Who is Teaching Lab?

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Our mission at Teaching Lab is our north star.

Teaching Lab

Teaching Lab is a nonprofit organization with a mission to fundamentally shift the paradigm of teacher professional learning for educational equity.

Our approach is based in rigorous research, which we summarize as “Head, Heart, and Habits”, with educational equity as the end goal.

“Heart”

Teachers strengthen **social capital** through teacher community, leading to greater buy-in and ultimately **leadership** over their own professional learning.[2]

“Head”

Effective professional learning focuses on **core academic content**, aligned to specific curricular materials, and research-based practices.[1]

“Habits”

Professional learning is structured around repeated **cycles of inquiry,** which allow teachers to apply what they learn and evaluate evidence of student learning.[3]

Equity

All in service of **educational equity**.

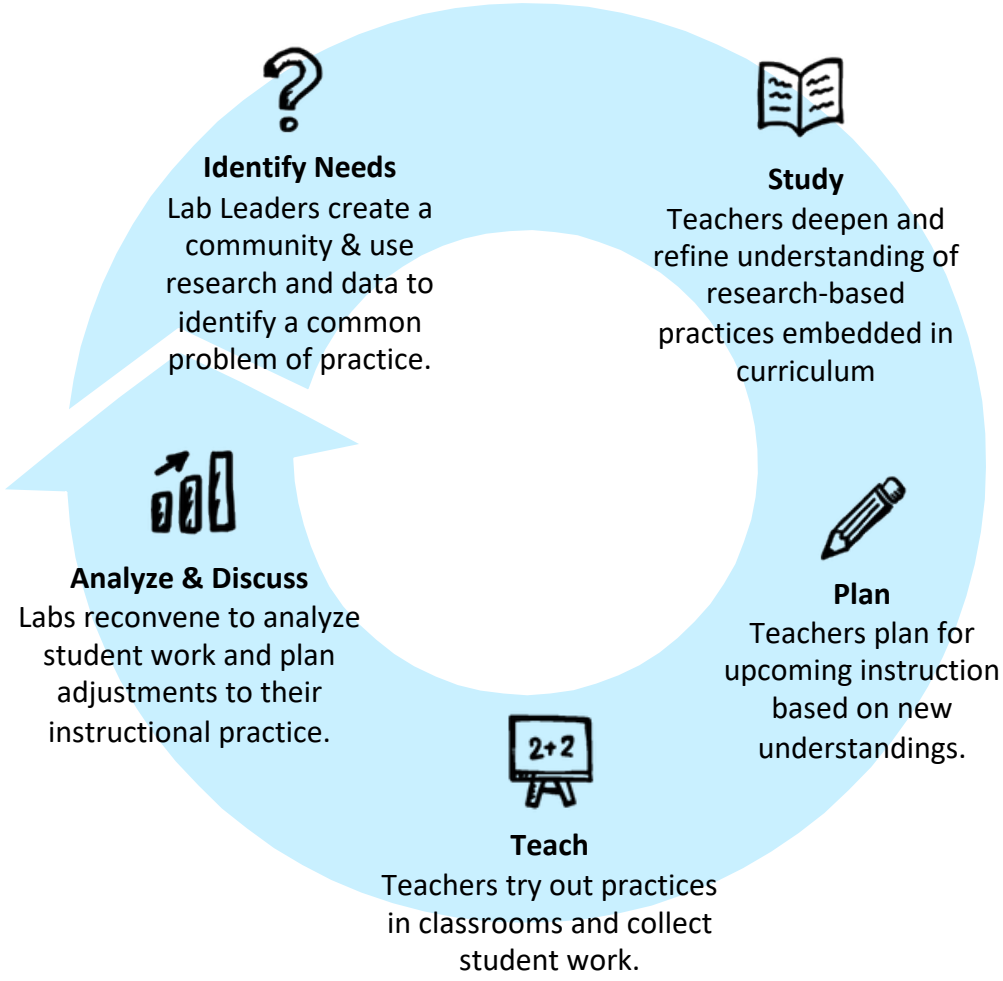
Sources:

1 Guskey, T. R., & Yoon, K. S. (2009). *What works in professional development*. Phi delta kappan, 90 (7), 495-500.

2 Leana, C. (2011). The Missing Link in School Reform. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2011, 30-35.

3 Jensen, B., Sonnemann, J., et al. (2016). *Beyond PD: Teacher Professional Learning in High-Performing Systems*. Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy.

Teachers engage in Cycles, which consist of five steps and last four to six weeks.



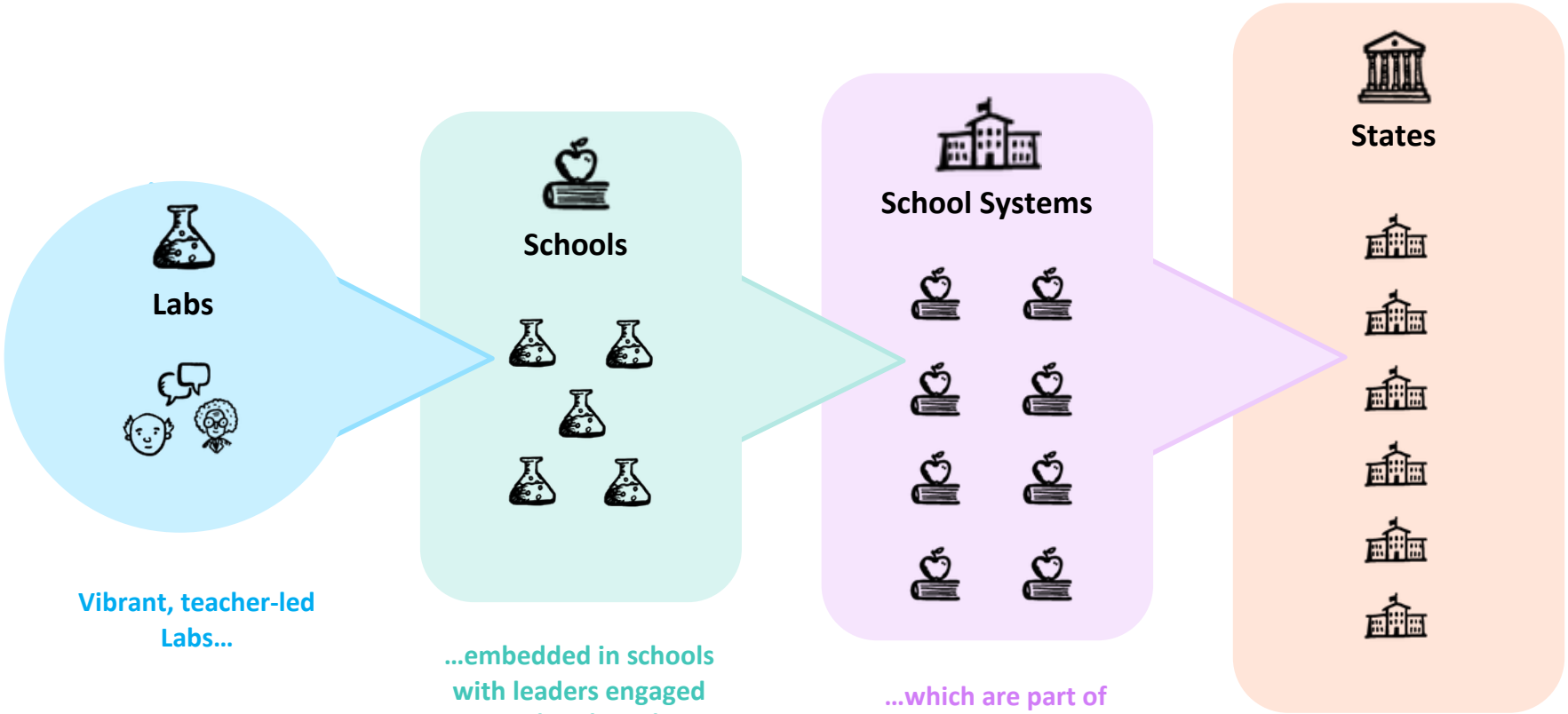
We have dozen of cycles developed, with another dozen in development. Sample cycles include:

- *Supporting Diverse Learners: Focus on Building and Developing Vocabulary* (Guidebooks)
- *Approaches to Complex Texts: Close Reading, Close Read-Aloud, and Reading Aloud to Research* (EL K-5)
- *Text-Based Writing to Deepen Student Understanding* (EL 6-8)
- *Facilitating Mathematical Discourse* (Illustrative Math)

Without these elements, professional learning falls short of its potential.

Common Versions of PD	Understand & Use HQ Content?	Build Community & Leadership?	Engage in Cycles of Learning?	What Happens
Top-Down				Teachers are told what to do; low buy-in or resentment leads to passive compliance or resistance.
Feel-Good				Teachers meet and feel good but are not supported to learn and grow their practice.
Slow Learning				Teachers engage in cycles of learning but progress slowly without the benefit of research-based content; may even adopt ineffective or counterproductive techniques.
Lonely-Slow Learning				Teacher learning is neither research-based nor collaborative; teachers are overwhelmed and revert to traditional teaching methods.
Professional Learning				Teacher-led communities are focused on core academic content and repeated cycles of inquiry, building social capital and buy-in from teachers to dramatically improve teacher learning.

Our vision is ultimately that vibrant teams of teachers work together to continuously improve their practice within supportive schools and systems.



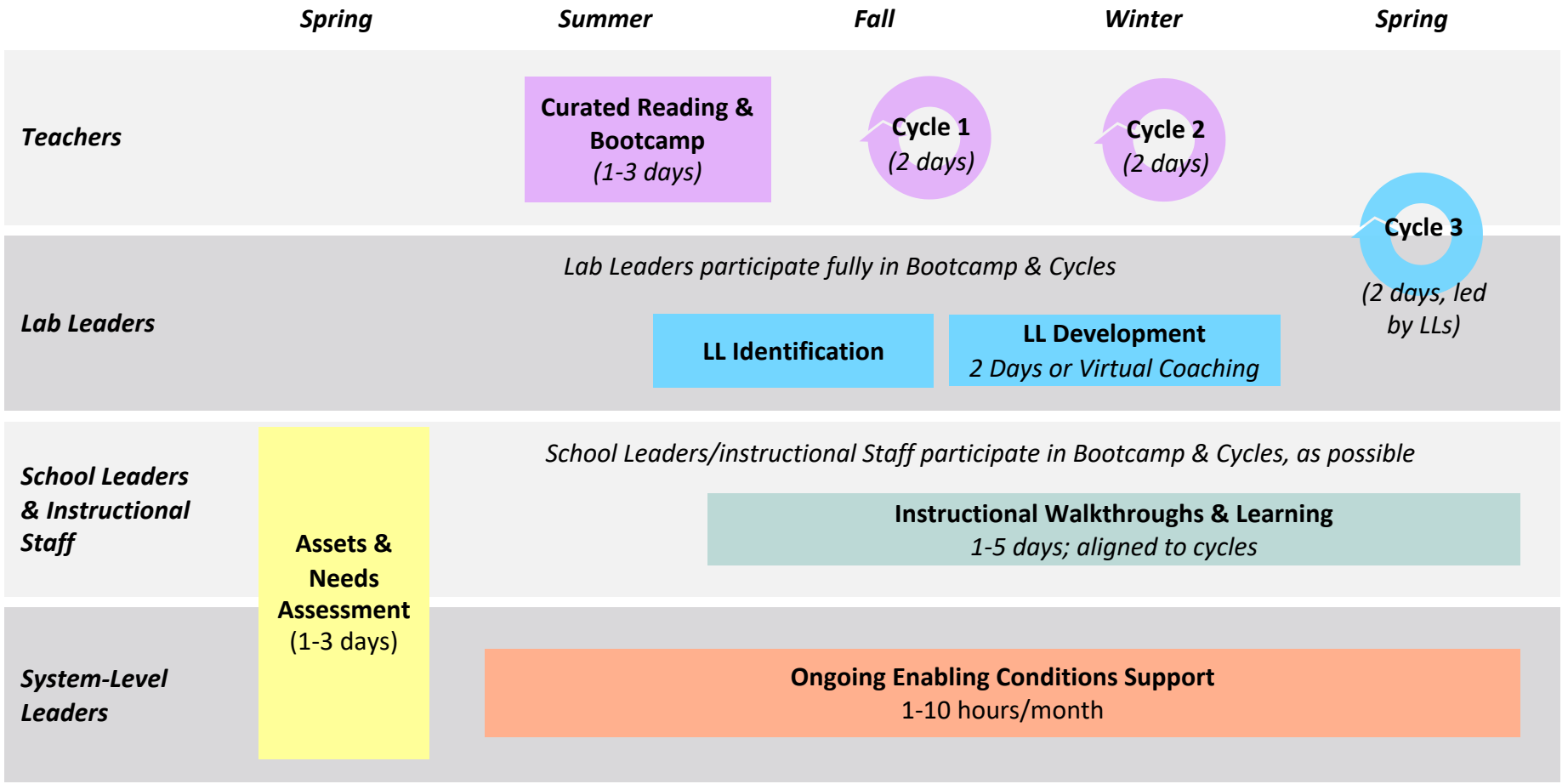
Vibrant, teacher-led Labs…

…embedded in schools with leaders engaged in distributed leadership….

