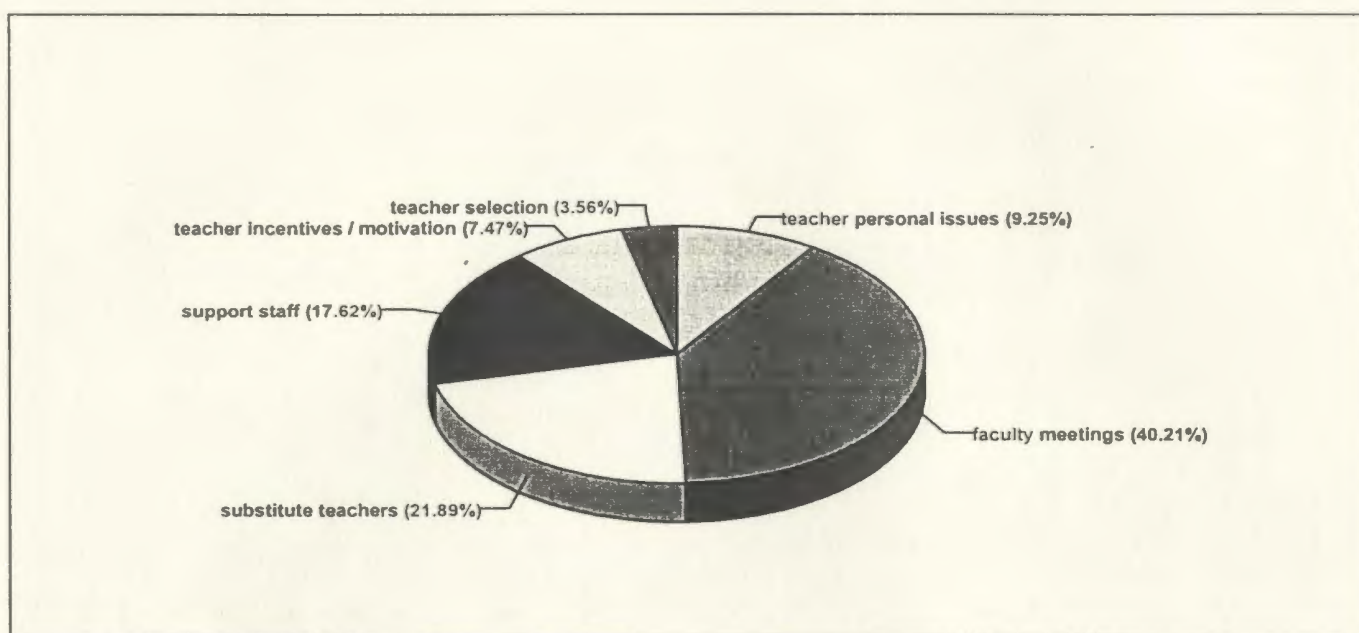


Figure 6. Staff/personnel.

responsibility for hiring substitutes. Pellicer et al. (1988) ranked it in the 18th position out of an identified 65 duties and Wyles (1973) placed it 13th out of the top twenty responsibilities of the assistant principal. This does not seem to represent a great deal of time for a duty that has been identified as having such a high degree of responsibility by assistant principals. One of the possible reasons for this is that this study only closely scrutinized the assistant principal's time between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Most of the time devoted to the procurement of substitute teachers was during the early morning before the assistant goes to school. Since in this study it was not feasible to observe directly this time, the assistant principal was asked to estimate the time spent. He reported that it ranged from zero time to a maximum of approximately 30 minutes. He also reported that times fluctuated depending on the time of the year; for example, flu season took up a lot of time. The assistant principal in this case stated that it would be reasonable to assess five minutes per day as an average time. Over the thirty-five days of this study this would have

resulted in an extra 175 minutes. If this were combined with the 123 minutes reported between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., then substitute teaching would have been responsible for 1.8% of the total time available, causing it to be a significant utilizer of assistant principal time.

The supervision of non-teaching personnel took up only 17.62% (see Figure 6), this is approximately .5% of total available time, and this amount is consistent with the literature. Wyles (1973) reported it ranked in 17th position out of twenty and Sharpe and Harte (1996) found that only 50% of the assistant principals reported some responsibility in this area. The role of the assistant principal in this category is primarily one of monitoring, as selection is done at the district level and within contract-specified guidelines. There is very little input by the school as to whom is assigned, since seniority within the district plays a major role in such job assignments.

