

### Unit 2, Activity 1: Discover personal assumptions

<b>Purpose</b>	To assess your own attitudes, assumptions, and actions about the practice of creating a climate hospitable to education; to discuss how personal attitudes and experiences relate to the principal actions, behaviors, and choices observed in the film clip; to determine implications of those assumptions for yourself and others.
<b>Time</b>	65 minutes
<b>Required roles</b>	Participants; facilitator

#### Personal attitudes, actions, and practices

Approximate time: 10 minutes

Principal actions create and sustain a school's climate. Think about the essential principal actions necessary to cultivate a supportive, safe, and learning-focused school climate. Identify your current attitudes, actions, and practices that you believe create and sustain a learning-focused climate. *Enter those into the first column of the chart.*

*In the second column,* identify the attitudes, actions, and practices that you hope to develop and strengthen as a result of your learning and engagement with others.

Current attitudes, actions, and practices	Desired attitudes, actions, and practices

## Group discussion

Approximate time: 25 minutes

In small groups, move in round-robin fashion to share thoughts and respond to discussion questions. Focus on a single question at a time, allowing all members an opportunity to respond before moving to the next question. Enter notes as others share to identify common themes. If you are unable to work with a group, go through each question and enter your answers into the boxes below each question.

- Which one of your attitudes, actions, or practices most cultivates a positive school climate? Share why you feel this way and what evidence you have to support your rationale.

- Which attitudes, actions, and practices do you hope to develop or strengthen? Share why.

- What aspirations do you have for your school climate when you develop those attitudes, actions, and practices?

- What would you like students, parents, teachers, and the school community as a whole to say about the climate at your school?

1. After you have identified your own attitudes, aspirations, actions, and practices, look again at those in the documentary film clip, [“Creating a climate hospitable to education.”](#) The facilitator will divide the learners into two groups. Assign half the group “Tresa” and the other half “Kerry.” Participants will respond to the following questions on index cards or on the writable pdfs below. Each learner will respond from the point of view of the assigned characters, either “Tresa” or “Kerry.”

• From the point of view of your character, describe what you believe are the critical attributes of the school climates at your respective school.

• What actions, attitudes, and practices do you employ as Principal Tresa or Kerry to create learning-focused school climates at Nash Elementary and Harvard Park Elementary?

2. Now, in your small group consider the following questions:

• Describe how Assistant Principal Sid Guillory at Nash and Principal Kerry Purcell at Harvard Park took families into consideration or interacted with them. How do principals work effectively with parents and communities to support student learning in their schools?

• What roles do assistant principals, teacher leaders, and central office administrators play in developing school communities that are responsive to the learning needs of students from all backgrounds? What data or strategies might help principals or central office administrators assess the effectiveness of an instructional learning climate in their schools?

• What actions should central office administrators take to support principals’ focus on teaching and learning? For example, how might districts help principals build the capacity of teachers, strengthen their own skills, and engage school communities?

## Individual reflection

Approximate time: 5 minutes

Finally, reflect on the film clip with these questions. You may want to compare your comments with the statements you wrote in the chart “Personal attitudes, actions, and practices” on page 1 of this activity.

- Of the strategies identified in your reading and observations of principals and administrators at Nash School and Harvard Park Elementary, which actions, attitudes, and practices appear most helpful in creating a climate hospitable to education?

- What insights are you gaining about the role of the principal to make learning central for adults and students?