…which are part of school districts and systems that prioritize HQIM and time/resources for high-impact PL…

…all within states with clear strategies for allocating state resources for HQIM and high-impact PL.

Teachers that go through a high-quality year of professional learning in a Lab experience foundational learning as well as 2-3 cycles.



In practice, this work unites educators every day in creating educational equity for students.

Teaching Lab Fellows Tamala Wiley and Ryan Colon (circled) with math teachers in Cincinnati Public Schools.

How does this happen? Teaching Lab facilitators…

Head
Focus PL on instructional materials relevant to teachers

Heart
Focus on building teacher community and relationships

Habits
Translate evidence into practice using teacher-accessible tools and embedded PL within a continuous improvement process

Equity
Center equity, especially related to unpacking teacher math identities

Our Challenge

Why We Exist as an Organization

Research shows that teachers are critical drivers of student outcomes and, contrary to popular belief, teachers improve over the time.

Teachers are the single largest within-school driver of student achievement and affect long-term student outcomes…

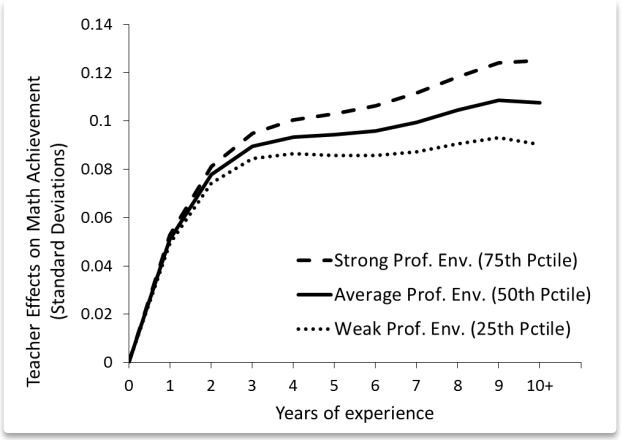
7.5-20%

variation in student achievement directly linked to teacher quality [1]

$250,000

increase in present value of students' lifetime earnings when a bottom-5% teacher is replaced with an average teacher[2]

…and we know that, in the right conditions, some teachers continue to improve over time.



38%

more teacher improvement in schools at high teacher professional environment levels (high "Heart") compared to schools at lower levels[3]

Sources:

[1] Hanushek, Eric A., John F. Kain, and Steven G. Rivkin. (1998). *Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 6691.

[2] Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014). Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood. *American Economic Review*, *104*(9), 2633-2679.

3 Kraft MA, Papay JP. Can Professional Environments in Schools Promote Teacher Development? Explaining Heterogeneity in Returns to Teaching Experience. Educational Effectiveness and Policy Analysis [Internet]. 2014;36 (4) :476-500.

While the U.S. spends significant time and money on teacher improvement, neither research nor teachers themselves suggest it is money well spent.

Time and money spent on teacher improvement is huge…

$18-20 billion
Annual spending on professional development

~$6,000
Average spent per teacher per year on teacher improvement

Up to 19 full school days
Time spent, per teacher, per year on professional development

…yet efficacy is limited.

Academic studies show minimal impact

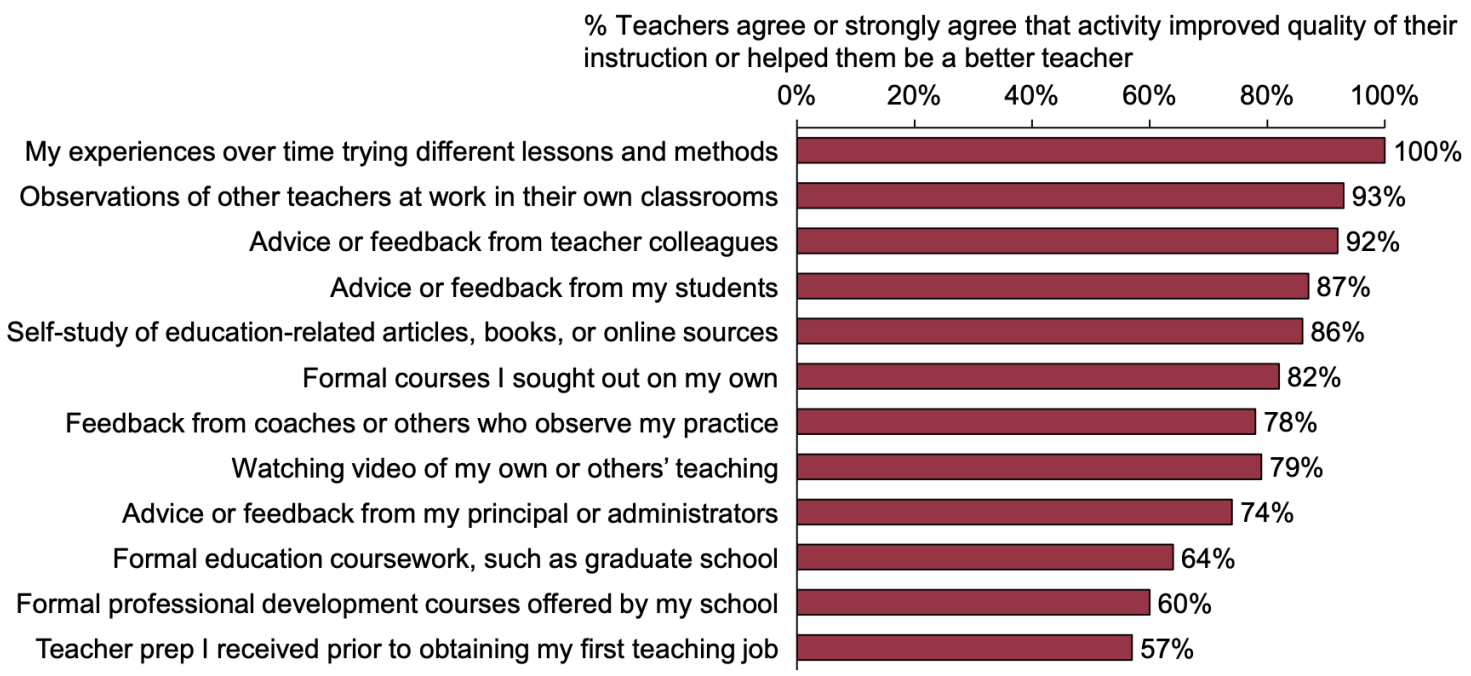
- A study of several large school districts showed 7 in 10 teachers do not improve or decline in performance over time.
- Only 9 of 1,343 studies on professional learning show robust evidence of impact on student achievement.

