Moving from Classroom Teacher to School Administrator: Attributes of Influence

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Honors Thesis

Introduction

The act of transitioning, in any sense, can be both daunting and difficult. Yet, it is a part of life that is unavoidable. Whether it is transitioning from elementary school to middle school, or transitioning from having a house full of children to empty-nesting, transition happens to everyone at one point or another. What if there were proven ways to make a transition easier? What if each type of transition had an ideal environment in which the transition could occur? The purpose of this study is to identify key qualities and characteristics that can make the transition from classroom teacher to school administration easier, better preparing them for when they transition. Further, it will help these future administrators work to prevent difficulty in the transition.

The research question for the study is: What qualities create a more favorable transition from classroom teacher to school administrator? Within this project, surveys and interviews were conducted to determine a possible correlation between age the transition occurred, the number of years spent as a classroom teacher, and the gender of the administrator and ease of transition they experienced.

Review

The following review was organized thematically, categorizing the studies based on what was found and the purpose of the study. The sections include: The factors that affect transition (specifically sex and experience), experience of transitioning, and how to create ease in transitioning.

Factors that Affect Transition

Sex and Gender Roles

Blackmore (1993), describes the differences in roles and perception of men and women in the field of education. She explains how teaching is often seen as women's work and that the administrative role is dominated by men. She places the blame for this on the culture perspective held that places men in roles of power and females in roles of submission. This perspective bleeds into the minds of the public through subtle cues, values, images, and language. Thus, men are more often seen in the powerful role of school administration (Blackmore, 1993). With consideration to the proposed research, this would support that men experience easier transitions from classroom teacher to principal, since men are primarily seen as leaders and powerful in society.

Teaching Experience and Age

Stone-Johnson (2014), qualitatively evaluates how years of experience and one's age can affect the transition from teacher to principal. All interviewed participants have between 7-15 years of experience at the time of the interviews and were a part of Generation X. It was determined that people from Generation X have a desire for balance and flexibility and prefer to work in groups to complete projects. Having these skills and preferences are ideal for teaching,

but are less impactful when being a leader (Stone-Johnson, 2014). This incite on the generational affects gives a good idea about how age and experience reacts with administrative roles.

The Experience of Transitioning

Hohner and Riveros (2017), outline the types of situations principals have gone through. This study was conducted qualitatively, via in-depth interviews that generally lasted for 60-90 minutes. All interviewed administrators (8 total) had transitioned to their new role within two years of the study to ensure an accurate depiction of the experience. In the study, they found that the transition included newfound feelings of loneliness as teachers were no longer a part of their grade level team. However, the situation also created an environment for professional growth and greater adaptability skills. Lastly, the study found that administrators commonly commented that having professional relationships with other faculty and staff is essential to a smooth and successful transition from classroom teacher to administrator. This article does not exactly line up with the proposed inquiry as it studies the outcomes and feelings that occur with transition without connecting them to any quantitative data or interviewee characteristics and qualities (Hohner & Riveros, 2017). Simon, Dole, and Farragher (2019), also mention the need for developing and preparing principals for the newfound loneliness, need for collaboration, and outline of new boundaries. They determined that leaders work well in problem-solving conditions, but that they need assistance and professional development to efficiently do this without losing the parts of their career that they hold dear.

Armstrong (2015), shares experiences of the transition of new vice-principals. One finding from the study is the newfound feelings of loneliness and displacement upon transition from classroom teacher to school administrator. The transition also caused administrators to feel uncomfortable in their schools as they adapted to their new role. The transition was commonly

described by surveyed administrators as a "culture shift." The move from collaborative teacher to supervisor forced those surveyed into a new part of school culture, which they were unprepared for. Vice-Principals also describes the transition as difficult because of the lack of privacy, saying they were now functioning for the need of the school and had less opportunity for creativity and personal functioning. Being that this study dealt specifically with Vice-Principals, it was found that the participants felt similarly to Principals in loneliness and separation, but did not necessarily receive the satisfaction of having power and control, since they exist within the shadow of the principal. The study's findings call for heightened support and collaboration for new vice-principals to aid in the difficult transition from classroom teacher to school administrator (Armstrong, 2015). This study is backed by an earlier study of Armstrong's. She echoes the need for socialization and support for new administrators. Further, Armstrong calls for shadowing and mentoring opportunities to ease transition. Transitioning Vice-Principles struggled to determine new boundaries with staff and find a better balance of activities (Armstrong, 2012).

