

Unit 4, Activity 1: Discover personal assumptions

Purpose	To assess your own assumptions and actions about the practice of improving instruction. Discuss how personal attitudes and experiences relate to the principal actions, behaviors, and choices observed in the film clip. Finally, determine implications of those assumptions for yourself and others.
Time	85 minutes
Required roles	Participants; facilitator

Personal assumptions, actions, and practices

Approximate time: 10 minutes

Independently, think about the following list of critical strategies to increase student achievement. Place a check mark in the boxes next to three statements that you think describe the most pressing needs of schools today. Be prepared to share your responses with others.

Supporting teacher acquisition of new knowledge and expertise.

Strengthening collaboration among teachers around curriculum, assessments of and for learning, and instructional design.

Examining new ideas, teaching strategies, evaluating effectiveness, and providing feedback.

Sustaining implementation and changes in teacher practices over time.

Effectively supporting new and struggling teachers.

Engaging in ongoing job-embedded professional learning.

Building teacher leadership capacity and skills.

Recognizing teacher input and decisions in the instructional process.

Exploring practical ways to implement new instructional initiatives.

Group discussion

Approximate time: 20 minutes

The facilitator will organize participants into small groups and guide them through a round-robin session to share thoughts and respond to discussion questions below. Facilitator will focus participants on a single statement at a time, allowing all members an opportunity to respond before moving to the next question. Enter any notes as others share.

1. Which statements were selected by most? Discuss your rationale for these selections.

2. Which statements were not selected? Discuss your rationale for these selections.

3. If you had to rank statements in order of importance to improve instruction, how would the top three selections change? Stay the same?

Discussion about the film clip

Approximate time: 45 minutes

After you have identified your own attitudes, aspirations, actions, and practices, look again at those in the film clip, ["Improving instruction."](#) In small groups or individually, draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper or white board so that you divide it into two columns. Across the top of the first column, write "Kerry" and write "Tresa" at the top of the second column.

Consider the following questions:

1. What do principals need to know and be able to do to lead instructional improvements that promote learning for all students? Collect and discuss examples of actions and behaviors by each principal in the film clip.
 - a. Under each column heading describe examples that show how Tresa and Kerry, respectively, supported teacher learning.
 - b. After examining their collective examples, how would you describe each principal's expectations for professional learning?

Kerry	Tresa

- 2.** How did Tresa and Kerry struggle with balancing management and instructional duties? Again, capture examples in the column for each principal.
- How did they resolve these competing demands?
 - What did you learn from their experiences?
 - What differences did you notice between the veteran principal (Kerry) and the novice (Tresa)?

Kerry	Tresa

Individual reflection

Approximate time: 10 minutes

After completing group discussions about lessons from the film clip, respond to the following reflection questions. You may discuss responses with the larger group.

In preparing to serve as a school principal, think about the principal’s responsibility to improve instruction. Using what you learned from your readings and your observations of Tresa and Kerry, how will you go about improving instruction?