Teachers voice significant frustration with professional learning

- Only 29% of teachers are satisfied with current professional development offerings.
- Only 34% of teachers think PD has improved recently.

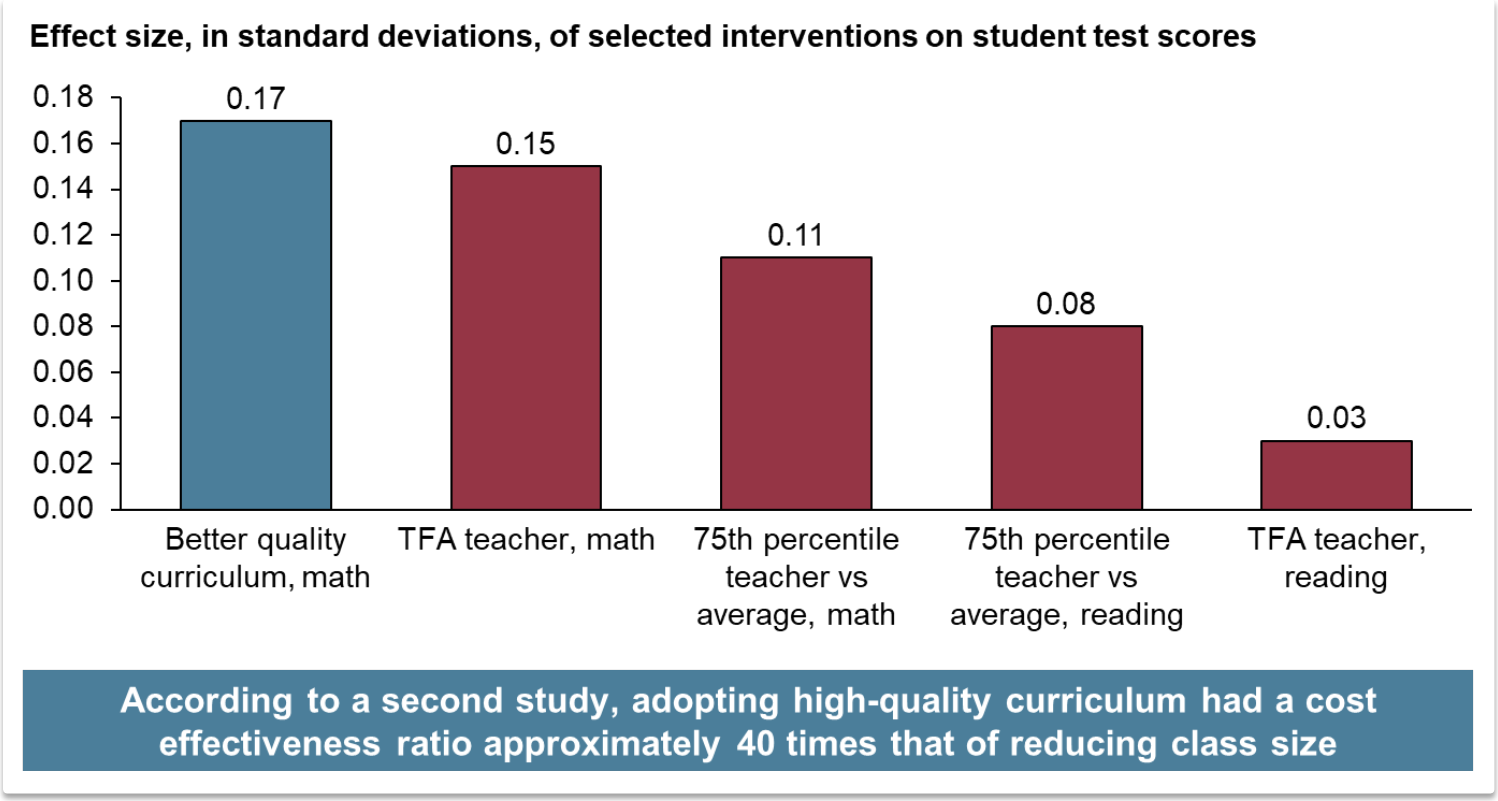
Sources:
National Center for Educational Statistics. (2008.) *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2005-06 (Fiscal Year 2006)*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
The New Teacher Project. (2015). *The mirage: Confronting the hard truth about our quest for teacher development*. Brooklyn, NY: Author. Retrieved from http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP-Mirage_2015.pdf
Guskey, T. R., & Yoon, K. S. (2009). *What works in professional development*. Phi delta kappan, 90 (7), 495-500

Teachers identify that content-specific (head), collaborative (heart), and practice-focused (habits) professional learning experiences improve their instruction.



Sources:
TNTP. (2013). Perspectives of Irreplaceable Teachers.
TNTP. (2015). The Mirage.

Emerging evidence of the effectiveness of instructional materials has resulted in a movement for HQ instructional materials adoption.

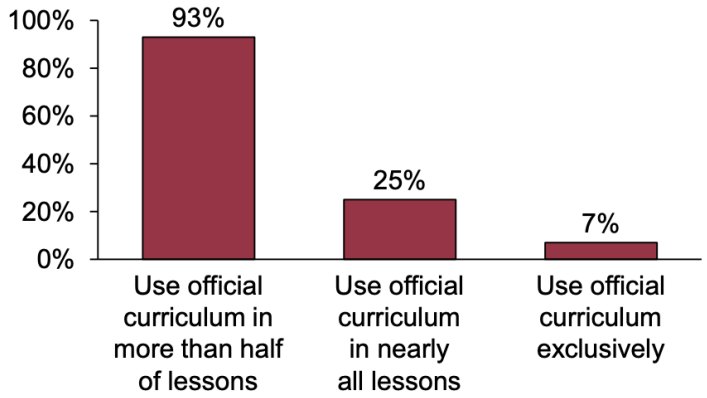


Sources:
Chingos, M.M., & Whitehurst, G.J. (2012). Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core.
Boser, U. et al., (2015). The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress,.