Shoho and Barnett (2010), discover some of the challenges new principals face. One finding was the stress principals face when first placed in their new role, specifically concerning the "responsibility burden" transitioning from a class full of students to a school full of students, not to mention the well-being of the faculty and staff on top of that. Closely relating to the questions of the proposed inquiry, Shoho and Barnett also found that principals recommend transitioning when one's life is at a more stable place. Examples given of what this stability looks like include: grown/older children, support from a spouse, and ample time to give. It became evident through the research that single principals without children made the transition easier, giving the administrators more time and brain space to devote to their new role. Other

factors described that affect one's transition include: still being in school, having a long commute, and being overly committed to other things (Shoho & Barnett, 2010).

Read (2012), surveys new vice-principals according to their engagement in education-oriented activities and compares it to their feelings of preparedness for their new role. It was found that preparatory programs such as a Master's in Education or Educational Leadership gave the vice-principals the accreditation they needed to obtain their role, but lacked necessary development and experience that would have been most helpful to their transition. It was also found that years spent as a classroom teacher before transitioning to administration is in decline. This lack of experience tends to translate into higher feelings of frustration and lack of preparation. It was also noted that teaching in different schools provides higher preparation for vice-principals, as it gives new and different perspectives. Overall, the study indicated the need for more professional development, more time spent in the classroom, and a diverse set of experiences for an easier transition to administration (Read, 2012).

Armstrong (2014), conducts a broad study that examined many different parts of the transition process. Armstrong's study was both quantitative and qualitative, similar to the proposed inquiry. The study had five objectives: "gather benchmark and longitudinal data regarding supports for newly appointed vice-principals and principals in Ontario; explore newly appointed vice-principals and principals' transition experiences; identify the challenges and successes experienced by newly appointed vice-principals and principals; identify promising programs and practices; and gather recommendations regarding how vice-principals and principals' leadership transitions can be supported" (Armstrong, 2014). The study also walks through what helped them the most and the least throughout the course of their transition. Interestingly, 95% of surveyed administrators stated personal characteristics as one of the most

helpful factors in their transition, specifically their engagement in self-directed learning and improvement. Most administrators requested more immersive and hands-on training to assist in their transition, such as internships or job shadowing. These opportunities could have provided them with a deeper understanding of the job requirements as well as better prepare them for the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator. Principals and vice-principals (82%) said opportunities to collaborate and receive support from other local administrators, after their transition, would have greatly benefited them. Administrators commonly commented that the professional development they went through during their transition was beneficial, but did not cover all topics, such as health and safety requirements that fall under the responsibility of the vice-principal. Participants also stated that creating and maintaining staff relationships post-transition was "moderately challenging, challenging or extremely challenging," and that tensions were raised. The study concludes with a call to better prepare administrators for the job by listening to what they ask for, as far as professional development goes, as this will lower the percentage of administrators that leave the job and raise the percentage of teachers that want the job (Armstrong, 2014).

Ease in Transition

Schechter (2014), suggests the use of a mentoring relationship and outlines benefits for both the mentee and the mentor. Mentors would benefit from debriefing their job and would be able to network throughout the process. Further, they can also receive innovative ideas from their mentees. Mentees would benefit the most, as the entire process is for them. Mentees would have tips and tricks at their fingertips, professional support, and a new group of professional advocates. Together, the two (or group) would be able to debate theory and educational belief within a group of knowledgeable professionals (Schechter, 2014).

