



SHAPE A VISION *of* SUCCESS

During the past decade, there has been a growing recognition among educators and policymakers that school principals must be instructional leaders who ensure that high-quality teaching occurs in every classroom. This view is backed up by a solid body of evidence showing that leadership places second only to teaching among school-related influences on learning.

In culling lessons from 13 years of research that describes what effective principals do well, The Wallace Foundation has found they perform five key practices:

1. Shape a vision of academic success for all students;
2. Create a climate hospitable to education;
3. Cultivate leadership in others;
4. Improve instruction; and
5. Manage people, data, and processes to foster school improvement.

These practices are explored in depth in the Wallace Foundation report, *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding*

Schools to Better Teaching and Learning (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Learning Forward has developed a web-based professional learning guide using excerpts from the PBS documentary film, *The Principal Story*, to illustrate the five practices.

The guide is intended to help those who prepare and support aspiring and current principals probe these essential practices. By following the five units in *The Principal Story Professional Learning Guide*, learners can read the research, discuss practices, view film clips, and complete a range of activities as individuals or in groups.

The tool on pp. 49-51 is from Unit 1 of the learning guide, which explores the first key practice: shaping a vision of academic success for all students. Use this tool as part of the learning guide or on its own to explore, individually or with a group, several assumptions related to this practice and implications for principals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **The Principal Story Learning Guide**

www.learningforward.org/publications/the-principal-story-learning-guide

- **The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning**

www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/effective-principal-leadership/Documents/The-School-Principal-as-Leader-Guiding-Schools-to-Better-Teaching-and-Learning-2nd-Ed.pdf

DISCOVER PERSONAL ASSUMPTIONS

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess your own assumptions and actions about the practice of shaping a vision. To discuss how personal attitudes and experiences relate to the principal's actions, behaviors, and choices observed in a film clip from <i>The Principal Story</i>. To determine implications of those assumptions for yourself and others.
Time	65 minutes
Roles	Participants, facilitator
Materials	Film clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEEI5x-dpac

Personal assumptions, actions, and practices		TIME: 10 minutes
Independently, read each assumption, and use codes to indicate your level of agreement with each statement. For each assumption, identify potential implications for the role of school principal.		
* = Strongly agree + = Somewhat agree	? = Uncertain — = Somewhat disagree	! = Strongly disagree

Assumptions	Code	Implications for principals
1 Every student deserves effective teaching every day.		
2 The capacity of educators to invent solutions to educational problems is a powerful untapped resource.		
3 A school's vision is essential to achieving school goals for students.		
4 The success of educators' daily work depends on effective professional learning.		
5 Shared responsibility and collaborative learning combine to improve student results.		
6 School is the center of change.		
7 Vision that aligns school system, school, and individual goals exponentially increases results for educators and students.		
8 Effective professional learning requires collaboration among educators.		

Group discussion		TIME: 25 minutes
<p>The facilitator will organize small groups and guide them through a round-robin session to share thoughts about ratings and respond to each of the questions below.</p>		
1	<p>Review your responses in the assumptions chart. In the space below, note the assumption with which you agree most strongly and the assumption with which you disagree most strongly. Share why you agree and why you disagree.</p>	
2	<p>Review your responses to implications for principals in the assumptions chart. Make note of the implications for the assumptions you just highlighted. Discuss those implications within your small group.</p>	
<p>I most strongly agree with the following assumption:</p>		
<p>Why I agree:</p>		
<p>Implications</p>		
<p>I most strongly disagree with the following assumption:</p>		
<p>Why I disagree:</p>		
<p>Implications:</p>		
3	<p>Write how you, as a principal, will model behaviors for others as you act on these assumptions. Discuss each within your small group.</p>	

Discussion about the film clip

TIME: 25 minutes

After you have identified your own assumptions, aspirations, actions, and practices, look again at those in the film clip, "Shaping a vision of academic success for all students," available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEEI5x-dpac.

In small groups, share thoughts, reactions, and interpretations using the following questions to guide discussions. Debrief salient points with the larger group.

1 How do visionary leaders challenge the status quo?

2 Tresa is a novice principal; Kerry is a veteran. How might different levels of experience affect principals' abilities to enact change within their schools?

Individual reflection

TIME: 5 minutes

Following the larger group debrief, independently respond to these reflection questions.

1 In preparing to serve as a school principal, think about the complexities of shaping a vision. Using what you learned from reading about and observing Tresa and Kerry, how will you approach shaping a vision for academic success?

2 What would you do similarly? Differently?

Source: Learning Forward. (n.d.). *The Principal Story learning guide*. Oxford, OH: Author. Available at www.learningforward.org/publications/the-principal-story-learning-guide.