Yet additional research suggests the benefits of HQ instructional materials are not consistent because of lack of teacher professional learning.

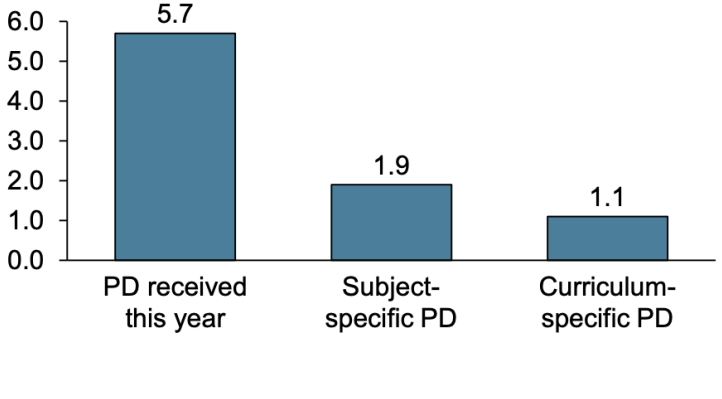
Use of instructional materials is not consistent

Percent teacher responses



And teachers are not consistently trained to use materials effectively

Average days of professional development (PD) per year

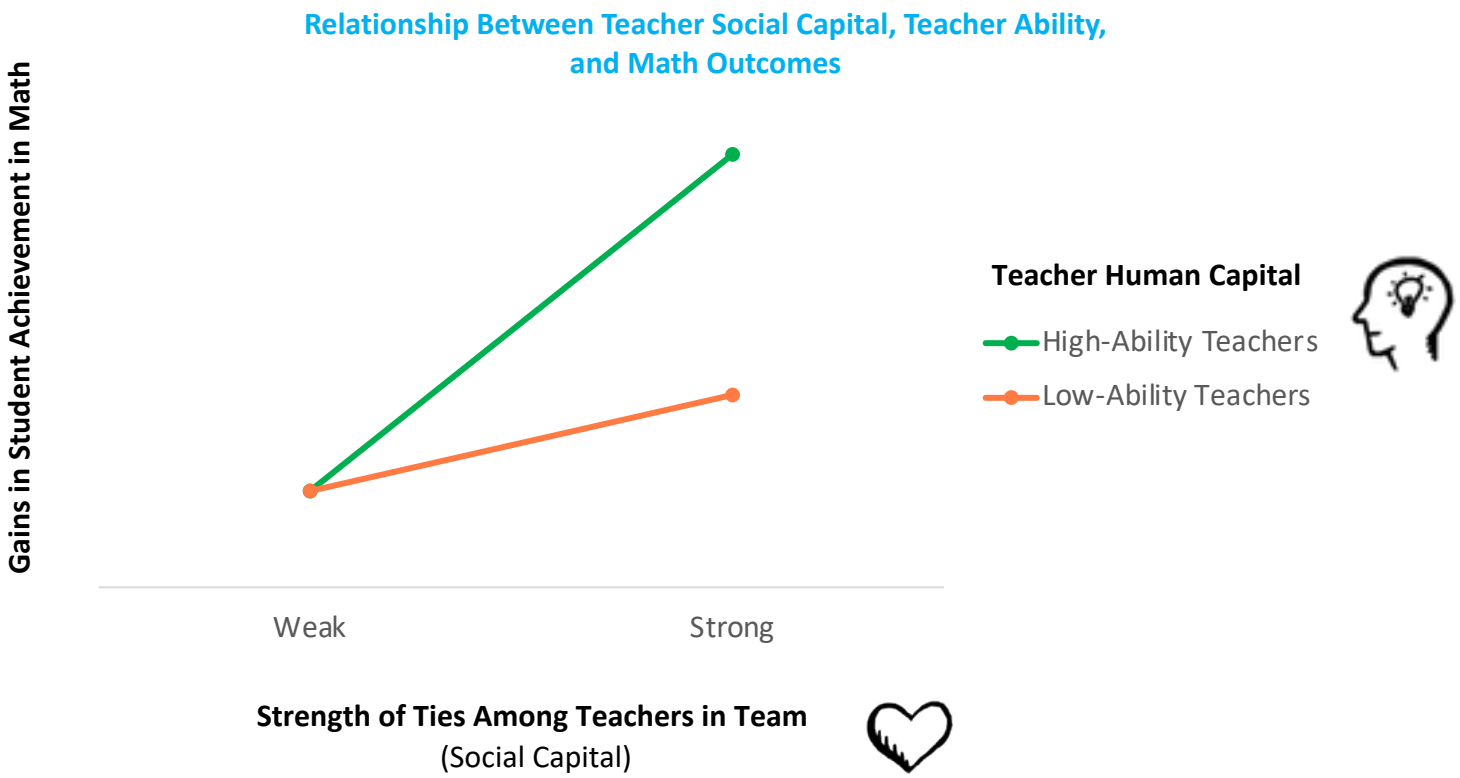


"Although the researchers saw substantial variation in achievement growth among the schools using each particular curriculum, there were no differences in average student achievement growth between curricula."

"The bigger error may be in thinking of **curriculum choice and teaching reforms as alternatives**. It could be that in order to gain the benefits of either, **districts must do both**."

Source: Blazar, D., Heller, B., Kane, T., Polikoff, M., Staiger, D., Carrell, S.,...& Kurlaender, M. (2019). Learning by the Book: Comparing math achievement growth by textbook in six Common Core states. Research Report. Cambridge, MA: Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University.

We also know that individual teacher effectiveness (or human capital) is just as important as teacher social capital, or teacher collegial relationships, highlighting the importance of "heart."



Source: Dr. Carrie Leana's Webinar with Teaching Lab, delivered on October 31, 2019

The research base supports Teaching Lab's model of teacher professional learning: *Head, Heart, and Habits all in service of educational equity.*

"Heart"

Teachers strengthen **social capital** through teacher community, leading to greater buy-in and ultimately **leadership** over their own professional learning.[2]

"Head"

Effective professional learning focuses on **core academic content**, aligned to specific curricular materials, and research-based practices.[1]

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Professional learning is structured around repeated **cycles of inquiry,** which allow teachers to apply what they learn and evaluate evidence of student learning.[3]

Equity

All in service of **educational equity**.

