



Teaching Lab

FINDINGS FOR — THE FIELD —

Accelerate Teacher Learning

=

Accelerate Student Learning

WWW.TEACHINGLAB.ORG

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Dear Readers,

This last year was rough — from a global pandemic that continues to persist to civil unrest due to repeated acts of racial injustice and police violence. We applaud you for continuing to move forward and keeping hope alive.

We especially commend the many educators we serve who kept teaching in unsafe environments; kept teaching in new and confusing virtual modalities; and kept teaching, not just to improve academic learning, but to ensure that the whole child is looked after by addressing student trauma and centering culturally responsive instruction.

Before the pandemic we said, “teaching is rocket science.” And this past year, teaching was more like “building the rocket while we fly it.”

In the following report — Findings For The Field — we show that despite this difficult year, teachers adapted, persevered, and improved their mindsets, knowledge, and practice. As an educator, I’m not surprised. Teachers will always bring it for their students even in the most challenging circumstances — it’s our calling.

**“Teachers will always
bring it for their
students even in the
most challenging
circumstances —
it’s our calling.”**

After all, when we take teacher learning seriously, we take student learning seriously.

As you know, our vision is to reimagine education and truly pursue educational equity by accelerating student learning — but our vision will not be realized without teachers. Our *Head, Heart, Habits, & Equity* model is about taking care of the whole teacher on behalf of the whole student.

When you treat teachers like professionals, teach them the evidence behind instructional practices, and give them time and space to learn and grow in their communities, they improve student learning experiences — and most of all, they experience joy while doing it.

We hope that Findings For The Field will encourage you to truly advance educational equity — for our nation’s students and for our amazing educators.

Thank you for shifting the paradigm with us.

Sincerely,

SARAH JOHNSON, CEO OF TEACHING LAB

WHAT IS TEACHING LAB?

Founded in 2016, Teaching Lab is a nonprofit organization with a mission to **fundamentally shift the paradigm of teacher professional learning for educational equity**. Teaching Lab specializes in curriculum-based professional learning, using our evidence-based model of professional learning, coined *Head, Heart, Habits, and Equity*. We envision a world where teachers and students thrive together in communities that enable lifelong learning and meaningful lives.



HEAD:

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



HEART:

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



HABITS:

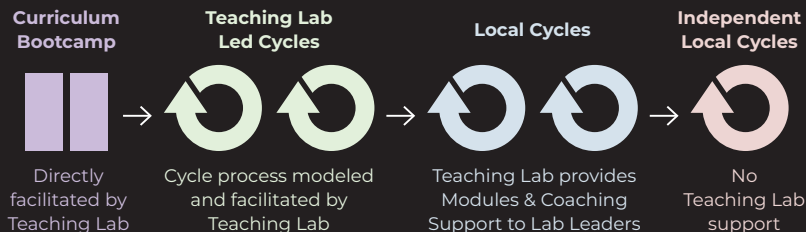
Professional learning is structured around repeated cycles of inquiry, which allow teachers to apply what they learn and evaluate evidence of student learning.³



EQUITY:

All in service of educational equity, which means eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of student learning outcomes.

In partnership with teachers, we transform professional learning from the ground up to dramatically improve student outcomes. We also work with school, district, and state leaders to create the instructional systems necessary to support these changes. To shift systems for teacher professional learning, Teaching Lab recommends partnerships with school systems extend over 3-5 years. Teaching Lab starts by directly facilitating professional learning, followed by gradually releasing facilitation responsibility to Lab Leaders through coaching support. Eventually, systems run their own Labs and local Cycles independently.



Our model is based on the best educational research and years of experience using exceptional instructional materials with teachers. Our team of educators is committed to ensuring all students—especially students traditionally underserved by our school systems—meet the academic and social expectations necessary to succeed now and in the future. Our partners believe in the power of great teaching to inspire students at all levels to learn and grow.

See more information [here](#).

NETWORK OF PARTNERS

In School Year 2020-21 (SY20-21), Teaching Lab supported over 30 school systems across 13 states, reaching 5,000 educators and over 400,000 students, and we also directly supported six state education departments. To date, Teaching Lab has reached over 10,000 educators across 24 states, serving over 1,000,000 students. Of the students in our school and district partner systems this year,

75%

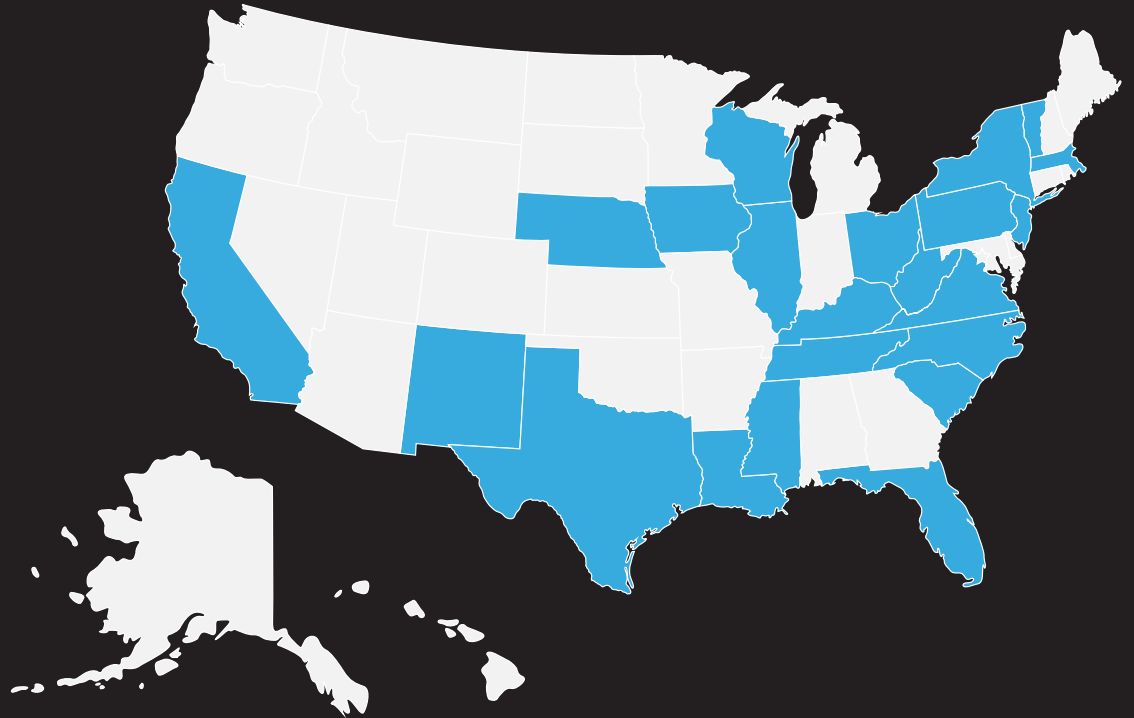
receive free or reduced lunch (FRPL)

71%

are students of color

10%

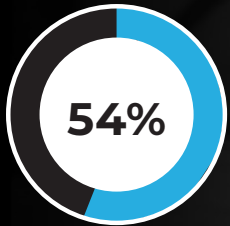
are students learning English, with several partners serving 30% of students learning English



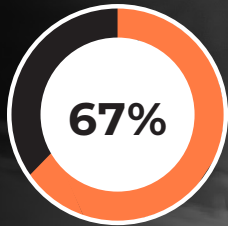
WHO WORKS AT TEACHING LAB?

