Who is Teaching Lab?
Our mission at Teaching Lab is our north star.

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.

**“Head”**
Effective professional learning focuses on **core academic content**, aligned to specific curricular materials, and 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**.

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

- Identify Needs
  Lab Leaders create a community & use research and data to identify a common problem of practice.

- Study
  Teachers deepen and refine understanding of research-based practices embedded in curriculum.

- Plan
  Teachers plan for upcoming instruction based on new understandings.

- Teach
  Teachers try out practices in classrooms and collect student work.

- Analyze & Discuss
  Labs reconvene to analyze student work and plan adjustments to their instructional practice.

We have dozens 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.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top-Down</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Brain Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Heart Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="No Circle Icon" /></td>
<td>Teachers are told what to do; low buy-in or resentment leads to passive compliance or resistance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Feel-Good</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Brain Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Heart Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="No Circle Icon" /></td>
<td>Teachers meet and feel good but are not supported to learn and grow their practice.</td>
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<td><strong>Slow Learning</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Brain Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Heart Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Gear Icon" /></td>
<td>Teachers engage in cycles of learning but progress slowly without the benefit of research-based content; may even adopt ineffective or counterproductive techniques.</td>
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<td><strong>Lonely-Slow Learning</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Brain Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="No Circle Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Gear Icon" /></td>
<td>Teacher learning is neither research-based nor collaborative; teachers are overwhelmed and revert to traditional teaching methods.</td>
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<td><strong>Professional Learning</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Brain Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Heart Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Gear Icon" /></td>
<td>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.</td>
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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.

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<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Curated Reading &amp; Bootcamp</td>
<td>(1-3 days)</td>
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<td>Cycle 1 (2 days)</td>
<td>Cycle 2 (2 days)</td>
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<td><strong>Lab Leaders</strong></td>
<td>Lab Leaders participate fully in Bootcamp &amp; Cycles</td>
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<td>Cycle 3</td>
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<td>LL Identification</td>
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<td>(2 days, led by LLs)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Leaders &amp; Instructional Staff</strong></td>
<td>Assets &amp; Needs Assessment (1-3 days)</td>
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<td><strong>System-Level Leaders</strong></td>
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<td>Ongoing Enabling Conditions Support</td>
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<td><strong>Instructional Walkthroughs &amp; Learning</strong></td>
<td>1-5 days; aligned to cycles</td>
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Lab Leaders participate fully in Bootcamp & Cycles:
- **LL Identification**: 2 Days or Virtual Coaching
- **LL Development**: 2 Days or Virtual Coaching
- **Cycle 3**: (2 days, led by LLs)

School Leaders/instructional Staff participate in Bootcamp & Cycles, as possible:
- **Instructional Walkthroughs & Learning**: 1-5 days; aligned to cycles

Ongoing Enabling Conditions Support: 1-10 hours/month
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

$250,000 increase in present value of students’ lifetime earnings when a bottom-5% teacher is replaced with an average teacher

...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

Sources:
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:


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

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

“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.”

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.”

### Relationship Between Teacher Social Capital, Teacher Ability, and Math Outcomes

- **Gains in Student Achievement in Math**
- **Strength of Ties Among Teachers in Team** (Social Capital)

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.*

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**Equity**
All in service of **educational equity**.

Sources:
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.

**Inputs**
- **Teachers** experience great PL
- **School leaders** understand and foster great teacher PL
- **School system leaders** understand and foster great teacher PL
- **State leaders** create enabling conditions for great teacher PL

**Outputs/Outcomes**
- Teacher mindset and knowledge improves
- Teacher practice improves
- Student outcomes improve

**Time (roughly)**
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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**Outputs/Outcomes**

- Teacher mindset and knowledge improves
- Teacher practice improves
- Student outcomes improve
- Systems independently sustain enabling conditions for great PL

**Services & Content for Teacher PL**

**Services & Content for Leader PL** (school & system leaders)

**Services & Content for Enabling Conditions**

**Services & Content for States**

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**Head**

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**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.

**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”.

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

Identify Needs
Lab Leaders create a community & use research and data to identify a common problem of practice.

Study
Teachers deepen and refine understanding of research-based practices embedded in curriculum.

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

**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*

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

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

**Stage 1: Building Knowledge & Buy-In**

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

**Stage 2: Demonstrating the Cycle**

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

**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

**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.

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.

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

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.

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.