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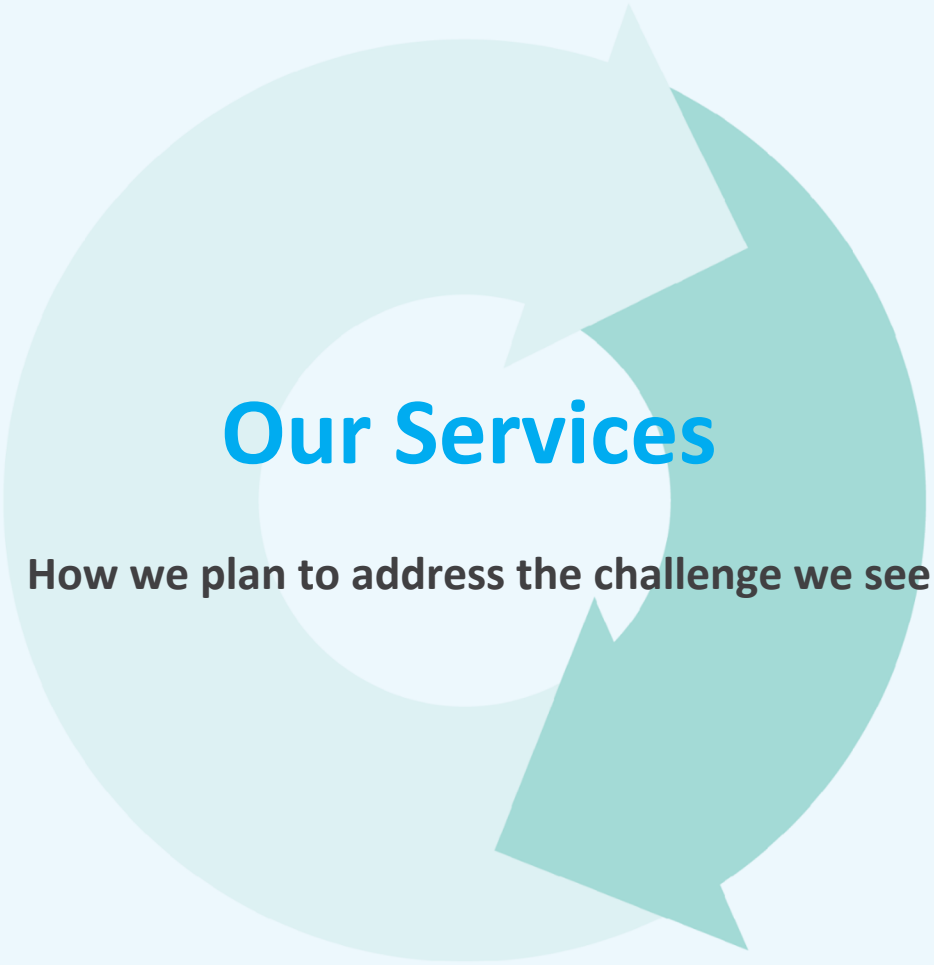
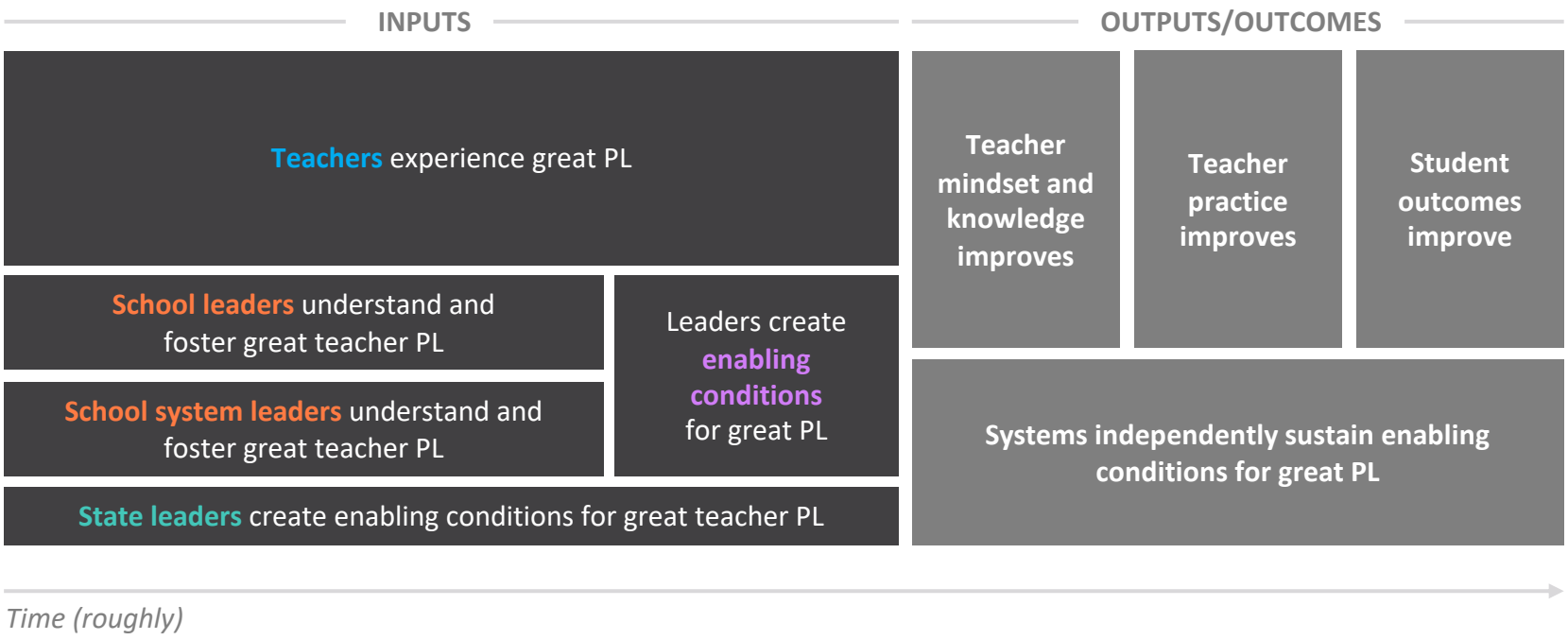