Teaching Lab is a learning organization consisting of a mission-driven team of over 40 employees and 100+ part-time consultants. The vast majority of our team members are accomplished former or current educators or instructional leaders. Our team members are instructional experts with experience in evidence-based ELA and math instruction, curriculum-based professional learning, and designing best-in-class in-person and virtual professional learning experiences.

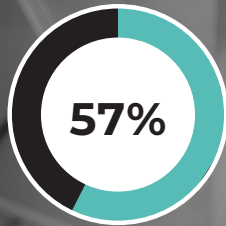
Team diversity is a major priority at Teaching Lab, and our goal is to ensure our workforce mirrors the racial diversity of the students we serve. Currently:



of our employees
identify as
people of color



of our Executive Team
members identify as
people of color



of our board
members identify
as people of color.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are grateful for the leadership and guidance from our Board of Directors:



BELLWETHER
EDUCATION PARTNERS

CWEN BAKER

Chief Operating Officer,
Bellwether Education Partners



TEACHFORAMERICA

JENNY JORDAN

Chief Operating Officer,
Teach For America – Bay Area



**STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT
PARTNERS**

RACHEL ETIENNE

Executive Vice President
of Professional Learning,
Student Achievement Partners



**BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation**

BRYAN RICHARSON

Senior Program Officer,
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
EDUCATION & SOCIETY PROGRAM

ROSS WIENER

Vice President for
Education, Aspen Institute



**Draper Richards Kaplan
FOUNDATION**

ANIKA WARREN

Chief Organizational
Effectiveness and Talent
Development Officer, Draper
Richards Kaplan Foundation



CORE[®]

Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education[®]

ROBERT SHEFFIELD

President, Consortium on
Reaching Excellence in
Education (CORE)

WHAT IS FINDINGS FOR THE FIELD?

Teaching Lab started releasing “Findings For The Field (formerly known as “Impact Report”)” in 2020 as a way to share our findings on the impact we’ve had on educator mindsets, knowledge, practices, and student learning each year. Our extensive research agenda includes surveys, observations, and student work sample reviews taken at multiple points during the school year. We also rely on many focus groups and interviews with educators to help us learn about our impact, and, most importantly, get a pulse check on their current instructional needs to continually improve our programming. Once a year, we bring all of our analyses together and share with our partners, funders, researchers, and the broader community and add to the literature on the impact of teacher professional learning.

If you are an educator, we want to share with you how taking teacher learning seriously through intensive and ongoing professional learning makes a real, positive, and lasting impact on student educational experiences and learning. Let us know if [you want our support.](#)



TEACHING LAB'S MEASURE OF INFLUENCE

This year, Teaching Lab shifted our model and offered 100% virtual professional learning. Educators who participate in Teaching Lab professional learning highly rate their experiences and improve their:

- 1) equitable mindsets and beliefs,
- 2) content and pedagogical content knowledge, and
- 3) equitable teaching practices.



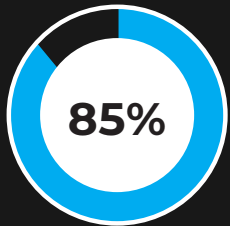
“

**This is extremely
valuable in furthering
my knowledge and abilities.”**

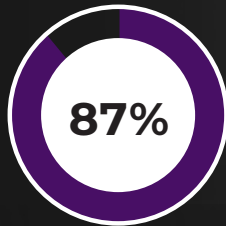
-DE CURRICULUM FLEXIBLE CYCLE 1 -
OPENING

Participant Feedback

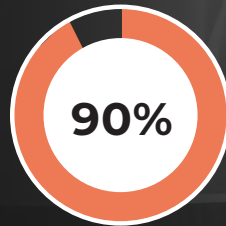
Teachers participating in the 2,200 hours of Teaching Lab's virtual delivery model continued to highly rate their professional learning experiences in spite of the challenges that SY20-21 brought. By leveraging our learning management system and other tech tools:



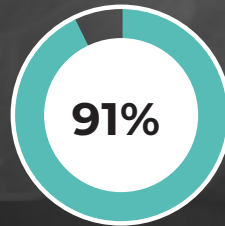
of participants reported **satisfaction with the overall quality** of courses



reported that **they would apply what they learned**



felt a **sense of community** in the virtual courses



felt **facilitators effectively built a community of learners**

Moreover, **Teaching Lab's Net Promoter Score (NPS) to date is 66**— well above 50, which is generally considered excellent.

“
Engaging, content-rich,
community environment of
learners, skilled facilitators.”

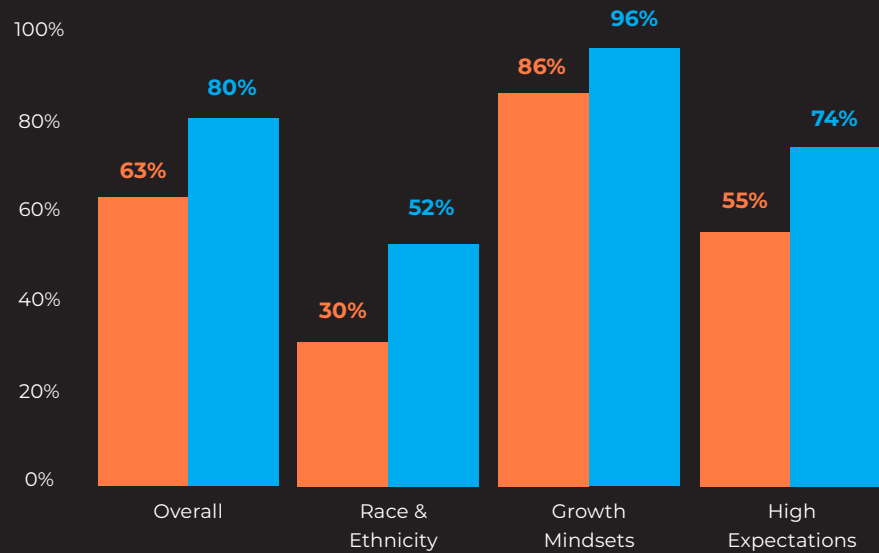
-EL BOOTCAMP: MODULES (K-8)

Educator Mindsets

Educators in Teaching Lab professional learning improve or sustain their equitable mindsets and beliefs about instruction. The percent of educators who sustained or improved their scores on components of equitable mindsets and beliefs increased from SY19-20 to SY20-21.

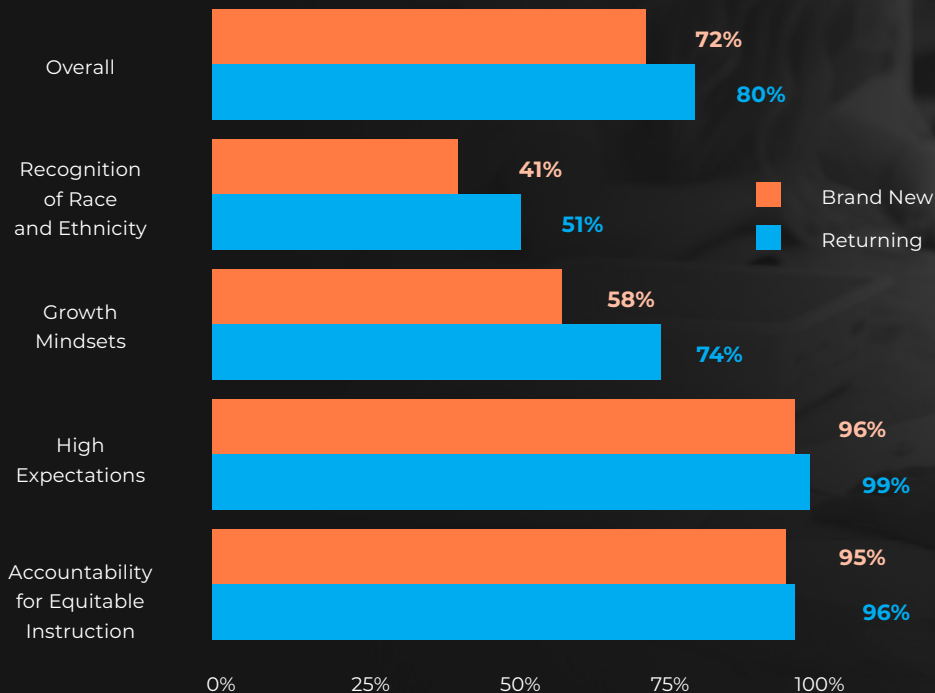
- Teachers in their subsequent year of professional learning demonstrated stronger equitable mindsets and beliefs compared to teachers who are brand new to Teaching Lab's professional learning. In particular:
 - Brand new participants averaged 41% on equitable mindsets on race and ethnicity whereas returning participants averaged 51%.
 - Brand new participants averaged 58% on growth mindsets whereas returning participants averaged 74%.
- This indicates that **Teaching Lab professional learning not only shifts teacher mindsets and beliefs, but it also endures beyond the first year of professional learning.**