Pellicer et al. (1988) were the only ones to identify the responsibility for teacher incentives and motivation as an assistant principal duty and even then it was ranked 25/65 by only 54% of assistants surveyed. Neither Sharpe and Harte (1996) nor Wyles (1973) recognized it as a responsibility of the assistant principal. In this study it was responsible for only 7.5% of its category which translates into less than one-half of one percent when compared to the total time available.

Dealing with personal problems relating to teachers, while not being identified as a formal duty in any of the studies examined, in this study did emerge as a responsibility of the assistant principal taking up 9.25% of time in this category. This may possibly stem from the same reason that students came to the assistant principal with personal problems -- that the highly visible interactive role the assistant principal plays in the school allows him/her to be seen as easily accessible and a person with whom a rapport can be established.

Community Relations

At 2.4% of total time (see Figure 1), this category was not involved to any great degree in the total time available. Included in this category are duties such as administrative representative at community functions and other school public relations issues. Pellicer et al. (1988), Sharpe and

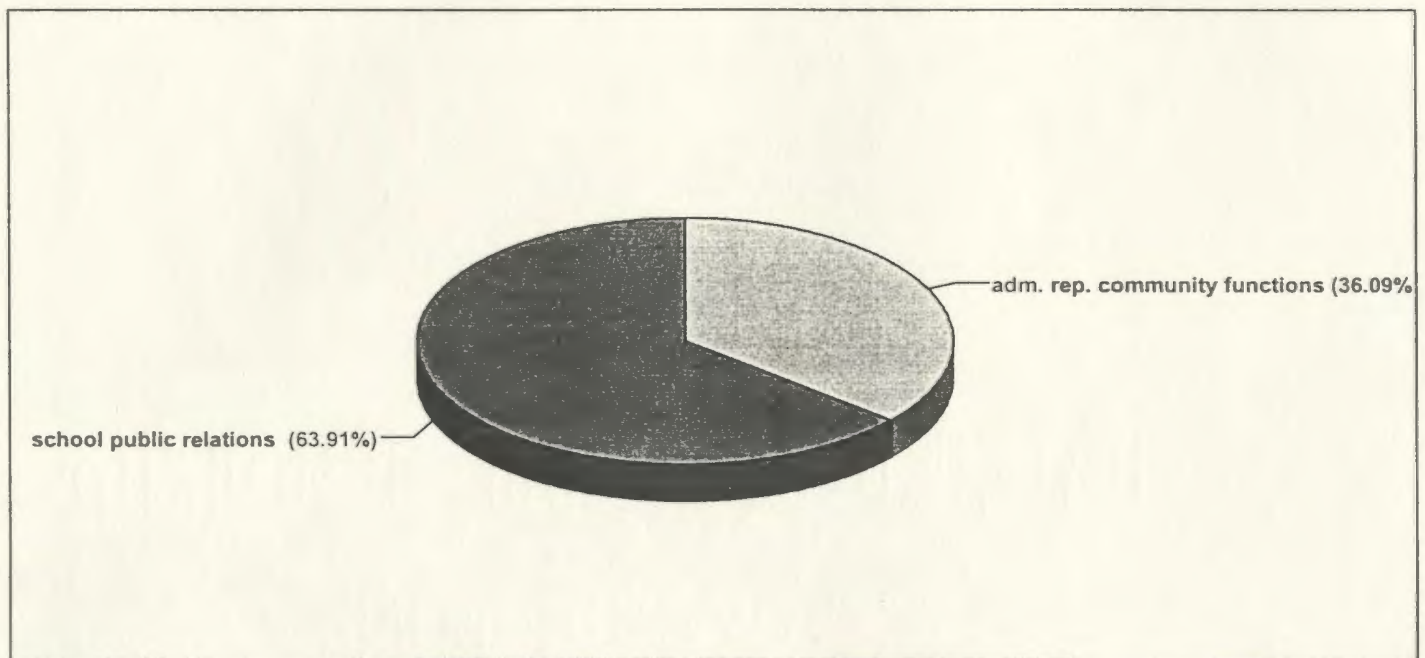


Figure 7. Community relations.

Harte (1996), and Wyles (1973) all recognize this category as part of the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal. While it does not seem to occupy much time in this particular study, the low percentage of involvement reported may be misleading. As previously noted this study covers only a small part of the school year, and most importantly, its direct observations are based on an 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. day, whereas many activities involving the community, such as school councils, parent teacher associations, parent teacher nights, meet-the-teacher night, awards night, and parent-teacher committees, are after hours, allowing people who

work an opportunity to become involved. In this study these were considered as part of the 17.92 hours (see Figure 8) spent on administrative duties after hours, as reported by the assistant principal. This is a fairly significant amount of time as it represents 2.24 days of work assuming the workday to be from 8 a.m. to four p.m. and this study covered only 35 days. It is reasonable to assume that, as the trend for more school accountability continues, this time will increase (during the school day as well as after hours).

