

Learning Labs

The Model

A Learning Lab is a tool for job-embedded professional learning that utilizes the **Learning Cycle**, developed over the past 15 years with UW College of Education faculty, and partners at multiple universities. The Learning Cycle is a structure for supporting groups of educators in learning to grow their craft in collaboration with one another. It is a useful tool for:



- **Exploring new ideas** and putting them into practice immediately
- **Developing a focus** on educator learning goals alongside student learning goals
- **Developing a culture** of collaboration among participant teams
- **Increasing the capacity** for educators to integrate new learning into their classrooms

Sustainability

The Learning Labs model is meant to be a tool for professional learning communities to take up as their own. The goal is for educator teams to grow their capacity to lead Labs independently. Many regional schools and districts that began with small university supported enterprises are now significantly growing the numbers of teachers involved in Labs. These schools and districts are also increasingly able to facilitate Labs with internal leaders– with intellectual support from university-based facilitators and the growing network of practitioners leading this work in the region. It is this shared ownership and practitioner leadership that renders Labs sustainable– by making it possible to expand the network of people using Learning Labs to grow ambitious teaching practices.

The Learning Cycle

The Learning Cycle is a model for professional learning that undergirds most of the partnerships in which INSPIRE engages. This model is an outgrowth of the research and practice of UW College of Education faculty as well as faculty and practitioners from other institutions. Its use has been evolving over the past 15 years in pre-service teacher education methods courses and in-service professional development.

Introduce: The group begins by selecting an aspect of practice they want to investigate collectively and selecting informational resources and an instructional activity to support that investigation.

Prepare: They collaboratively plan and practice a lesson or intervention to try with students.

Enact: They go into a classroom to try the lesson or intervention, sharing the responsibility for the decision making of live teaching during the lesson. Often groups will do two classroom visits in one day so that plans can be revised between visits and multiple teachers can try leading the activity.

Analyze: Then the group analyzes how the lesson or intervention was implemented, considering what they learned about student thinking and how decisions played out in the classroom. They then plan for next steps.



UW INSPIRE and the UW Continuum College are currently partnering to offer Learning Labs facilitation and resources for teams interested in developing practice in the English Language Arts content area. For more information on Learning Labs, and the Learning Cycle, visit our website at inspire.washington.edu or visit tedd.org.

To learn about how your district can start using Learning Labs, please contact us at inspire1@uw.edu.