Percent of educators who sustained or improved scores on mindsets and beliefs in **SY19-20** and **SY20-21**



Components of equitable mindsets and beliefs about education

Comparing equitable mindsets for instruction for brand new vs returning participants



Eureka Math can be quite intimidating when you first look at the curriculum. This bootcamp really helps you understand why Eureka is laid out the way it is and how it nurtures all levels of math learners in your classroom.”

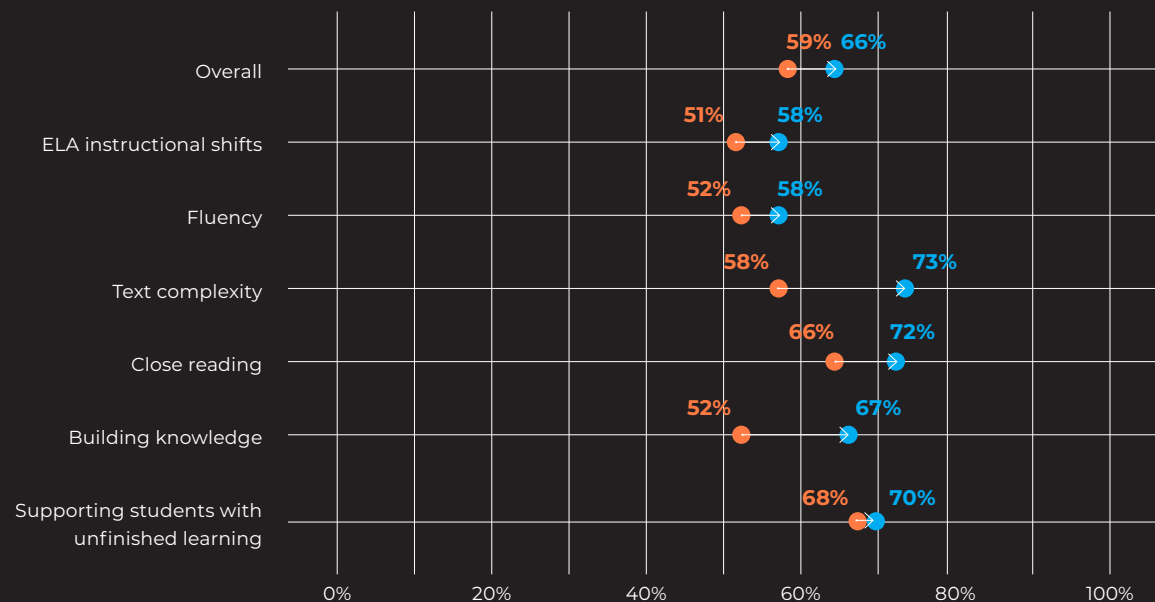
-ENGAGENY K-5 BOOTCAMP

Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge

- We continue to gather evidence that educators increase and sustain their content and pedagogical content knowledge following Teaching Lab's professional learning programs.
- ELA educators increased their content and pedagogical content knowledge across all constructs from the diagnostic to the follow-up survey. They especially increased their capacity in the category of: building knowledge to increase access to grade-level texts as well as selecting for text complexity.

Components of ELA content and pedagogical content knowledge

Educators' average scores on ELA content and pedagogical content knowledge in the **diagnostic** and **follow-up surveys**



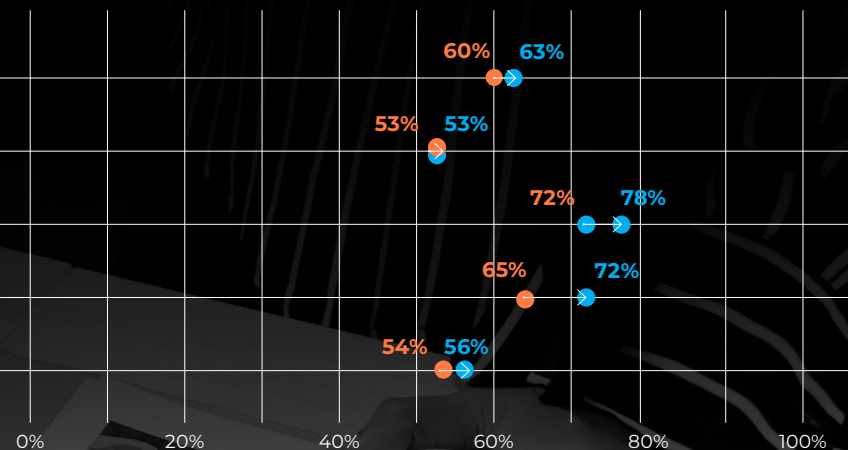
Math educators increased their content and pedagogical content knowledge for most constructs

from the diagnostic to the follow-up survey. They especially showed gains in knowledge related to supporting students with unfinished learning and principles of equitable math instruction. For example, educators learned about incorporating just-in-time reviews of prerequisite skills and opportunities for students to practice saying out loud how they solved a problem. These two specific constructs are critical for ensuring that all students receive high-level math instruction, especially following the impact of COVID-19.