Work After Hours

While the primary purpose of this study was to examine the role of an assistant principal as he went about his daily responsibilities, the study would be incomplete if mention were not made of the amount of time that he put in after hours. For the purpose of this study, after hours is considered to be what was accomplished after 4 p.m. and before 8 a.m. during the work week, as well as work completed during the weekend. The data on the amount of time spent after hours was not compiled by direct observation, rather it was left to the assistant principal to give account of what transpired during these times. The times were then broken into two categories: 1. time spent on extracurricular activities; 2. time spent on administrative duties.

The time spent on extracurricular activities was responsible for 43.42% of after hours time (see Figure 8), and while not broken down into specific events consisted of such things as: attending district sports committee meetings, and attending various sports activities such as hockey games, bike races, and rugby games. During the duration of this study the assistant principal reported spending 13.75 hours involved in these various functions, which translates into 3.96 full days work.

The second category identified as requiring work after hours was in the area of administrative duties, which accounted for 56.58% of the time (see Figure 8). These duties included those that were part of his daily administrative routine but which could not be completed within the eight hour time frame, such as monthly returns, substitute teacher forms, and

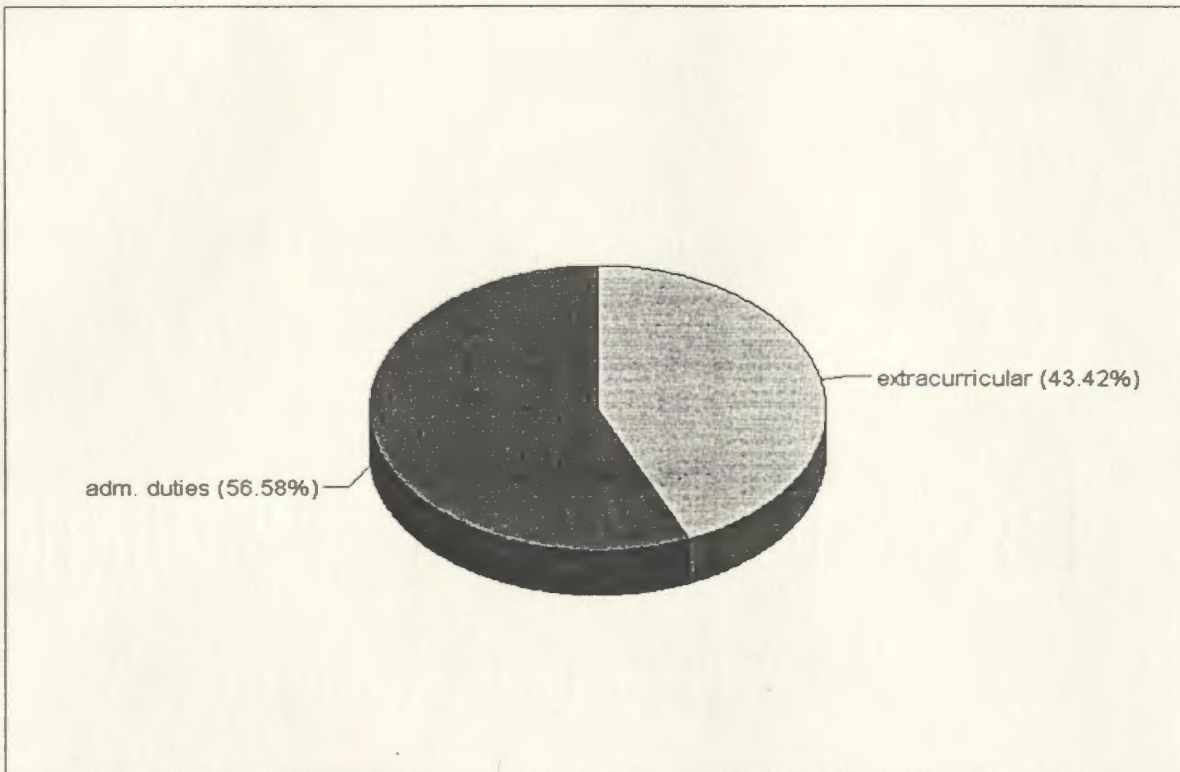


Figure 8. Work after hours.

timetabling. Also included in this category was his participation in functions scheduled after school hours such as parent-teacher nights, and awards nights. The amount of time spent in dealing with administrative duties after hours as reported by the assistant principal was 17.92 hours or 2.24 full days work. When combined, the total time spent after hours is 31.67 hours or 3.96 full days work. It must be noted here that this time deals exclusively with the period of this study's frame of reference. If this figure is extrapolated over the whole year, this assistant

principal could conceivably spend 92 hours or 11.50 full days of work after hours. This significant amount of time spent in working after hours by the assistant principal is supported in the literature. Pellicer et al. (1988) in their study also found that assistant principals reported a considerable amount of time devoted to working after hours.