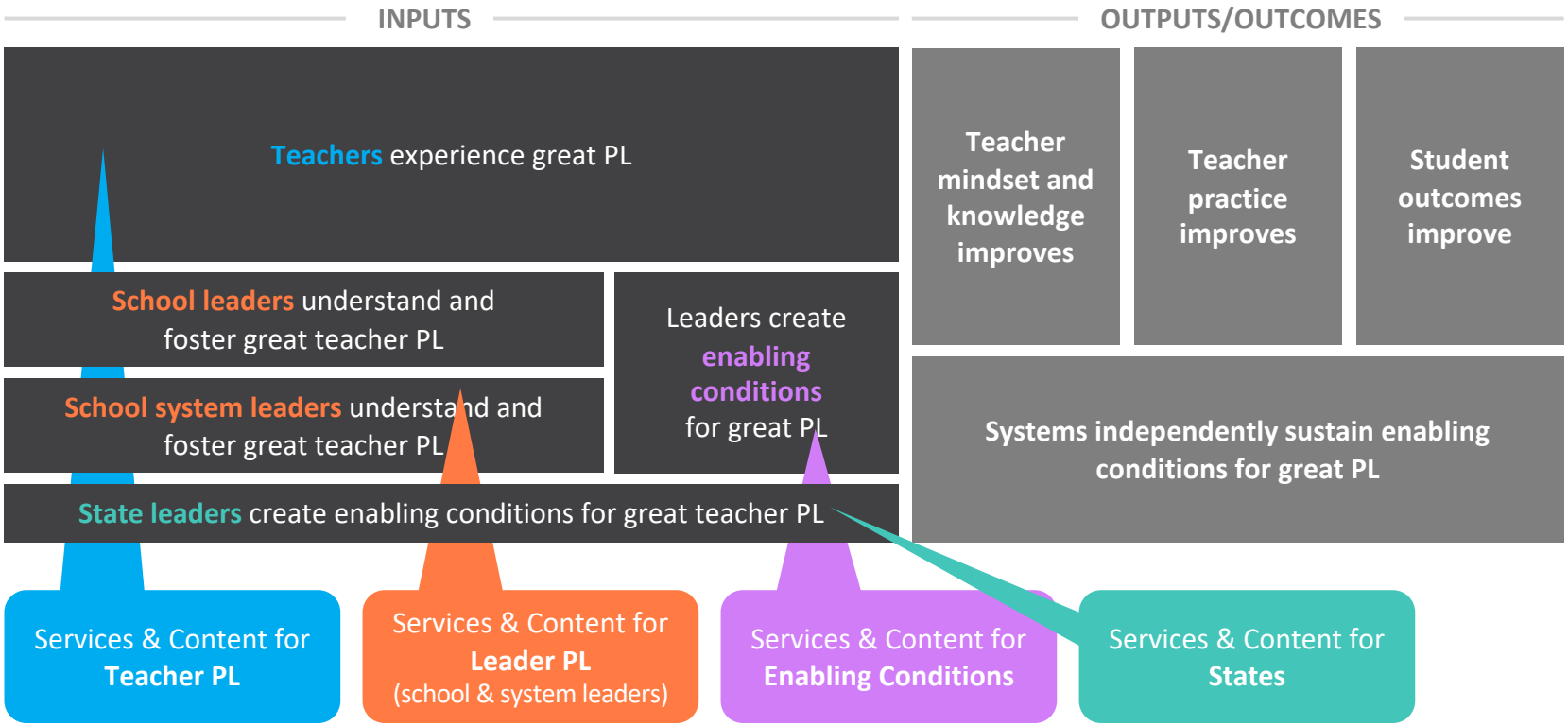
Our Services

How we plan to address the challenge we see

We believe great teacher professional learning (PL) drives improvements in teacher practice and equitable student outcomes. We see five key inputs necessary for this work.



We provide four major strands of services and content that address these inputs. All of them integrate Head, Heart, Habits, and Equity.



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Habits
Professional learning is structured around repeated **cycles of inquiry,** which allow teachers to apply what they learn and evaluate evidence of student learning.

Equity
All in service of educational equity.

We primarily sell these services and content to local schools and school systems, with some state-level and light consulting work.

Teacher PL | Leader PL | Enabling Conditions | States

OUR CLIENTS

Local Schools & School Systems

- The majority of our work is deep partnerships with local schools or school systems to create and sustain great teacher PL
- We work with any district or school that is using or about to use one of the HQIM that we support
- Aligned with our equity-oriented mission, we partner with schools and districts that are ≥60% students of color or ≥60% FRL (or other poverty measure)
- Increasingly, we have demand at the school level for a school model approach aligning teacher and school leader supports

State Education Agencies

- We also work at the state level, helping to create the conditions for great teacher PL
- While we'll work with any state, we'll focus on those with an emphasis on serving historically underserved students and an equity orientation

Other Organizations (Consulting/Content Sales)

- We partner with other organizations with similar missions, including other PL orgs or curriculum providers, to share our learnings and extend our reach
- We may also sell our PL content to other organizations over time

The core of our work is focused on teacher-level PL. Our current implementation model centers on “Labs”.

Teacher PL | Leader PL | Enabling Conditions | States

LABS

A **Lab** is a group of teachers of the same subject working with a common curriculum and students in the same or similar grade levels within a school or network of schools.

Labs are led by two or more **Lab Leaders**, who are experienced teachers or instructional coaches who support their colleagues’ development.

Labs center their work on curriculum-specific professional learning **Content Modules** created by Teaching Lab and vetted by experts.

Content Modules support repeated **Cycles** of learning that align with student-facing materials to drive teacher professional learning. Cycles last four to six weeks to allow for teachers to apply and evaluate new learning. Labs complete two to four Cycles each school year.