Components of math content and pedagogical content knowledge

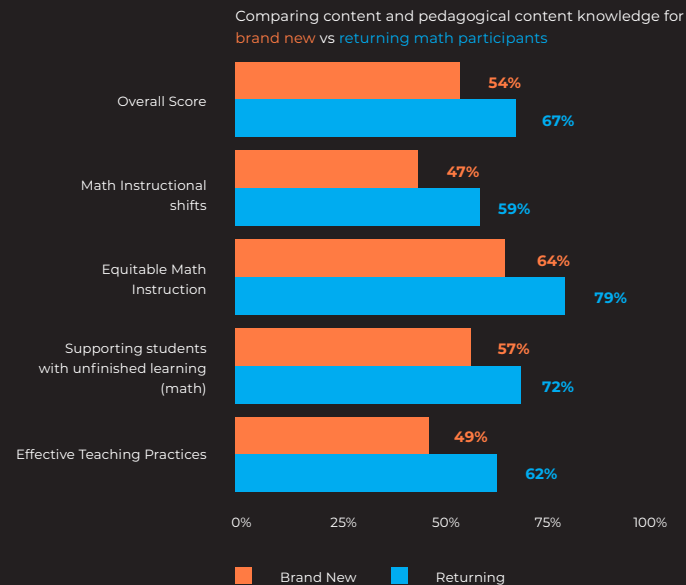
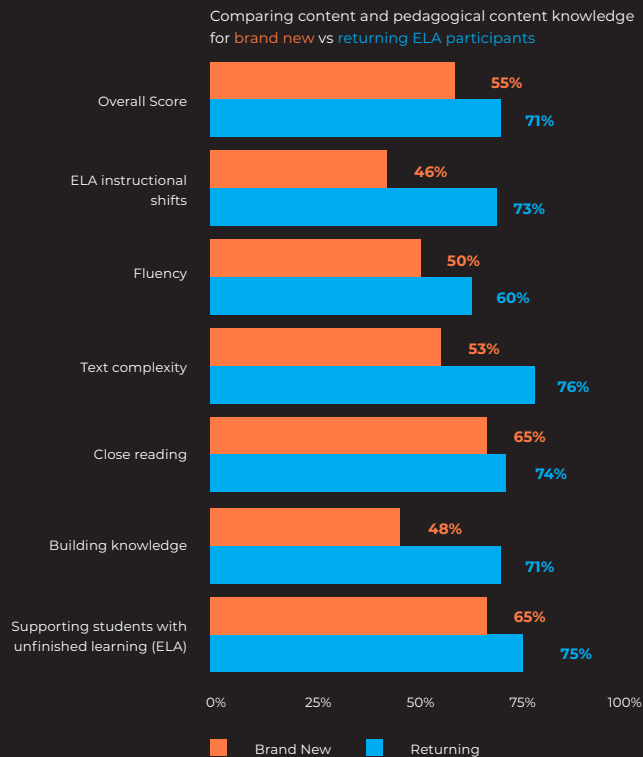
Overall
 Math instructional shifts
 Equitable Math Instruction
 Supporting students with unfinished learning
 Effective Teaching Practices

Educators' average scores on math and pedagogical content knowledge in the **diagnostic** and **follow-up surveys**



· Additionally, teachers in their second year of professional learning scored significantly higher on pedagogical content knowledge compared to teachers brand new to Teaching Lab professional learning, offering evidence that **content and pedagogical content knowledge is sticking and reinforced after years of professional learning:**

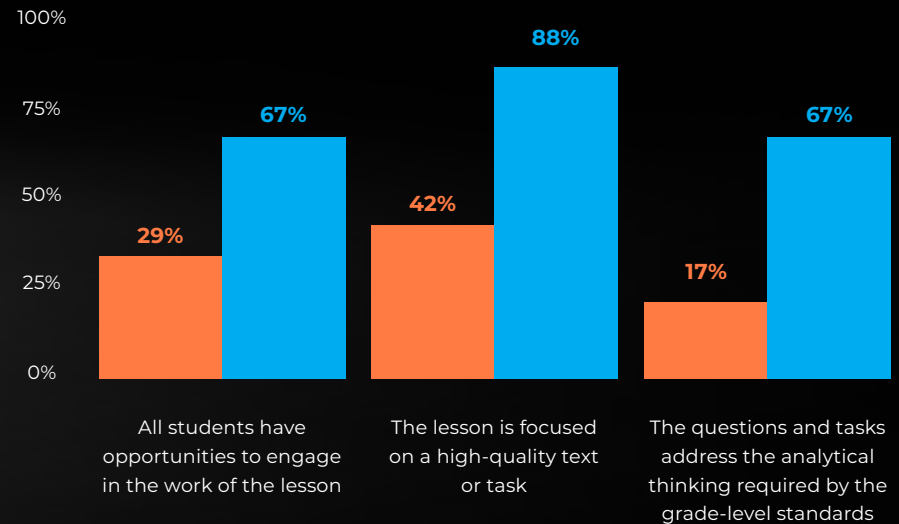
- Average ELA scores: 71% (returning participants) compared to 55% (first year participants)
- Average Math scores: 67% (returning participants) compared to 54% (first year participants)



Teacher Practices

- **Teachers reported feeling more confident in their implementation of the curriculum** in a way that maximizes positive impact for student learning. Specifically, 68% of educators agreed or strongly agreed they were confident in the diagnostic Educator Survey, which increased to 74% in the follow-up survey.
- Coaches, leaders, and administrators reported that **teachers who participated in Teaching Lab professional learning were much more likely to enact high-quality and equitable instructional practices** than teachers who did not.

Comparison of teacher practices of **Teaching Lab participants** and non-participants, as reported by coaches, leaders, and administrators



“

It was a great course - learning was to help us best support our student needs. I loved how much we were required to reflect on our teaching.”

-FORT DODGE K-2 SKILLS CYCLE 1: USING DATA TO INFORM INSTRUCTION

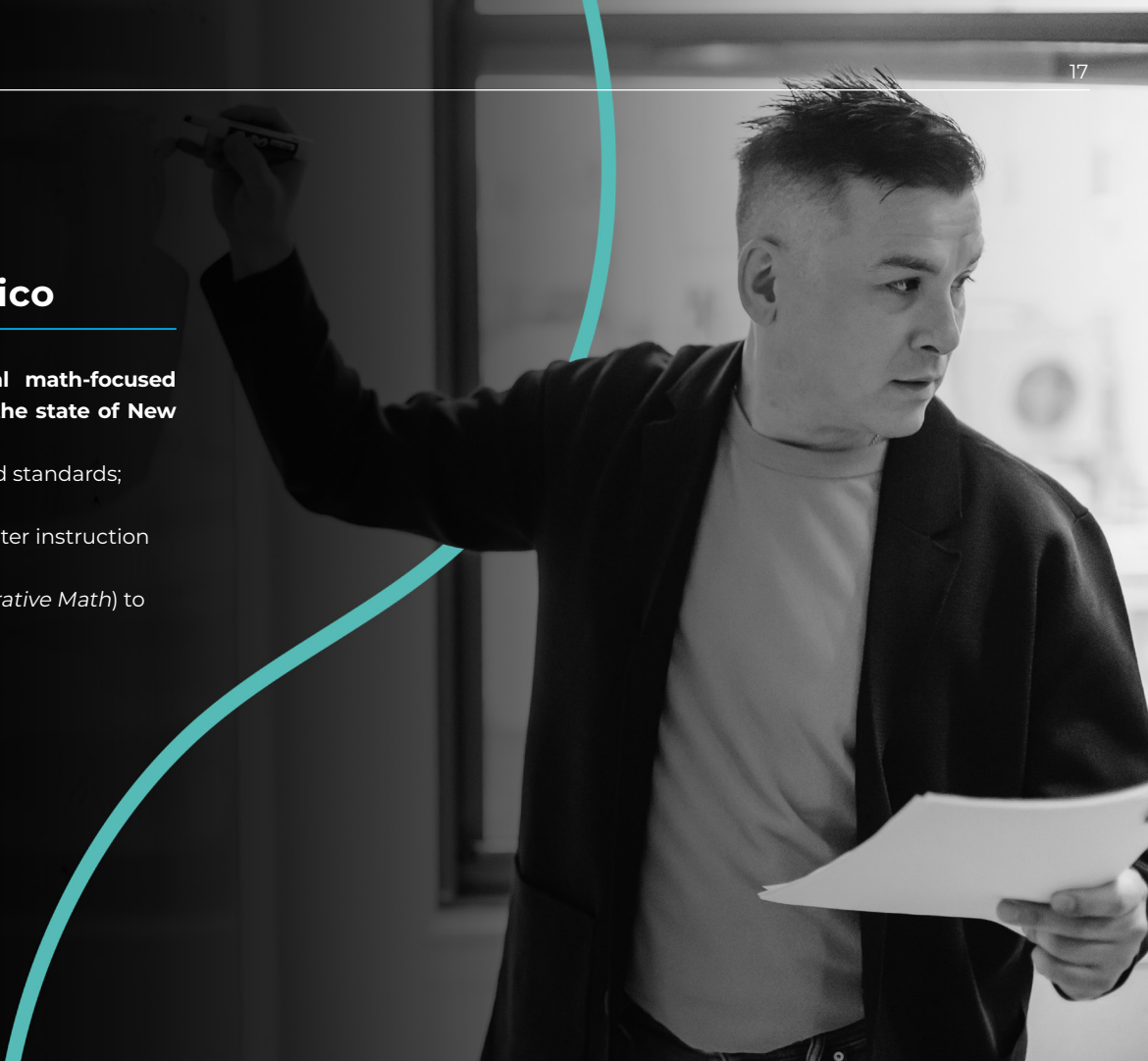
External Evaluation: Professional Learning in New Mexico

