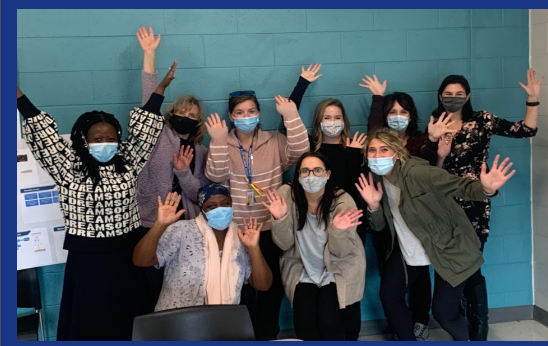


# Teacher Leader Fellowship: Impact Report

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**2021-2022**

The Diverse Learners Cooperative exists to create purposeful networks of educators, providing them with high quality resources and collaborative learning experiences that increase best practices for diverse learners and teacher retention.





# DLC Teacher Leader Fellowship

## Purpose of the Teacher Leader Fellowship

Teachers of students with disabilities and English learners are often one of a few in their schools, lack access to adequate support and development opportunities, and as a result, experience high rates of burnout. The DLC Teacher Leader Fellowship exists to connect teachers to relevant professional growth experiences, resources, and networks to propel best practice for diverse learners and increase teacher efficacy.

## The Fellowship Experience



3-day  
Summer  
Session



Quarterly  
Growth  
Sessions



Onsite 1:1  
Leadership  
Coaching



Peer  
School  
Visits



Mentor  
Groups &  
Cohort Calls



Design  
Impact  
Project

After completing the Fellowship, leaders are equipped to:

- ✓ **Lead** other teachers and team members
- ✓ **Influence** school programming and practice
- ✓ **Improve** diverse learner outcomes

## 2021-2022 Involvement

The 2021-2022 fellows represented **18 different schools**, including 6 public schools, 1 independent private school, and 11 charter schools. This class was comprised of 8 English Learner Teachers, 7 Special Education Teachers, and 3 Support Coordinators/Coaches.