Methods

Participants

The study was conducted with administrators from a central Florida school district. The survey was emailed to all, 379, principals, assistant principals, and deans in the district. Of the 379 invited to participate, 87 administrators completed the survey.

Procedure

The study is a multi-method design. A quantitative survey collected demographic information as well as their perceived ease of transition in regards to the following categories: respect from faculty, respect from parents, respect from students, comfortability, relationships with faculty, relationships with students, and their overall transition. Participants ranked their ease of transition in these categories on a one-to-nine Likert scale. Participants were asked if they would consent to an interview regarding their transition from classroom teacher to school administrator. Of the 48 participants that consented to an interview, 21 were selected based on diversity purposes. Six of the 21 set up an interview, and five of the six interviews occurred. The interviews were conducted both over the phone and Zoom and lasted between 15 to 30 minutes. Administrators were questioned on their transition as a whole, the support they may have received during their transition, as well as personal qualities they believe may have had an effect on their transition into administration. sf

The two sets of data were analyzed individually. The data from the survey, being quantitative, was analyzed using IBM SPSS software. A series of ANOVAs was connected with Tukey post-hoc testing. Qualitative data from the interviews was collected through recordings and then transcribing those recordings. The transcriptions were coded using Values Coding. Chunks of commentary was coded into themes, values, or experiences and then recoded into

major, more overarching themes. Some of these themes included: organization, mentors, support, experiences, and the unexpected. These themes were consolidated into two major themes: Support and Expectation vs. Reality. These themes were most supported and prevalent in comments from participants.

Results and Findings

Collected data show demographic and experiential effects on the ease of transition from classroom teacher to school administrator. The results indicate a greater ease of transition, mainly, when the new administrator has spent 0 to 5 years or 20+ in the classroom prior to transitioning to role of administrator. Other demographic information such as gender, age, school switch, age of transition, and position seem to have a lesser, but still present, effect on transition to administration. Finding also indicate the importance of support throughout the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator, as well as a need for better preparation for the job.

Quantitative Analysis

The data was collected through anonymous surveys sent out to all principals, assistant principals, and deans of a school district in central Florida. Administrators that volunteered to participate answered questions on demographics, information on the nature of their transition into administration, and their perceived ease of transition in regards to the following categories: respect from faculty, respect from parents, respect from students, comfortability, relationships with faculty, relationships with students, and their overall transition. Ease of transition was ranked on a one-to-nine Likert scale where higher scores indicate a greater ease of transition. There were also optional comment boxes below each question. The following is the collected data and analysis.

Gender

Gender did not significantly influence the majority of factors associated with teachers' transition to administrator experiences. The means for females and males did not differ significantly for comfortability ($F < 1$, *ns*), respect from faculty ($F < 1$, *ns*), relationships with faculty ($F < 1$, *ns*), relationships with students ($F < 1$, *ns*), and overall transition ($F < 1$, *ns*). Participants' reported differences in respect from parents and respect from students based on gender.

Table 1
Average Rating of Transition Factors by Gender

Gender	Respect from Faculty	Respect from Parents*	Respect from Students	Comfort-ability	Relation-ships with Faculty	Relation-ships with Students	Overall Transition
Male	7.31	7.34	7.84	6.84	7.47	8.00	7.41
Female	7.52	7.95	8.20	6.66	7.38	8.04	7.45

* = significant

Gender and Respect from Parents.

Participants indicated their perceived Respect from Parents on a one-to-nine Likert scale, higher scores indicate a greater ease of transition. Female administrators ($M = 7.95$) reported higher Respect from Parents compared to males ($M = 7.34$). The differences among these means are statistically significant, ($F [1,86] = 7.06$, $p = .009$). However, the effect size was small, ES = .076.

Gender & Respect from Students.