- In the Spring of 2021, Teaching Lab led a **6-week virtual math-focused professional learning series with over 50 educators across the state of New Mexico**, focused on supporting teachers to:
 - Attend to rigor aligned to core mathematical practices and standards;
 - Strengthen students' conceptual understanding;
 - Affirm students' diverse (mathematical) identities and center instruction on student knowledge;
 - Use high-quality curricular materials (i.e., *EngageNY*, *Illustrative Math*) to facilitate high-quality instruction



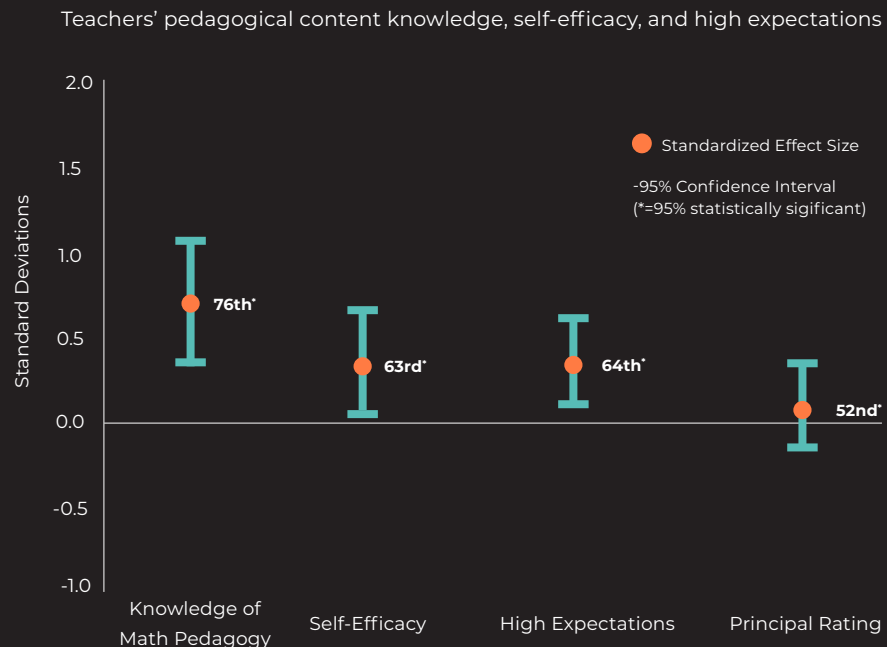
**Informative and able to apply to my teaching.
This PD wasn't selling a product; they were
giving practices."**

-ILLUSTRATIVE MATHEMATICS ENGAGENY 6-12 BOOTCAMP



- **Dr. David Blazar from the University of Maryland conducted an external evaluation of Teaching Lab's elementary and middle school math professional learning series in New Mexico.** Results were overwhelmingly positive and statistically significant: **Math teachers who participated showed substantively meaningful changes in their knowledge of math pedagogy, self-efficacy at delivering high-quality instruction, and self-reported practices related to high expectations for student learning and promoting strong working relationships with parents and students.**

- Teachers in focus groups said, "the content was phenomenal" and loved the opportunities for cross-school collaboration, pointing to the unexpected benefits of virtual professional learning.
- For such a short engagement, it was great to see that the largest effect observed was in the category of teacher knowledge, which generated an effect size of 0.7 SD, equivalent to the median teacher moving to approximately the 76th percentile in the distribution of their knowledge of math pedagogy.
- For teacher-reported self-efficacy, high expectations, and building strong working relationships, the standardized change was approximately 0.35 SD, which means the average teacher moved from the 50th to the 63rd/64th percentile in the distribution of effectiveness.
- Standardized differences ranged from 0.4 to 1 standard deviation (SD), which are **similar to or larger than differences between novice versus veteran teachers. This means that over a very short professional learning engagement, teachers advanced as much as a novice teacher would over the course of accumulating years of teaching experience.**



Source: Blazar, D., Henderson, F., McNamara, D. & Turner, B. (2021, June). Teaching Lab Professional Learning Series: Supporting Teachers to Deliver High-quality, Equity-oriented, and Curriculum-aligned Mathematics Instruction. Independent Evaluation.

Student Work

Student work collected from our partner schools, serving student populations made up of 75% students of color, revealed that 92% of the student tasks were grade-level. These results are dramatically different from TNTP's Opportunity Myth (2018) report, which found 40% of classrooms with a majority of students of color never received a single grade-level assignment.

Students of Teaching Lab teachers improve their school work. In a third-party analysis of student work samples taken in the fall and spring of SY20-21, average scores on grade-level tasks increased for ELA and especially for math. Note: Student work samples were scored 0, 1, or 2.



Efficient and no-nonsense approach to learning about Guidebooks. Teachers' time is valuable and precious and this method honored that."

-GUIDEBOOKS ABBREVIATED BOOTCAMP

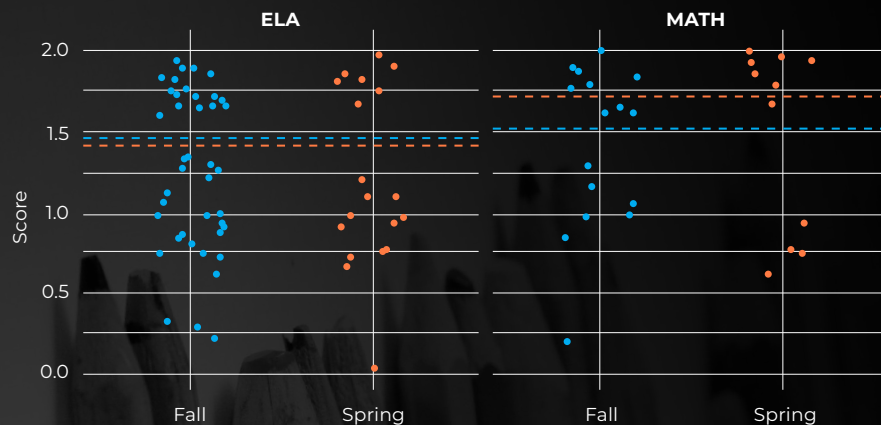
Average scores of student work samples

	FALL	SPRING
ELA	1.32	1.41
MATH	1.27	1.71

The figure (right) illustrates the improvement in student scores in ELA and math over a time period from fall to spring in several different locations where Teaching Lab provided professional learning services. In both ELA and math, there was a marked improvement. Scores provided to anonymized student work were given as 0, 1, or 2. In the figure those scores are “jittered” to represent a distribution where scores of 0 can range 0 to 0.5, scores of 1 can range 0.5 to 1, and scores of 2 can range 1.5 to 2. The dashed lines in the middle represent the mean scores.