### Nashville Fellows



### Memphis Fellows



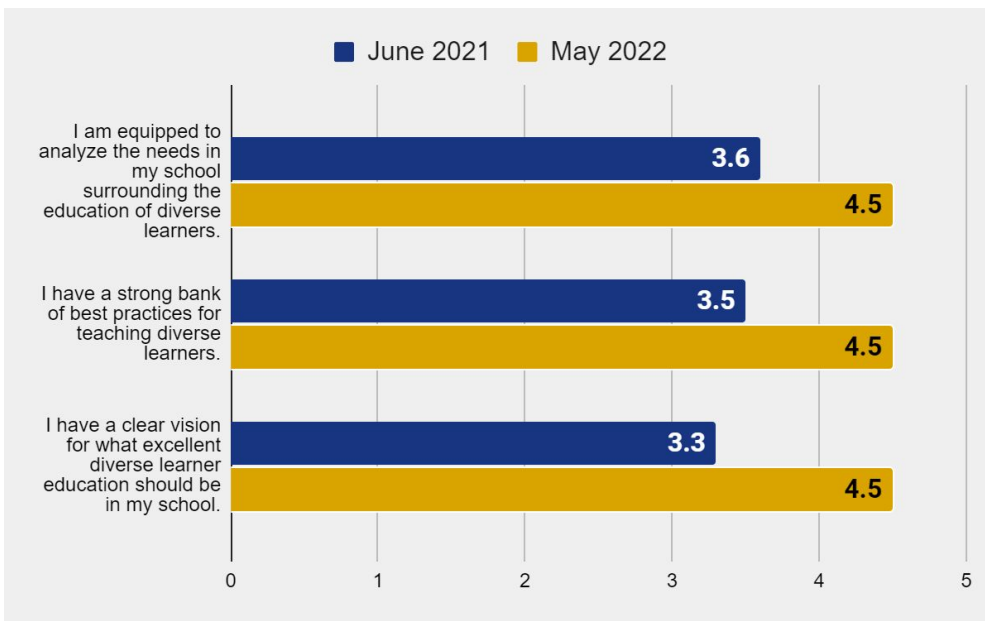


# Measures of Impact

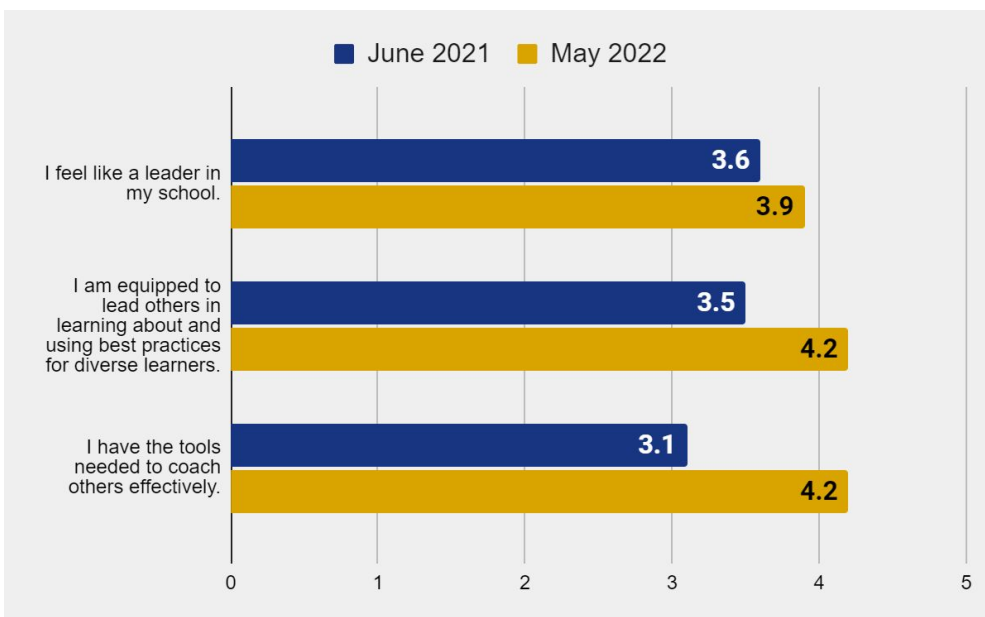
## Collective Teacher Efficacy

John Hattie's Visible Learning cites Collective Teacher Efficacy as the **number one factor** in positively influencing student achievement. Through this experience, we hoped to see Fellows grow in the skills to not only meet the needs of diverse learners they serve, but lead others to do the same. In analyzing data from beginning and end of year surveys, it is clear that Fellows feel more confident to lead change for diverse learners in their schools.

## Fellow Identities as Effective Educators



## Fellow Identities as Effective Leaders



# 88%

of Fellows **returning** to classroom next year

# 2

Fellows are taking an extended maternity leave, and plan to **return** to school after



Fellows identified **growth** in their sense of vision, preparedness, and knowledge of diverse learners





# Impact Projects

## Impact Project Overview

In order to improve quality of diverse learner programming, Fellows had the opportunity to design and implement a solution to better serve diverse learners in their setting. Fellows conducted a needs assessment to identify a barrier to diverse learner success, researched possible solutions, designed a plan for addressing the barrier, and implemented their plan. This process necessarily included collaboration with school leaders and other team members. Fellows presented their projects, findings, and reflections at the Fellowship Expo in May.



## 2021-2022 Fellows Impact Projects

Fellows enacted wide variety of solutions to better serve diverse learners in each of their schools. Below, projects are listed by topic. A full read of any project demonstrates the wide-reaching positive effects of equipping teachers with best practices and leadership skills.