The report discovered that 96% of assistant principals in their study reported working more than 40 hours per week and over 50% stated that they spent more than 50 hours per week in school. Valentine et al. (1993), in their study of middle school leadership, found that 59% of assistant principals reported working 50 or more hours each week.

Conclusion

This internship had two purposes. The first purpose consisted of three specific goals, including:

1. to develop an understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal within this specific setting.
2. to become, as much as possible, an active participant in these duties.
3. to observe the daily interaction of the administrative team in relation to others who came within their sphere of influence.

As a result of the tremendous co-operation from the administrative team at this school, especially from the assistant principal, each one of these goals was successfully accomplished.

The second purpose of the internship was to generate a study whose aim was to examine the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal, as reported in the literature and as observed in this particular setting. By using a theoretical framework, the study provided an excellent

opportunity to compare the results of other studies and the practice of a local current assistant principal.

Using the broad view of instructional leadership (Sheppard, (1996), this study does seem to suggest that much of the assistant principal's duties fall under the managerial umbrella. This study found that 39.5% of the total time available is concerned with student services and school management, and that within these categories, duties such as student discipline, student attendance, clerical services, building use and procuring equipment and supplies take up the bulk of the time. If the 31.7% of the total time involving teaching is subtracted from the time available, this 39.5% becomes significant indeed.

Only 6.1% of total time was dedicated to matters of curriculum and instruction, duties that would be considered directly related to teaching and learning that make up the narrow view of instructional leadership. Therefore, using this definition, the assistant principal, in this specific case, would not be considered to be very effective as an instructional leader.

If one considers the data in this study specifically from the perspective of what constitutes an effective school using the broad definition of instructional leadership as defined by Sheppard (1996) and Calabrese (1991), then it can be said that the assistant principal is an instructional leader, since the duties may be seen as "second order" interventions which indirectly impacts on teaching and learning. However, whether one uses the broad or the narrow view of instructional leadership, it is very evident that in this study at least, the duties of the assistant principal, as an administrator, are skewed and very lopsided with emphasis primarily in one direction, that being the operation and management of the school.

Leithwood (1994) sees the broad definition of instructional leadership as the basis of transformational leadership. From this perspective then it could possibly be said that the assistant

principal is transformational. Sheppard (1996) identifies ten characteristics which he considers to be conducive to transformational leadership. They are: framing school goals, communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning. If one compares these ten characteristics to the data generated by this study, then it can be said that there is some evidence of transformational leadership within the school setting on the part of the assistant principal. The assistant principal was highly visible as he spent much of his time in the corridors or in his office talking with teachers and students. Within the areas of framing and communicating school goals, there was no direct evidence within the study of the actual framing of school goals, which could possibly have been due to the brevity of the study. However, the assistant principal did discuss often the goals of the school with teachers and the principal from the perspective as to whether they were being achieved or perhaps needed changing. As for monitoring student progress, outside of time spent making sure students were attending classes and were appropriately behaved, there did not seem to be much evidence of this characteristic. This could have been perhaps attributed to the fact that the teachers were directly responsible for this and also that due to the departmentalization within the school, much of the attention to this issue could have been dealt with within the specific departments.

Other than within the specific area assigned to the assistant principal, there was very little evidence of supervising and evaluating instruction. This could be attributed to the fact that the staff was comprised of tenured teachers and it also may also have been influenced by the brevity of the study. Outside of timetabling, there was very little evidence of coordinating the curriculum

or the protecting of instructional time. This may be because the requirements for these two areas are outlined very concisely by the provincial Department of Education.

There was also little evidence of the three final characteristics, those being: providing incentives for teachers, providing professional development, and providing incentives for learning. As is readily evident from this comparison, there is not a high correlation between the characteristics identified by Sheppard (1996), and what is happening in this particular school situation. Therefore, if these characteristics are conducive to transformational leadership, there does seem to be room for improvement.