This analysis revealed that 44% of students moved out of lower scores of 0 or 1 between fall and spring.

Jittered Difference in Student Scores Fall & Spring Teaching Lab Services



Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education

At Teaching Lab, we believe that any student can learn anything when their cultural and linguistic identities are viewed as funds of knowledge and assets that can aid in the process of learning. In SY20-21, Teaching Lab began to bring a more explicit focus on Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education (CRSE) practice into our professional learning programming offered across the nation. Through this process, Teaching Lab has become a leader in aligning CRSE and curriculum-aligned professional learning, partnering not only with CRSE experts like Dr. Julia Aguirre and Dr. Gholdy Mohammad, but also with teachers themselves through Teaching Lab's Teacher Advisory Board to create and pilot tools and professional learning experiences that incorporate a CRSE lens.



“

Very informative and provides a clear roadmap to instructionally plan.”

-ACCELERATING LEARNING IN MATH



Specifically, in SY20-21, Teaching Lab:

- **Engaged teachers across the country through our Teacher Advisory Board to understand challenges teachers and schools face when learning and implementing CRSE practices** and to ensure our professional learning experiences are developed for and by teachers.
- **Carried out a pilot focused on Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education and implementing the EL Education (EL) curriculum, or what we call a CRSE & HQIM PLC, with 72 teachers from New York City's District 11.**
- **Revised our evaluation plan and identified areas and instruments where we will incorporate the evaluation of CRSE** mindsets and practices for SY21-22.
- **Piloted CRSE items from the Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education Self-Efficacy scale** to improve our evaluation of CRSE practices.
- **Infused a culturally responsive focus into our State-Level High-Quality Professional Learning Fellowship** with the support and thought-partnership of Kao Moua Her.
- **Developed and piloted sessions within our introductory Bootcamp professional learning** to explore the concepts of mathematical identities, effective teaching practices, and equity to deepen educators' critical consciousness related to instruction.

Through these experiences, we've learned that teachers want and need knowledge building and practice opportunities related to CRSE and that district and system leaders also need dedicated and focused learning on cultural responsiveness.

In SY21-22, we look forward to a continued emphasis on CRSE across all of our work.

Teacher Advisory Board

Teaching Lab established the Teaching Advisory Board (TAB) in the spring of 2021 to ensure that Teaching Lab's professional learning programs and content are developed "for teachers, by teachers" to solve for the most important challenges they face with the end goal of advancing educational equity for students across our nation. Made up of 15 teachers across four states who instruct or support all grade-bands of ELA or mathematics, TAB has especially informed Teaching Lab's development of CRSE professional learning experiences by providing insight into how teachers understand CRSE as well as challenges for its implementation at both the classroom and school levels.

TAB not only advises Teaching Lab's program and content development but also builds a community of teachers among its members. Alice Ng, 7th grade math teacher in New York City, describes her experience in TAB:



"We have a lot of diversity of experiences when it comes to Culturally-Responsive Teaching (CRSE) practices. Even as a new group, we are already supporting and giving advice/strategies to each other to improve... there have already been moments of teacher joy that have grown out of connection, shared learning, and sharing solutions and strategies."

In SY21-22, Teaching Lab looks forward to expanding TAB as a community of teachers and amplifying its role in the ongoing development of Teaching Lab's professional learning experiences by using human-centered design principles.



I feel prepared to use EL, but even more so I understand HOW to incorporate the shifts into instruction and WHY they are important."

-EL BOOTCAMP: MODULES (K-8)

New York City's District 11

Teaching Lab has developed an ongoing partnership with District 11 in the Bronx, New York City. In the spring of 2021, Teaching Lab designed and carried out a five-session learning sequence that was part of a professional learning community (PLC) focused on Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education (CRSE) and implementing the EL Education (EL) curriculum, or what we call a CRSE-EL PLC, with 72 teachers from District 11. This virtual PLC provided educators with an opportunity to build and apply knowledge of CRSE practices. The series was designed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to successfully implement CRSE in their daily instructional practices including planning, assessment, and student-facing instruction. Teachers used each of their students' unique cultural identities and skill sets to encourage academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness.



Adrienne Sublett, Director - New Products & Services (ELA), was instrumental in designing this series and reflected: *"I have so many different emotions about this work because I feel like this is it. This is how we can really transform education and help support teachers in ways that they haven't really been supported before."*

A large, stylized teal quotation mark icon consisting of two curved shapes.

The topics are relevant and in high-stakes areas that aid in the development of a great teacher."

-CALCASIEU DIVERSE LEARNERS TEACHER BOOTCAMP

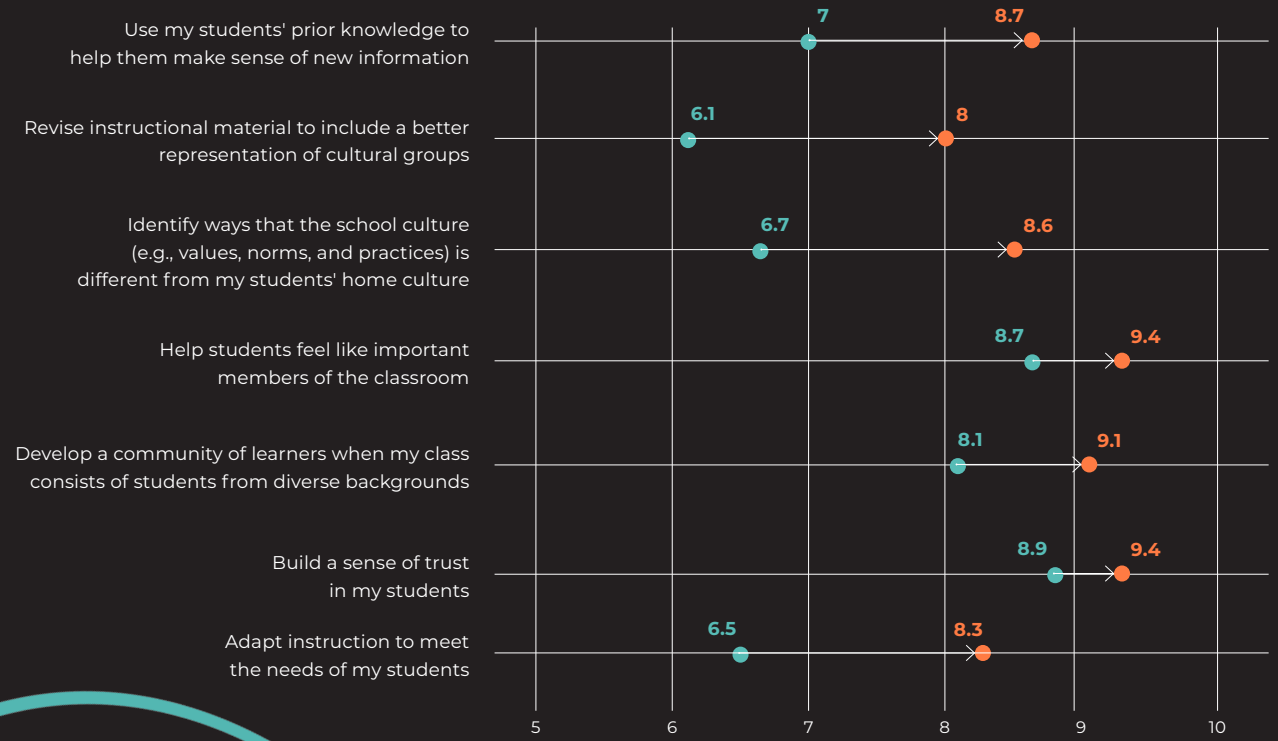



Teachers' reactions and learning from the CRSE-EL PLC were also overwhelmingly positive:

- **Participants approved of and were very satisfied with the CRSE PLC.** Specifically, over 95% of participants agreed that the topics were relevant, facilitation was clear, the facilitators built a community of learners, they felt a sense of community in the virtual environment, and they would apply what they learned in the PLC to their teaching practices.
- **Participants reported increasing their knowledge surrounding CRSE practices after the PLC,** especially those related to identifying differences between school and students' cultures, using students' previous knowledge to help make sense of new information, and revising instructional material and adapting instruction with a CRSE lens, as the figure to the right illustrates.