[InSPIRE Reading](#) - *Leslie Nwosu*

[Student-led IEPs and Self-Advocacy](#) - *Kathleen Gant*

[EL Seniors Support Lunch Project](#) - *Wilma Lefler*

[Data-Driven Reading Intervention](#) - *Shawn Blackwell*

[Monitoring Student Progress Toward Language Goals](#) - *Angela Brown*

[Effective Behavior Strategies](#) - *Catherine Harding*

[Training Paraprofessionals to Increase Effectiveness](#) - *Jo Dobernic*

[Positive Social Feedback and Work Completion](#) - *Mindy Baier*

[The Impact of Student Goal Setting on Academic Growth](#) - *Destinee Ramson*

[Scaffolding for Diverse Learners](#) - *Jacqueline William*

[Effective Co-Teaching for Off-Task Behaviors](#) - *Caroline Aly*

[Building Teacher Capacity: Reimagining ILP Meetings](#) - *Michelle Prinzo*

[Co-Teaching for Diverse Learners](#) - *Melinda Bascom-Harvey*

[Building a Culture of Inclusion](#) - *Christina Cammarn*



## Leslie Nwosu

Exceptional Education Teacher

LEAD Neelys Bend

### InSPIRE Reading

**Central Question: How can we help our struggling readers become better readers?**

Once a child can read, the possibilities are boundless. But how can we help those who struggle? For my impact project I created reading groups of 3-5 students each. The students engaged in the S.P.I.R.E. program for nonreaders, struggling readers, and students with dyslexia. S.P.I.R.E., a 10 step multisensory phonics-based reading program, provides explicit direct instruction. It instills and reinforces every stage of reading development..

The students I worked with saw great gains in reading success over the course of the year. With continued implementation, I see this project helping our diverse learners bridge the learning gap and getting them on course to become lifelong learners and readers.

**“The biggest thing I've gained from the Fellowship experience is confidence and a deeper understanding of why I do what I do.”**



## Kathleen Gant

Exceptional Education Teacher

Crieve Hall Elementary

### Student-led IEPs and Self-Advocacy

**Central Question: How can I support my fourth grade students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) to take ownership of their learning and understand how to advocate for their needs?**

As an elementary exceptional education teacher, I was concerned that not only do my students have reading deficits, but they are also unable to self-advocate. I believe that they need to be able to self-advocate because they have deficits, and they have to understand how they learn in order to be successful. I theorized that by teaching my students about the major components of their IEPs, their parents, teachers, and other staff will be able to see more independence on the part of these students as they take ownership and are more engaged in their learning. By the same token, my students will be able to understand how they learn and how to be successful.

After our work in the spring semester, my students now have a better understanding of their IEPs and have already led practice IEP meetings with their teachers, principal, SLP, and school counselor. Next year, these rising 5th graders will be involved in the actual meetings and my rising fourth graders will have the opportunity to practice student-led IEPs. Better yet, I now have a template to use for future students - not just my own - to help with self-advocacy.



**Wilma Lefler**  
English Language Learner Teacher  
STEM Prep High School

## EL Seniors Support Lunch Project

**Central Question: How can I affirm EL seniors as “whole humans” in order to engender confidence and a sense of self?**

Through conversations with students during the EL seniors lunch time, I realized that many had never written a resume, interviewed for a job, or know how to respond to interview questions. My learners expressed confusion and worry about how to proceed in the job market.

Upon this realization, I wanted to create a meaningful end of high school unit for senior EL students. We collaborated to create a unit where students would create a portfolio which included key “templates” that could be used throughout the rest of their careers. These templates included a basic resume, short bio, cover letter, taped job interview, and evidence such as a video or some other multimedia platform. As we executed this unit, we blended in other skills such as the ability to use Google to find answers, use editing tools within a document, set up documents such as resumes, and more. This unit provided students with a folder full of documents can use as they move into their adult lives.

My impact project showed that the idea of EL support, particularly for Career Skills, can be a huge benefit to EL students. My hope is it will be used for future EL students each year, enabling them to feel more prepared to meet the challenges of their career and work life!

**“The most impactful element of the Fellowship was the thought pool of other teachers who are experiencing similar challenges. This amazing group of educators has become a great resource. It feels supportive because I’m not alone and I hear some great ideas that I can implement.”**



**Shawn Blackwell**  
Special Education Teacher  
Stem Prep Academy

## Data-Driven Reading Intervention

**Central Question: What strategies do I need to implement to see growth in reading intervention?**

Problems in reading can affect performance across several academic content areas and other functional skills that are used in everyday life. With my impact project I wanted to explore how data can grow students reading fluency and comprehension scores. I wondered what strategies I would need to grow my students' reading scores.