Similarly, participants reported their perceived Respect from Students on a one-to-nine Likert scale. Higher scores indicate a greater ease of transition. Female administrators ($M = 8.20$), reported higher perceived levels of respect from students than males ($M = 7.84$). The

differences among these means are nearing statistical significance, (F [1,86] = 2.90, p = .092),

the effect size was also small, ES = .033.

Age

Age did not significantly influence all but one of the factors associated with teachers'

transition to administrator experiences. Participants reported their age categorically, 20 to 30

years of age, 31 to 40 years of age, 41 to 50 years of age, 51 to 60 years of age, and 60+ years of

age. The means for the current ages of the administrators did not differ significantly for Respect

from Faculty (F = 1.85, *ns*), Respect from Parents (F = 1.40, *ns*), Respect from Students (F =

1.849, *ns*), Relationships with Faculty (F = 1.96, *ns*), Relationships with Students (F = 1.78, *ns*),

and Overall Transition (F = 1.15, *ns*).

Table 2
Average Rating of Transition Factors by Age

Gender	Respect from Faculty	Respect from Parents	Respect from Students	Comfort-ability*	Relation-ships with Faculty	Relation-ships with Students	Overall Transition
20-30 years of age	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
31-40 years of age	7.00	7.36	7.68	6.27	7.32	7.91	7.23
41-50 years of age	7.49	7.79	8.26	6.51	7.18	7.87	7.33
51-60 years of age	7.78	7.87	8.09	7.57	7.87	8.39	7.78
60+ years of age	7.50	8.25	8.25	6.50	7.50	8.00	7.50

* = significant

Age & Comfortability.

Age significantly influenced reported levels of Comfortability, (F [3,84] = 3.56, p = .018), also reported on a one-to-nine Likert Scale. Follow up Tukey Post Hoc tests indicated that participants only perceived significant differences between 51-60-year-olds (M = 7.57) and two age groups, 31-40-year-olds (M = 6.27) and 41-50-year-olds (M = 6.51). However, the effect size was small, ES = .113. There was no difference between the 31-40-year-olds and 41-50-year-olds reported levels of Comfortability.

Table 3
Mean Difference of Comfortability by Age

Age	20-30 years of age	31-40 years of age	41-50 years of age	51-60 years of age	60+ years of age
20-30 years of age		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
31-40 years of age	N/A		.926	.020*	.992
41-50 years of age	N/A	.926		.037*	1.00
51-60 years of age	N/A	.020*	.037*		.535
60+ years of age	N/A	.992	1.00	.535	

* = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

Years of Experience

The initial ANOVA indicated that Years of Experience significantly influenced teachers' perceptions of Respect from Faculty as they transitioned from teachers to administrators, $F(4, 83) = 2.519$, $p = .047$. However, a follow-up Tukey post hoc test indicated that there was no

significant difference between any two Years of Experience groups. Participants indicated all

factor of transition experiences on a one-to-nine Likert Scale.

> *Respect from Faculty*
> $(F[4, 83] = 2.519, p=.047)$
> *Comfortability*
> $(F[4, 83] = 4.252, p=.004)$
> *Relationships with Faculty*
> $(F[4, 83] = 3.858, p=.006)$
> *Overall Transition*
> $(F[4, 83] = 3.655, p=.009)$

Table 4
Average Rating of Transition Factors by Years of Experience

Years of Classroom Experience	Respect from Faculty	Comfortability	Relationships with Faculty	Overall Transition
0-5 years	7.76	7.18	7.41*	7.82
6-10 years	7.24	6.37**	7.08**	7.18*
11-15 years	7.15	6.35**	7.50	7.15*
16-20 years	7.71	7.00	7.71	7.57
20+ years	8.50	8.67**	8.83**	8.67*

* = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

Table 5
Mean Difference of Comfortability by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
0-5 years		.299	.401	.999	.186
6-10 years	.299		1.000	.815	.004**
11-15 years	.401	1.000		.835	.006**
16-20 years	.999	.815	.835		.225
20+ years	.186	.004**	.006**	.225	

* = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

Table 6

Mean Difference of Relationships with Faculty by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
0-5 years		.815	.999	.968	.044*
6-10 years	.815		.600	.587	.003**
11-15 years	.999	.600		.990	.060
16-20 years	.968	.587	.990		.321
20+ years	.044*	.003**	.060	.321	

* = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

Table 7

Mean Difference of Overall Transition by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
0-5 years		.277	.293	.983	.435
6-10 years	.227		1.000	.894	.014*
11-15 years	.293	1.000		.887	.020*
16-20 years	.983	.894	.887		.329
20+ years	.435	.014*	.020*	.329	

* = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < .001

School Switch

Switching schools upon transitioning from classroom teacher to school administrator did not significantly influence the majority of factors associated with teachers transition to administrator experiences. The means for the years of experience did not differ significantly for Respect from Faculty ($F < 1$, *ns*), Respect from Parents ($F < 1$, *ns*), Respect from Students ($F < 1$, *ns*), Comfortability ($F = 2.85$, *ns*), Relationships with Faculty ($F < 1$, *ns*), and Overall Transition ($F = 2.16$, *ns*). Participants' reported relationships with students differ by school switch.

Table 8

Average Rating of Transition Factors by School Switch

School Switch	Respect from Faculty	Respect from Parents	Respect from Students	Comfort-ability	Relation-ships with Faculty	Relation-ships with Students*	Overall Transition
Yes	7.49	7.78	8.10	6.87	7.43	8.13	7.52
No	7.26	7.53	7.95	6.21	7.32	7.63	7.11

* = significant

School Switch & Relationships with Students.

Administrators that switched schools upon their transition reported, one a one-to-nine Likert Scale, greater Relationships with Students ($M = 8.13$) than those that remained in the same school ($M = 7.63$). The differences among these means are significant, ($F[1, 86] = 4.672$, $p=.033$), however the effect size is small, at ES = .052.

Age Of Transition

Age of Transition from classroom teacher to school administrator did not significantly influence the majority of factors associated with teachers transition to administrator experiences. The means for the Age of Transition did not differ significantly for Respect from Faculty ($F < 1$, *ns*), Respect from Parents ($F = 2.50$, *ns*), Respect from Students ($F < 1$, *ns*), Comfortability ($F = 1.51$, *ns*), Relationships with Faculty ($F = 2.05$, *ns*), and Relationships with Students ($F < 1$, *ns*). Participants' reported Overall Transition differs by age of transition.

Table 9

Average Rating of Transition Factors by Age of Transition

Gender	Respect from Faculty	Respect from Parents	Respect from Students	Comfort-ability	Relation-ships with Faculty	Relation-ships with Students	Overall Transition *
20-30 years of age	7.24	7.71	8.18	6.41	6.94	8.00	7.24
31-40 years of age	7.34	7.42	7.97	6.50	7.34	7.95	7.21
41-50 years of age	7.72	8.10	8.17	7.21	7.76	8.14	7.90
51-60 years of age	7.25	8.00	7.75	6.75	7.50	8.00	7.00
60+ years of age	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* = significant

Age of Transition & Overall Transition.

Participants reported their perceived Overall Transition on a one-to-nine Likert scale. Those that transitioned between 41 and 50 years old reported the highest levels of ease based on their age of transition ($M = 7.90$). Descending, next was 20-30 ($M = 7.24$), 31-40 ($M = 7.21$), and finally 51-60 ($M = 7.00$). No participants transitioned at 60+ years. The differences between these means are statistically significant ($F[3,84] = 3.176$, $p=.046$) with a low effect size of ES = .09. Follow up tests indicated no significant differences between any two select age groups. Follow up Tukey Post Hoc tests indicated no significant differences between any two select age groups.