Whether the assistant principal is an instructional leader, transformational in nature or not, it is important to note that assistant principals themselves wish to see their roles redefined. Sharpe and Harte (1996) in their survey of 109 assistant principals reported that assistant principals expressed a desire to have less involvement in the managerial duties and more involvement in curriculum and instruction activities. Cantwell (1991) in a study of 72 assistant principals also reported that assistant principals expressed a wish to spend less time on clerical and organizational duties and significantly more time on what they refer to as curriculum development and instructional supervision. There is, however, perhaps some good news for assistant principals regarding role redefinition. Recent literature seems to suggest a growing awareness of the need for the assistant principal to play a much more expanded role within the leadership team (Brown, 1994; Calabrese, 1991; Rowbotham, 1995; Sharpe and Harte (1996). Sheppard (1996) also makes a recommendation that instructional leadership be included in educational administration programs and that professional development emphasize the importance of instructional leadership.

Reflections

Out of the many and varied experiences I encountered during my internship, the one that stands out the most is the issue of perspective. As an administrator, you see the school in a more holistic manner. You are privy to all the issues that arise and often issues, that from the perspective of the staffroom would seem so straightforward, are in reality very complicated when seen through the eyes of administration.

For example, assistant principals when dealing with issues of confrontation between students and teachers, must attempt to maintain neutrality. They must try to see the issues from both perspectives in order to make a fair assessment of the situation. There must also be an awareness of the fact that there are times when the student may be right and assistant principals must be prepared to side with the student while at the same time striving to prevent the alienation of a teacher with whom they will have to work in the future. This duality is also evident in the fact that assistant principals are both administrators and teachers. They are often called upon to evaluate the very teachers with whom they teach and may be even forced to discipline some of these same teachers. This is one of the great conflicts inherent in the role of assistant principal, and one which requires study.

Another observation arising from my internship experience is that while there are overall specific duties assigned to the assistant principal, it is at times very difficult to find time during the day to tend to these duties. Situations are constantly arising that demand attention. The position of assistant principal involves almost constant involvement in these issues from the time of arrival in school to the time of departure, which is often very late in the afternoon. These situations often make it necessary for the assistant principal to return to the school in the evening in order to be able to complete some of the assigned administrative duties. Not only do assistant

principals work at nights, but they are often assigned the task of telephoning substitute teachers early in the morning. In many instances, this means being contacted by teachers who are not coming to school and then having to find a substitute teacher. This can be very time consuming, especially during flu season when many teachers are ill and substitutes are sometimes hard to find.

It was also evident from my experience during this internship that there were few opportunities to spend a great deal of time interacting or building relationships with other teachers. Everyone was very busy with their assigned tasks and there was minimum time available for socialization, so that almost all interactions were professional in nature. Realizing that by the very nature of their positions that some natural separation exists between administrators and teachers, perhaps more opportunities to socialize as a staff could promote a better understanding of each other. This might even alleviate potential negative situations which could arise from lack of awareness of the personal side of co-workers.

Most of the assistant principal's time during my internship experience was spent in three main areas: discipline, attendance, and the completion of forms. A great deal of time was spent on tracking the whereabouts of students and ensuring that they were attending, not only school, but also their classes while they were in school. This necessitated a constant vigilance on the part of the assistant principal.

Discipline was also a major part of the job and it manifested itself in two forms: active discipline, where the assistant principal dealt with discipline problems as they surfaced; and passive discipline, where the assistant principal maintained a highly visible presence throughout the school. There is, perhaps, a positive side to passive discipline as it affords assistant principals opportunity to interact with, and get to know, most of the students on a much more personal basis than if they were to stay isolated in their offices.

A final observation on my internship experience is that the role of the assistant principal, in my situation, was primarily of a managerial nature. Curriculum issues rarely entered into the day's activities. My experience suggests that assistant principals are not what one would traditionally consider as bosses wielding power, but rather as facilitators who attempt to cause the school to function with as little disruption as possible. They are also mediators who aid students, teachers, and sometimes parents, when there is direct or potential conflict in resolving their differences. Assistant principals must maintain an open line of communication between themselves and the principal and be prepared to work as part of a leadership team. They must be able to adjust quickly to new ideas and realize that their position is, especially in today's educational environment, under constant evolution. They must not become complacent and set in their ways. Finally they must be prepared to work long hours for very little recognition and very little monetary reward and realize that, in their chosen field, many of the rewards are intrinsic rather than extrinsic.

In conclusion, I would recommend that future study be done into the role of the Assistant Principals.

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