Head

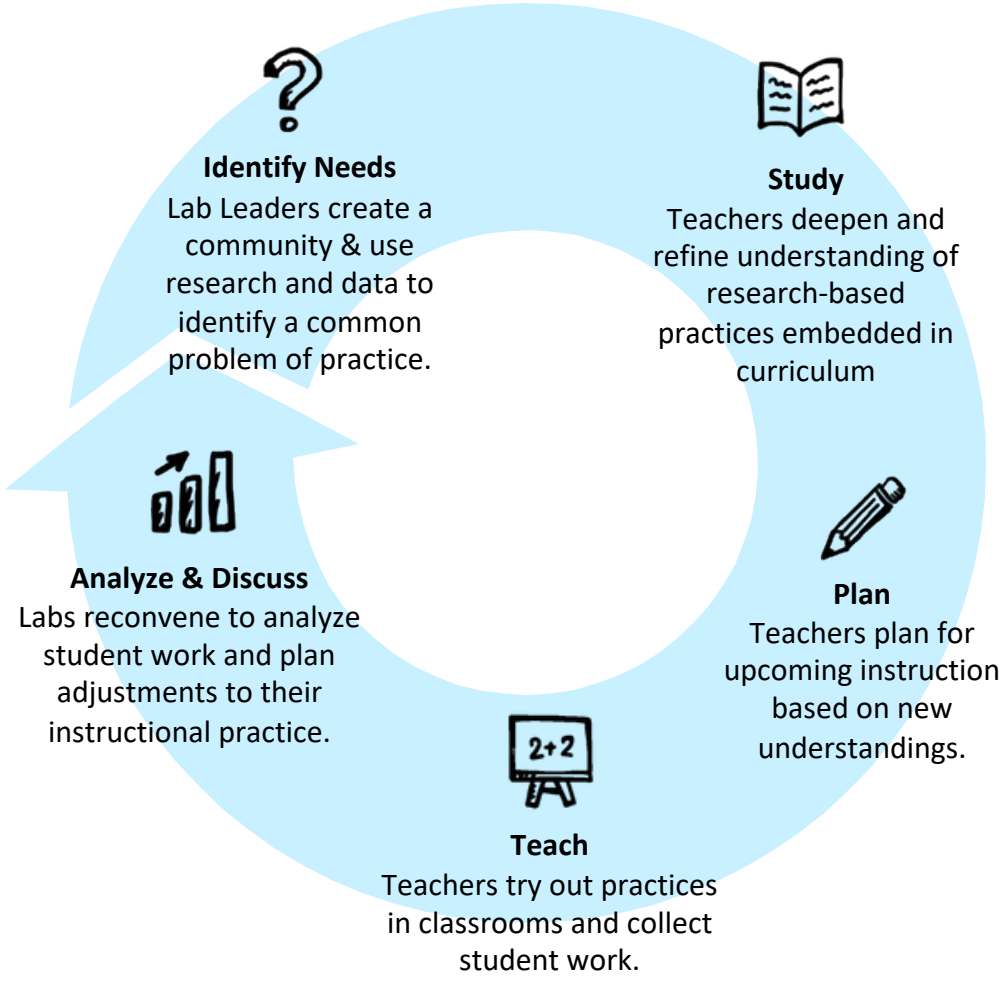
Heart

Habits

Equity

Labs complete Cycles, which consist of five steps and last four to six weeks.

Teacher PL | Leader PL | Enabling Conditions | States



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We support systems to create or improve key enabling conditions for great teacher PL through a consultative model.

Teacher PL | Leader PL | **Enabling Conditions** | States

ENABLING CONDITIONS FRAMEWORK

Head

Demonstrates role-appropriate and system-wide knowledge of:

- College- and career-ready (CCR) **instructional shifts**
- **Content knowledge and learning science**
- **HQIM-specific knowledge** (design, approach, and assessment)
- **High-leverage and equitable instructional practices** (ideally, those outlined by the Instructional Practice Guides)
- Equitable supports for **diverse learners and students with unfinished learning**

Heart

Demonstrates system-wide commitment to:

- Coherent **instructional vision** for improving teaching and learning
- **TL's mission & model** (HHH & Equity)
- HQIM as a **vehicle for educational equity**
- **Teachers as leaders**
- **Stakeholder engagement** to advance instructional vision by building **social capital**

Habits

Has sustainable systems in place for:

- **Distributed and equitable teacher leadership** (including incentives)
- **Sacred time (and resources) for professional learning**
- **Observation, feedback and coaching cycles** for teacher growth (i.e., not evaluative)
- **Use of data and continuous improvement processes** to make decisions
- **Coherence of related instructional system components** (e.g., assessment systems, grading policies, testing requirements, accountability systems, approach to intervention, technology adoption, etc.)

Equity

Demonstrates alignment to our core value of equitable outcomes for all students, including a belief that all students can learn

Our ultimate goal is to move partner school systems towards leading independent Labs and Cycles.

Teacher PL | Leader PL | Enabling Conditions | States

STAGES OF TEACHING LAB DEVELOPMENT

Bootcamps & Onsite Visits

Stage 1: Building Knowledge & Buy-In

Services: *Needs assessment, bootcamps, curated reading, school and district-level support*

Demonstration Cycles

Stage 2: Demonstrating the Cycle

Services: *Teaching Lab-led cycles; additional investment of teachers and leaders; Lab Leader identification*

Local Cycles

Stage 3: Lab Leader Cycles with Direct Teaching Lab Support

Services: *Coaching of Lab Leaders; support of school and district-level teams to continue the work; microcredentialing; tech tool integration*

Independent Local Cycles

Stage 4: Independent Lab Leader Cycles

Services: *Provision of additional content modules; virtual Lab Leader support; work with school and district teams to plan for sustainability*

Teaching Lab support & cost to districts declines over time as teachers build ownership and capacity to sustain the work. Our explicit goal is to put ourselves out of business as we work with individual school systems.

Lab Leaders play a key role in both delivering PL to their peers and creating long-term sustainability in schools and school systems.

Teacher PL | Leader PL | Enabling Conditions | States

STAGES OF TEACHING LAB DEVELOPMENT

Bootcamps & Onsite Visits

Stage 1: Building Knowledge & Buy-In

Lab Leaders are always teachers or coaches; sometimes they are already designated teacher-leaders, while other times they are identified later in TL's engagement

Demonstration Cycles

Stage 2: Demonstrating the Cycle

Lab Leaders learn the basics of Labs and Cycles as Teaching Lab facilitators lead during the first stage

Local Cycles

Stage 3: Lab Leader Cycles with Direct Teaching Lab Support

Lab Leaders begin to co-lead Cycles with Teaching Lab or lead with in-person or virtual TL coaching; they also identify additional Lab Leaders

Independent Local Cycles

Stage 4: Independent Lab Leader Cycles

*Lab Leaders lead Cycles independently, beginning to identify new topics and creating new cycles with their peers.**

*Lab Leaders may become certified by Teaching Lab at this stage.