Position

One case was removed from the data analysis of transition factors influenced by Position. A participant that previously held an administrative role returned to a lower level leadership role. Current position of school administrator did not significantly influence the majority of factors associated with teachers transition to administrator experiences. The means for the current position of the administrators did not differ significantly for Respect from Faculty ($F = < 1$, *ns*), Respect from Parents ($F < 1$, *ns*), Respect from Students ($F < 1$, *ns*), Comfortability ($F = < 1$, *ns*), Relationships with Faculty ($F = < 1$, *ns*), Relationships with Students ($F < 1$, *ns*), and Overall Transition ($F = < 1$, *ns*). Participants reported no significant differences in transition due to Position.

Table 10
Average Rating of Transition Factors by Position

Gender	Respect from Faculty	Respect from Parents	Respect from Students	Comfort-ability	Relation-ships with Faculty	Relation-ships with Students	Overall Transition
Principal	7.42	7.62	8.12	6.81	7.12	7.85	7.35
Assistant Principal	7.44	7.78	8.04	6.72	7.57	8.11	7.48
Dean	7.86	7.86	8.07	7.00	7.57	8.14	7.86

* = significant

Discussion

The survey results indicate that there are many differences in the experience of transitioning from classroom teacher to school administrator. Gender had nearly no effect on the experience of transitioning to classroom teacher to school administrator. Age of administrators was only significant in regards to comfortability in the role. Administrators 51-60 years of age indicated the highest levels of comfortability in their role. This could be due to personal stability,

community connections, or other reasons. Years of experience in the classroom prior to transitioning into a school administration role had an effect on the greatest number of factors of transition. Comfortability, relationships with faculty, and overall experience were significantly influenced by the years spent in the classroom prior to becoming an administrator. While those with 20+ years of experience felt most at ease in their new role, those with 0-5 years of experience generally were not far behind in their rankings. There could be many reasons :Are those with greater amounts of experience more aware of what they do not know? Have they had more time to be exposed to underlying issues? Why those with 0-5 years of experience express the same levels of ease and comfort as those with 20+ years of experience would be interesting to delve deeper into. School Switch seems to significantly affect the transition of administrators in regards to relationships with students. This makes sense as students may feel distant from a newcomer. Transitioning to administrator between 41 and 50 years of age seems to be the easiest regarding overall transition. Administrators in this age group consistently gave higher Likert scores than other age groups. Lastly, current position held no significant effect on creating ease in transition from classroom teacher to school administrator. Years of Experience was found to have the greatest effect on an administrator's transition into their role from classroom teacher.

Qualitative Analysis

At the end of the quantitative surveys, administrators stated whether they would consent to a qualitative interview. Of the 87 participants, 48 consented to an interview. From those consenting, 21 were contacted to set up an interview based on diversity within their demographics and experiences indicated in their surveys. Six of the 21 responded and set up a time to be interviewed. One interviewee had to cancel, and did not reschedule. Five

administrators were interviewed. The demographics of the interviewed administrators can be found in Table 11.

Interviews with the five administrators brought to light two major themes which influence one's transition from classroom teacher to school administrator: Support and Expectations vs. Reality. Support refers to support received, or not received, from an administrative team, colleagues, and/or mentors. Expectation vs. Reality deals with administrators' misconceptions about the role of administration and the surprising factors of the job that left them feeling unprepared. Together, the two themes outline the majority of commentary received from participating administrators.

Table 11

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
Age	60+ years of age	31-40 years of age	60+ years of age	51-60	51-60 years of age
Race	Black or African American	White	White	Black or African American	White
Position	Principal	Assistant Principal	Principal	Assistant Principal	Principal
Years of Classroom Experience	6-10 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	0-5 years
Age of Transition	41-50 years of age	31-40 years of age	41-50 years of age	51-60 years of age	20-30 years of age
School Switch	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Support

Support was a common thread that ran through all five school administrators interviewed. Participants generally identified three separate groups through which support was received/ or

not received: the administrative team or principal, colleagues/faculty, and specific mentors. All interviewed administrators commented on the necessity of having a mentor in creating ease in the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator.

Administrative Team.

Interviews of the administrators revealed the importance of having a strong and supportive administrative team to create ease of transition into the role of administrator. Support from one's direct supervisor, when not supplied, is desired. "I would've liked a whole lot more administrative support from the assistant principal and principal" (A5). Alternatively, close relationship with fellow administrators at the school was encouraging and empowering to newly transitioned administrators "….the most support that I got was from my principal who was just an amazing person. She… had enough skill set so that she could…know what it was you needed" (A3). This support also reinforced and encouraged administrators to persevere through the difficulties of the job: "…having somebody that is experienced to go back to and say 'Okay, this is what happened' … and her saying 'well, okay, this is common'" (A3). Administrators felt that support from their administrative team played a strong role in the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator.

Colleagues.

Support from colleagues is another distinction of support that carried throughout conversations with administrators regarding their transition into an administrative position. This was especially noted by administrators transitioning within the same school in which they taught: "I went from a classroom teacher to a dean position at the same school. … For me, I didn't have to earn anybody's respect; I already had a relationship with them all" (A5). Another factor in feeling supported by colleagues is based on the specific role of administration. For one

administrator, transitioning to Assistant Principal of Curriculum upon leaving the classroom aided their new dynamic with faculty: "…my position was very positive, and so, the trust was already there with the community and the classroom teacher" (A3). Not having support from teachers can cause frustration for administrators, "…you will always have 3 to 5% of your staff that no matter what you do you'll never agree with what you're doing" (A3). This distaste made for rocky relationships with faculty. Administrators shared experiencing easier transitions when they felt most supported by their colleagues.

Mentors.

Having a mentor to confide in, to consult with, and to be encouraged by, as discussed by all participants, is integral in the process of transitioning from classroom teacher to school administrator. This desire of new administrators is consistent throughout their career, but especially in the early stages of their administration: "I wish I had the opportunity to do more shadowing and have the opportunity to actually walk into some leadership roles" (A4). A regulated mentor-mentee program was also voiced as a factor that could have eased the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator:

> "I think it would've been so much better if the district had paired you up with somebody
> in your area that maybe had a lot more experience, so you didn't feel uncomfortable. … I
> think it would've been better if maybe there had been some people in the area that you
> …could have confided in if there was something you were feeling uncomfortable
> about…" (A3).

Because there was no system in place to pair new administrators with experienced veterans, many administrators were left to seek advice and counsel on their own accord: "I had to make a concerted effort to reach out to people and be very open with just communicating.

…becoming acquainted with different people so I could lean on them when I wasn't sure about something" (A2). While this may have strengthened relationships that would not have otherwise prospered, it added yet another responsibility to the stack of tasks administrators have each day, "I was able to do it, but it really took a lot [of] questioning people and asking people" (A1). All administrators commented on the importance of having a mentor. Not only can these mentors walk mentees through the parts of the administrative job that are difficult, they can also provide insight on unexpected aspects of being an administrator.

Expectation vs. Reality

The second major theme of influencing transition identified through interviews with current administrators is Expectation vs. Reality. The faulty expectations generally dealt with the role of being an administrator and the tasks required of them, or the colleagues they worked alongside. Participants indicated that having a better understanding of the role of being an administrator prior to entering that position could have created greater ease in their transition from classroom teacher to school administrator.

Role.

Administrators expressed that, many times, the role of administrator was very different than the role of classroom teacher, and that contrast was greater than they expected. The new tasks required of the job were tolling, "That was a hard year for me because it's not in my character to be a disciplinarian, reprimanding students because of their behavior; [it] was exhausting. I was asking myself 'is this what I really want to be doing?'" (A4). Administrators also confessed to having false ideas of what the specifics of being an administrator looked like, "I mean it's shocking it took me three schools before I even realized what in the world was going on" (A3). Participants indicated their lack of preparation for, or knowledge of, many tasks set

before them as an administrator: "I would say when I initially started I wish I had a clearer understanding of what was expected" (A2). Having a mentor could have better prepared administrators for the unexpected aspects of the role of administration.

Colleagues.

Many administrators were confounded by the attitudes of some of their fellow teachers, listing it as one of the most difficult parts of the job: "The hardest part was going in and observing fellow teachers that I thought were just like me because I … thought that they would be putting in the same time and effort into the instructional piece and [they were] not" (A3). Another administrator echoed that statement, saying, "I had the idea that everyone taught the way I taught and it was heartbreaking for me to find out that they don't… it would become just a job to them. In education, regardless of your role, it's a ministry" (A4). Recognizing differences in passions and seeing differing levels of effort can be shocking and difficult for new administrators.

Navigating relationships with faculty was a tough task to facilitate: "If I said anything critically about it they took it to heart. I had to be really careful not to step on toes" (A5). Not surprisingly, administrators indicated wanting to have positive relationships with their faculty. Any negativity that is brought into that professional relationship was avoided, which brought frustration: "I am a people pleaser … especially in the very beginning, I wanted to make everybody happy. But, if you had 25 teachers, you have three that, no matter what you do, you're never going to make happy" (A3). Eventually, administrators come to understand that this is no way to govern a school, "…what you need to do is … make a decision. You need to go with the path and really have guidelines of what you will not waver from" (A3). Recognizing your role as a leader and acting on that from the beginning would have been helpful: "I wish I would have

been a little more aware of that [pause] I was capable and aware of that [pause] I was able to [do] in the administrative position" (A2). The interviewed administrators, over time, realized the importance of knowing your goals upon entering administration. The role of administrator requires many adjustments, but the adjustments seem to magnify if the person is inadequately prepared.

Conclusion

The findings of the study are similar to the findings of the literature previously compiled on the topic of transition to administration. Support was noted to be one of the most important factors to creating an ease of transition into the administrative role. Armstrong (2015) posits that A call for heightened support for new vice-principals to aid in the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator is not uncommon. Although other studies do not delve into the specific groups from which support is needed, the need for support is echoed by researchers. In another study, Armstrong (2014)A indicated 82% of principals and vice-principals desired collaboration and support system opportunities upon their transition to administration . Support from other administrators, colleagues, and mentors were found to positively influence the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator.

Expectation vs. Reality seemed to strongly affect administrators' transition from classroom teacher. Participants commonly commented on tasks and responsibilities they did not expect to have, unanticipated interactions with parents and faculty, and general feelings of unpreparedness. Armstrong found that interviewed administrators' professional development did not cover all topics, such as health and safety requirements that fall under the responsibility of the vice-principal (Armstrong, 2014). Similarly, Shoho & Barnett found that new principals faced great levels of stress due to the difficult transition from heading up a classroom to an entire

school – an unexpected burden of responsibility (Shoho & Barnett, 2010). Findings of this study indicate that administrators struggle with relationships with faculty upon moving up the ladder. Armstrong also found that administrators struggled with the move from collaborative teacher to supervisor because it forced those surveyed into a new part of school culture, which they were unprepared for (Armstrong, 2015). Better preparing our administrators, whether it be pre-transition preparation or organized mentor-mentee relationships, would, seemingly, greatly help the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator.

Next Steps

Moving forward, it would be interesting to dive deeper into some of the reasons behind responses of the administrators. Why do administrators with limited classroom experience feel as comfortable as administrators with 20+ years of experience? What specific aspects of the transition made them feel more at ease? What specific qualities are sought after and valuable in a new administrator? How does the transition differ between primary and secondary schools? These inquiries would give greater incite to the transition from classroom teacher to school administrator and could supply information to aid in the ease of the transition.

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