Participants' perceived knowledge about CRT practices **before PLC** and **after PLC.**

● Before PLC
● After PLC





In a focus group, participants commented that they felt they could be honest, share, and connect with fellow teachers in Teaching Lab's CRSE PLC. Felecia Kelly, fifth grade teacher, expressed: "The space that was created that really felt like a safe space for teachers to open up, and even though we didn't know each other, to really just engage in that kind of conversation, and to get personal at times. So thank you."

Participants reflected that Teaching Lab's CRSE PLC, in conjunction with other CRSE workshops and activities, including a design series focused on Dr. Ghody Muhammad's framework, pushed participants to think more broadly of CRSE; whereas before many teachers only focused on race, they reflected that a student's identity and culture also encompass other aspects such as religion and their community.

Participants also learned about the importance of their own identity work. Stefanie Sanabria, kindergarten teacher, commented that CRSE requires “bringing knowledge of our own biases, and how they influence in the classroom.” Felecia Kelly added:

It made us look inside of ourselves for our personal views on identity. And it's like, almost impossible now for me to go through any day teaching and not not find a way to incorporate “How does this fit in with identity?” with my students and come up with a question to end off the period. With that, it's like it's just constantly in the front of my brain. ...I don't even have to have it in a lesson plan anymore, which I feel like that should be like, like an ultimate goal.

Participants also mentioned that they realized their focus on culture previous to this CRSE work was surface level and isolated. As second grade teacher Marangele Rios stated, “Whereas before, I think, you know, I looked at culture kind of superficially, I was able to really understand like other aspects of culture, and then break that into, like our planning sessions for next year. I love the culture tree that we have explored during one of our sessions.”



Additionally, teachers appreciated the time dedicated in the PLC to understand what CRSE is, unpack what was learned, and find ways to incorporate it into the curriculum and classroom. One teacher highlighted this in a focus group:

"I just think...a lot of times we attend PD, and there's never that concrete time to work with someone unpacking what was just done. For that real life practice in your classroom. It's a lot of theory, theory, theory, spirit, spirit spirit, but [I wonder], 'How do I do this? [How do] new teachers [do this]?... What do I do with this information?' So allowing that time [is so important]. [We had] a great opportunity [during the PLC where the facilitator gave us] that time in groups to look at our lessons, look at our units to unpack it collectively with others within our district, because everybody has different experiences. So you gain a lot of knowledge that way."

For SY21-22, participants are planning their lessons from a CRSE lens, looking for opportunities to incorporate deeper aspects of culture, being aware of how things are phrased that may inhibit some students' understanding, proactively exposing students to other cultures, and making sure students are experiencing joy in the classroom.



Administrators have also observed a shift in teachers' mindsets and practices. Daniel Russo, Deputy Superintendent, commented that the change "really comes down to...the bravery of teachers to tackle topics and literature around topics, unapologetically." He also expressed appreciation for how the CRSE work "has helped teachers and leaders think about how you can honor the curriculum, its structure all of the the work and research that has been put into the product but deliver it in a way that feels like it's the right fit for your students at the right time." Russo added, "we're happy that we have a partnership that is so aligned, and that we're now at a place where we're seeing the benefits of a sustained partnership, surfacing themselves naturally in the learning process, and not in such an orchestrated way."

Teaching Lab looks forward to revising the PLC series based on participant data, feedback from the district partners, and additional research and learning and launching additional cohorts in the FY22 programmatic year.

"change really comes down to...the bravery of teachers to tackle topics and literature around topics, unapologetically."

- DANIEL RUSSO, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT 11 NYC



State-level Program

To truly shift the paradigm of teacher professional learning for educational equity, Teaching Lab believes that every level of the educational system is responsible for advancing a clear vision of educational equity in our nation's classrooms. For that reason, Teaching Lab partners with state-, district-, and regional service center (RSC) leaders to: 1) create the enabling conditions for large-scale selection and adoption of high-quality curriculum; 2) plan and implement equity-driven and curriculum-based professional learning; and 3) build leader capacity across the state to dramatically improve teaching and learning.

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The bootcamp was informative and meaningful. I have a greater understanding of EL education and will apply my learning to my practice.”

EL BOOTCAMP: MODULES (K-8)

State-level Spotlight: Wisconsin Fellowship

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is leading the charge for educational equity across their state. This is important because the state of Wisconsin has some of the largest gaps in achievement between Black and white students in both ELA and math subjects, as determined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2019). To address issues of access and equity, such as the use of outdated materials, teaching below grade-level, and “one-and-done” professional development structures, Wisconsin DPI is engaging in deep work with Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs), district- and system-level leaders, PL Providers, and CESAs to promote the use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) accompanied by high-quality professional learning (HQPL). Having already dedicated time and resources for leaders to identify characteristics of HQIM and processes for its selection and adoption, DPI’s goal during SY2020-21 was to increase capacity and understanding of HQIM-focused professional learning, while at the same time advancing equity for their students.

This is where Teaching Lab came in. Through its eight-session Instructional Leader Fellowship, **Teaching Lab began its partnership with the Wisconsin DPI, CESAs, system-level leaders, and other PL organizations to advance an understanding of exceptional HQPL aligned with HQIM and design the roll-out of HQIM adoption and HQPL plans to the districts and schools they support.** Teaching Lab also pushed participants to analyze the structures within school systems that create barriers for certain students, especially those from historically marginalized groups, and reflect on their role as leaders in engaging in hard conversations surrounding these issues to pave the way for change.



“**The information was priceless and you get to talk with other professionals.”**

-MATH CURRICULUM FLEXIBLE DAY 2



Teaching Lab codesigned its PL with the Wisconsin DPI.

"...it was a *true collaboration and a true partnership with Teaching Lab...* [who] was really open to our feedback, really open to us connecting them with additional folks in the state that we knew had specific expertise in that area of equity. And, just really willing to lean into better understanding [of] our state and our state context and continuing throughout the series to work to understand what's the experience, and what's the context of our regional service providers, as well as the district teams that were participating. ... We were able to really land some relevant appropriate scenarios that ultimately really resonated with our regional service provider participants." -Laura Adams, Literacy Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Teaching Lab helped Wisconsin DPI and its partners to develop and use common language surrounding equitable teaching. Kao Moua Her, Technical Assistance Coordinator from Wisconsin RtI Center, explains, "I want[ed] to make sure that there was an alignment, that there was building common language and common understanding where high-quality instructional materials and professional learning was aligning to the framework." Similarly, Dr. Angela Ford, Manager of Advanced Academics of Milwaukee Public Schools, commented, "I'm happy that we're all using the same language, which are, you know, the shifts, and what's the expectation, and really focusing on improving instruction." She continues, "*We realized that from Teaching Lab, that we have to really invest in professional development with teachers so that we all are speaking the same language.*"

Teaching Lab's use of relevant and practical activities facilitated participants' learning and was replicated by CESAs within the schools they serve.

