

### Unit 1, Activity 3: Link research with practice

<b>Purpose</b>	To recognize essential elements of the practice from a case study and to consider them as they appear or should appear in practice.
<b>Time</b>	70 minutes
<b>Required roles</b>	Participants

View the film clip in Unit 1, [“Shaping a Vision of Academic Success for All Students”](#) to identify behaviors attributed to shaping a vision for academic success. Read and respond to the questions that follow.

#### Individual review of the film clip

Approximate time: 5 minutes

You will hear how a novice principal, Tresa Dunbar, and a veteran principal, Kerry Purcell, articulate their visions for their schools and explain why they became principals. Tresa focuses on the challenges related to working with new teachers, and Kerry highlights the progress she and her staff have made in relation to student learning.

- Tresa comments that her work is “a wonderful way to effect change in the world.” We see a mentoring/orientation session for teachers. She explains that she has 12 new teachers who are learning how to teach. She asks, “What’s my responsibility?” Her answer: “To give them space and time to make mistakes, because someone gave me space and time to make mistakes, and look where I am.”
- Kerry says she became a principal because “I wanted to change the world, really. I believed I had the skill set to help teachers become better teachers so that students could be more successful in the classroom and in life.” She contrasts what the school was like six years ago to what it is presently. Before, “the building was in crisis on a number of levels — teacher morale was low, behavior was out of control, and test scores were in the gutter.” Today, she says, “the school has a 92 percent attendance rate and test scores have improved dramatically.”

## Discussion about the film clip

Approximate time: 25 minutes

Consider the following questions: In small groups, share thoughts, reactions, and interpretations using questions below to guide discussions. Be prepared to debrief salient points discussed with the larger group.

1. Using the language of the research in the [excerpt](#), how would you describe the leadership visions articulated by Tresa and Kerry?

2. How does a principal ensure that a vision of high expectations for teachers and students permeates every aspect of a school?
  - a. What examples did you see in the film clip?
  - b. What examples have you seen in schools you work in or with?

## Role play and discussion questions

Approximate time: 40 minutes

Principal Kerry Purcell and the faculty and staff members of the school have accomplished much in a few years. We can assume they now share and realize a vision of academic success for all students.

With a partner, decide which of you will take the role of Kerry Purcell and who will take the role of a faculty member, a lead teacher. Answer the following questions taking the viewpoint you have chosen. As applicable, identify specific examples, strategies, and steps from the film and your own experience to consider when addressing questions.

### **What are potential steps that principals take to share and shape a vision of academic success?**

One of you will write a list of steps from the point of view of Kerry Purcell; the other will write a list from the point of view of a teacher. As you prepare your list, consider the following questions:

- What is essential for principals to know about their staff and school before they shape a vision?
- How do principals diagnose or gauge staff needs, expectations, and culture?
- How do staff members determine what principals expect of them?
- How can principals use reflection for continuous improvement and follow-up support?

After you have completed your lists, share them and explain them from the point of view you represent.