During the course of the year I implemented reading strategies that also aligned with the content we were using in reading. I use the LLI reading system to improve reading fluency by introducing them to choral reading and echo reading to see if they are fluently reading.



**Angela Brown**  
English as a Second Language Teacher  
Aurora Collegiate Academy

## Monitoring Student Progress Toward Language Goals

**Central Question:** How would targeted progress monitoring of language goals of students at the developing level increase their writing scores?

Every English language learner receiving ESL services has learning goals. Progress toward these goals must be reported every 9 weeks, yet given all the demands on a teacher's time it is difficult to monitor student progress in a meaningful way throughout the quarter. This process oftentimes doesn't feel purposeful and students don't get consistent feedback on how they are progressing toward their goals.

For my project I decided to focus on leveraging writing checklists to monitor student writing. This would provide the students an opportunity to monitor their own writing during the process. I extended each lesson over 2 days to provide time to incorporate this writing process. My students became engaged in their writing and eager to make their own corrections and improve their writing. As we progressed through the year, they started to self correct and edit their own writing. With more time, I would have these students evaluate sample essays and revise their own work based on their learnings.

**"As result of the Fellowship, I have a greater sense of self as a teacher, leader, and person. By participating in this fellowship I spent time reflecting on my practices and really thinking more deeply about education and how I show up for my students impacts our day to day. I also gained another community network of educators that have similar goals and work ethics that I was able to learn from."**





**Catherine Harding**  
**Hand in Hand Lower School Resource Teacher**  
**St Ann Catholic School**

## Effective Behavior Strategies

**Central Question: What are some simple, applicable strategies teachers can use when their students are exhibiting challenging behaviors?**

My project was focused around behavior. I teach at a private school with a Hand in Hand program that was implemented about four years ago. We recently had the Program for Inclusive Education (PIE) come to our school and did a deep dive on our staff and our school. Based on the results of the survey and the resulting conversations our staff had about addressing behavior, I developed my central question. I wanted to present something to the staff that could immediately help them positively support a student's behavior.

I presented my findings to our entire staff. I was able to share 3 strategies to better equip them to support a student exhibiting challenging behaviors. I am thrilled this project was able to help our whole team to better understand ALL students and improve our proactive support of their positive behavior.

**“This was one of the most impactful things I have done since I started as a professional. I would have never thought as a teacher I would be able to or think that I could present to our entire staff and have them learn from me. Now I want to do this every year.”**



**Jo Dobernic**  
**Exceptional Education Teacher**  
**Haywood Elementary School**

## Training Paraprofessionals to Increase Effectiveness

**Central Question: How can academic achievement of students with disabilities be positively impacted by better utilizing the support of paraprofessionals in the general education setting?**

Throughout the course of my impact project, I provided training for paraprofessionals on best instructional practices, guidance on implementing accommodations in the general education setting, and access to data and materials. By the end of the school year, the paraprofessionals at Haywood reported feeling better prepared to serve their students, and the students they worked with saw a marked improvement on their Reading and Math scores from Fall to Spring.

My impact project was so successful that our school has decided to implement it again next year. Next year's training will expand to include general education teachers in addition to our paraprofessionals. This expanded network will allow us to better serve more exceptional students on our campus.

**“This experience has been one of the most valuable growth opportunities I've ever participated in. The timing couldn't have been better with all of the challenges we faced this year. As someone who is towards the end of her teaching career, the training has helped me see how I can share and help others on this journey.”**





**Mindy Baier**  
**Director of Special Populations & Testing**  
**Crosstown High School**

## Positive Social Feedback and Work Competition

**Central Question:** How do we increase the number of students who consistently complete and submit class work for grading?

Many of our diverse learners struggle to stay organized and motivated to complete and submit work on time. This often leads to falling behind in class and to failing grades. For my impact project, I wanted to find a way to help my students stay on task. I created a weekly checklist that we reviewed multiple times a week. On Mondays we'd work together to set goals for the remainder of the week. On Wednesdays I'd do a quick check-in to remind them of their goals and to observe progress towards those goals. Each Friday students would determine if they met their goal or made progress towards the goal. I utilized positive reinforcements, sharing their success with their parents or other members of their education team.

Through this project my students saw great growth. The weekly checklists allowed them to successfully navigate through the school year. They wanted to be successful, but needed a specific tool to break down overwhelming tasks into manageable parts. I also found that they were highly motivated by positive social feedback. Sharing their weekly success, now matter how small, was highly motivating to these students.



**Destinee Ramson**  
**Director of Special Populations & Testing**  
**Memphis Delta Prep**

## The Impact of Student Goal Setting on Academic Growth

**Central Question:** Can student goal setting and monitoring progress toward mastery of goals, increase individual student achievement?

After completing a (mostly) virtual school year, our school's students with disabilities were identified as those who had gotten the furthest behind. My students also needed support to increase their academic focus and endurance. For my impact project, I wanted to increase their academic achievement by collaborative goal setting, progress monitoring, and clear guidance and support to meet these goals.

Tracking progress through the year, we found that setting clear, concise goals with our students not only lessened their skill gaps, but improved their confidence and independence, giving students more control over their own success. All the students involved in my project grew a full STEP level over a four month period. To add to this success, a teacher in a general education classroom adopted the same goal-setting methods and her class saw great growth rate for STEP, with 71% of her students growing at least one full STEP level between January and April 2022.

Through this work, I found goal setting motivated my students to independently practice at home, improving their homework completion and I observed improvements in reading fluency, work accuracy and endurance for work completion. Students were achieving more and happier doing so.



**Jacqueline Williams**  
EL Teacher  
Journey East Academy

## Scaffolding for Diverse Learners

**Central Question: How can specialists help teachers scaffold instruction for multiple diverse learners?**

Teachers often struggle to manage the diverse accommodations required by students in SPED and ESL. I wanted to see how I could work with our general education teachers to best support their students. I met with a general education teacher semi-monthly to identify learning goals. I then identified resources and scaffolds the teacher could use to help a specific student reach their targeted learning goal.

Over the course of the year, we saw great strides in these students' achievement levels. The teachers I worked with were thrilled to receive and implement the resources I provided. With these new resources, students' accommodations and scaffolds were implemented consistently throughout the year. The consistency not only improved student achievement, but these students learned to access and use the new resources independently, further improving their success.

I think that while we still have more work to do, teachers are open to collaboration and finding innovative and efficient ways to support all of their students.



**Caroline Aly**  
Exceptional Education Teacher  
Harpeth Valley Elementary

## Effective Co-Teaching for Off-Task Behaviors

**Central Question: How can we improve co-teaching in the general education setting for students who exhibit off task and/or impulsive behaviors that inhibit their engagement with instruction?**

One of the many challenges we face as exceptional educators is off task behaviors. Our students can go off task due to frustration when they are mismatched to instruction, when a teacher's lesson seems disorganized or poorly planned, or simply when the student is preoccupied by anxious thoughts. Teachers can find themselves spending a large amount of time reminding students to stay on task and follow directions.

For my impact project I wanted to broaden my lens and look at the behaviors of the entire class. If we could see where the disconnect was with our exceptional education students, could teachers better know how to overcome the barriers in behaviors? Could they create consistency with action steps? Would these actions help students learn to refocus to task and drive their learning forward?

I think co-teaching improved my practice as an exceptional education teacher and improved collaboration amongst teachers.



**Michelle Prinzo**  
K - 4 English Language Learner Teacher  
Fall Hamilton Elementary

## Building Teacher Capacity: Reimagining ILP Meetings

**Central Question: How can we build school-wide capacity to support EL students in the general education setting?**

In designing my Impact Project I attempted to balance the need for teacher professional development in supporting ELs with the reality that most of our teachers were overwhelmed with the challenges they faced during this extraordinary school year. The solution came in reimagining what our required 5 week ILP meetings looked like. Meetings were strategically scheduled before data meetings and the monitoring process was streamlined. This left time for "micro-PD" sessions throughout the year.

These micro-PD sessions started by helping teachers better understand WIDA Can Do standards and interpreting student ACCESS scores. We did sessions on supporting students in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Each session provided a resource to take away for more learning, a problem solving or strategy discussion, and at least 1 strategy that could be easily implemented the next lesson. To promote vertical conversation, an email was sent out with links to resources shared and a discussion summary.

The data suggests that utilizing ILPs meetings in this way contributed to capacity building for teachers. Teachers were asked to take a pre and post survey to discuss their familiarity with WIDA Can Do's and their comfort level with supporting EL growth in the classroom. The post-survey indicated that ILP meetings were the primary (and in some cases only) form of professional development directly related to EL learners and that teacher comfort level increased in all areas. Teacher anecdotal feedback indicated that they felt ILP meetings were both important and useful.

Additionally, ACCESS scores indicated that 98% of EL students showed growth, 83% of students made more than .5 points of growth on their composite scores, and 56% of students met their growth goals. Though ILP meetings were only one part of our EL student support strategy this school year, it seems that they are a positive contribution to the success of English Learners at Fall Hamilton.

**"I plan to continue using this model for ILP meetings in future years. Additionally this model was shared across the district at the EL Fall Forum conference and many other EL coaches and teachers indicated that adopting this model could positively impact their schools."**



## Melinda Bascom-Harvey

EL Coordinator

Purpose Prep

### Co-Teaching for Diverse Learners

**Central Question: How would co-teaching support in the classroom support diverse learners?**

For my Impact Project I chose to use data to see how best to support EL students. I reviewed the WIDA assessment for the target student and I saw that her biggest need was support with Literacy and Writing. Using the data I developed a plan to co-teach during writing and literacy blocks with the content teacher. I could see in real time where this student's challenges were, and adjust my methods or talk with the content teacher about how to better approach the content for the EL students. During the school year the target student saw growth in quarterly report cards and STEP assessments. The support provided in the classroom helped my student to understand the content better.

My project will impact my future school by supporting content teachers and EL teachers. We learned how to better work together and complement each other's teaching styles to best support our students.

**"Participating in the DLC this year will allow me to provide resources to teachers that they can use to ensure that all students learn."**



## Christina Cammarn

First Grade Teacher

Tusculum Elementary

### Building a Culture of Inclusion

**Central Question: How can we create and sustain a culture of inclusion to improve student outcomes?**

Meeting the needs of diverse learners begins with student knowledge, and the staff demographics at my school are not very representative of our student population. My project focused on teacher education around equity, student and family cultural backgrounds, and inclusive practices, with the intention of impacting student outcomes.

Classroom environment has a massive impact on student outcomes. Research supports creating a culture of inclusion, which gives students a sense of belonging and safety. The work we did this year has helped us all understand the value of equitable practices, self-reflection, and other schools are adopting some of our ideas too!

**"The fellowship was a major confidence boost for me! It gave me the opportunity to grow in a safe community of supportive colleagues. I tested my boundaries and discovered my abilities using easily applicable tools. This learning had a major impact on my perspective and attitudes as an educator and leader in my school, which had a ripple effect on my team and in my classroom."**

# Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank the DLC Fellows for their commitment to continuous learning and their fierce advocacy for diverse learners. We were continuously inspired by their work and the spirit of collaboration they brought to each session, in person and virtual.

Thank you also to the school leaders who endorsed their Fellows' participation in the inaugural class of the Fellowship. Their support meant greater outcomes for students often left behind.

We are also very grateful for the generous contributions of the Scarlett Foundation, Memphis Community Foundation, and many other generous supporters. Their financial support made our work possible.

The Fellowship continues to demonstrate that engaging teachers in the development of diverse learner best practices and leadership skills builds teacher efficacy and learner success. Through this work, diverse learners in our state will access more prepared, confident, and effective teachers year after year.

This work is just beginning. If you are interested in learning more about the work of the Diverse Learners Cooperative, please visit our [website](#) or get in touch with us [directly](#). We look forward to partnering with you in supporting all learners to reach their fullest potential.

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