Facilitators in the virtual PL utilized concrete examples, role-playing scenarios, student experiential simulation, and pragmatic tools to illustrate the importance of HQPL aligned to HQIM. The student experiential simulation around shifts in learning was particularly impactful for participants' understanding of instructional shifts and equitable teaching practices and was recreated by participants with the schools they support. Role-playing relevant scenarios to adapt conversations with schools and districts about high expectations, key to equity, were also valuable. Adams commented, "The concrete examples that Teaching Lab provided...were really helpful. Some of those concrete examples were scenarios for folks to talk through, like if this comes up in your district, like how to navigate that. How would you put it if this is what the conversation is? ...How would you navigate that [with] some specific tools, like the unit preview protocol, as a concrete strategy, or concrete framework for guiding materials, scope, identifying and guiding some materials, focused professional learning, those were all really, really helpful tools."

Based on what they learned in the fellowship, CESAs have made changes to how they design, plan, and deliver PL. An Instructional Services Director from one of the participating CESAs explains, “*We [are] truly taking the ideas of ... adult learning, ... the heart, mind, habits.* Yes. [When we are] looking at our PD or thinking about that, when we plan new PD, [we ask] is this really what we’re doing?”

CESAs and other participants have also strengthened their collaboration with each other through the fellowship. Approximately 84% of participants who completed the follow-up survey reported that the Fellowship improved the way they work outside of the PL sessions. Kao Moua Her states, “*the teaming structure, the teaming collaboration across the state was so powerful and meaningful...it was empowering for my region that I support.*” Similarly, Dr. Ford commented, “we have built relationships that are meaningful,” crediting the way Teaching Lab structured the Fellowship to give participants time to process and listen to others and their context.



Participants engaged in meaningful conversations about issues of equity in the districts they work or support.

Around 7 in 10 participants agreed or strongly agreed that the readings, discussions, and session content on cultural proficiency and racial equity impacted their beliefs, behaviors, or actions as a leader, and 9 in 10 participants demonstrated improvement or sustained high scores on equitable mindsets. Kao Moua Her explains:

“And this, this, to me is equity: It’s when people started to realize and recognize that it is the system that is broken. And we need to deconstruct it to make it more accessible. And this is how we’re going to start doing it. These are the couple steps that we’re going to take to move forward. And all these little steps are going to add up to be the you know, the whole letter for where we need to be at. So that, to me, brought me hope, and joy, in terms of where our state is moving, where our educators are moving, and where our leaders are moving toward.”



So a school can do it itself. But that's in isolation. But when a district supports that work, it's almost like the mother coming and saying, 'I'm taking all of you [and] we're going this way,' and that the support and the continuous improvement, and the professional [learning] will be a part of that. And so that's why I'm super excited about the fellowship coming to life, because we have leaders who see this work, who know what needs to be done, and started to change that. So the adoption will happen, the vision will happen, the curriculum will be adopted, the professional learning will be in place, because those funds will be identified, and allocated to where it needs to be."

By the end of the fellowship, state- and district-level teams had developed improvement action plans for HQPL aligned with HQIM and clarity surrounding how materials-focused professional learning promotes equity.

Adams stated, "everybody really walked away with better understanding both of materials-focused professional learning, and equity, and...the intersection between those two things: how equity can be really explicitly brought into a materials-focused professional learning opportunity."

Although challenges remain in closing the gap between students from different backgrounds in Wisconsin and nation-wide, Teaching Lab looks forward to continuing to engage with state- and district-level teams in Wisconsin and beyond and focusing more explicitly on culturally responsive leadership related to HQIM and HQPL and its bridge to Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education.



Contributions to the Field

Teaching Lab seeks out opportunities to collaborate with external researchers and other organizations to contribute to the larger professional learning community. During SY20-21, we partnered with academic researchers and practitioners alike to move our learning forward on what works in professional learning to promote equitable instruction and improved student learning experiences.

- **Teaching Lab is a founding member of the Research Partnership for Professional Learning (RPPL), which brings together top PL organizations and the Annenberg Institute at Brown University to transform professional learning practices through rigorous research.** As part of this partnership, we designed studies that will allow us to know what works in PL, both design features and content, which we will carry out in SY21-22.
- **Dr. David Blazar from the University of Maryland College Park conducted an external evaluation of Teaching Lab's culturally-responsive and curriculum-aligned math professional learning** in New Mexico. Findings pointed to significant gains in teacher knowledge, self-efficacy to deliver high-quality instruction, and self-reported practices that hold students to high expectations and promote strong working relationships with students and families, which are key features of Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education.
- **Teaching Lab participated in Robin Hood Literacy & Technology Fund's Blended Literacy Community of Practice** as part of our innovative grant-funded ELA work carried out in District 11 in New York City.



- **Teaching Lab is pioneering the integration of technology into our core PL model through collaborations with edtech organizations.**

- With funding from the Hewlett Foundation, Teaching Lab began collaborating with ASSISTments, a web-based math homework platform, to explore the use of data on curriculum implementation and student progress in a Cycle of Inquiry to accelerate teacher learning and improvement. The work through this partnership also supports broader research and learning on how open educational resources can best be implemented to support equitable instruction and student learning.
- Through support from Robin Hood funding, Teaching Lab established a partnership with Quill, a research-based open source digital platform to improve student writing, to pilot the integration of this technology into a Cycle of Inquiry.



- **Teaching Lab was selected to be one of the professional learning providers for the multi-year study *Analysis of Middle School Math Systems* funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.** Led by Mathematica, the research will examine how schools and districts can enact high-quality middle school math curricula with aligned professional learning to support teachers and priority populations of students, especially Black, Latino, English Learner-designated, and those experiencing poverty.
- **Teaching Lab is one of the professional learning providers for the Effective Implementation Cohort (EIC), a multi-year project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.** Managed by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), the EIC goal is to generate insights on the key enabling conditions for effective implementation of coherent instructional systems aligned to high-quality middle-years math curriculum.



Looking Forward

As we begin SY2021-2022, Teaching Lab will continue to learn, adapt, innovate, and improve to reach our goal of fundamentally shifting the paradigm of teacher professional learning for educational equity.

We will build new products and services through our best-in-class content design systems and will customize our curriculum-aligned professional learning services based on our partners' goals and their enabling conditions to achieve our objectives in a sustainable, equity-driven, and user-centered way.

We will work to become a leader of virtual professional learning by continuing to create and deliver high-impact, evidence-based, and learning science-based PL in a virtual way, leveraging our LMS and other edtech tools. This includes launching open enrollment service offerings to expand reach and impact to teachers and students across the country, as well as developing systems to support efficient delivery of virtual services to scale partnerships in large districts.



Research is the way we do our work. Not only do we continue to integrate learning science and research about what works in professional learning and teaching into our model, we will continue to conduct innovative formative and evaluative research of our model to inform our own work and share insights with the field. We will lay the groundwork for a future rigorous external impact evaluation of our model by entering into data sharing agreements to collect and analyze teacher and student data from school districts, deepening partnerships with key researchers and funders, carrying out small-scale testing and evaluations, and identifying opportunities for external research funding.

We will move toward full integration of racial equity in every aspect of our programs and operations. We will integrate a culturally-responsive teaching perspective into all of our products and services to ensure all students, especially those from historically marginalized groups, receive equitable and joyful instruction and achieve high expectations. Internally, we will build and sustain an anti-racist culture and build team practices and accountability to advance racial equity and antiracism by prioritizing learning through a racial equity lens, failing out loud, and revising our approach based on what we learn.



FUNDERS

We are grateful for the support of:

