# Training New Teachers in Atlas

New school year, new teachers! This six-step guide outlines the process to training new teachers in using Atlas. As a member of your schools' leadership team, the way you present your curriculum development process to new teachers is crucial so your process continues to accelerate and grow.

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It's exciting when a new teacher starts at your school! They come in, mid-August, set up their classroom, get to know co-workers, and bring a fresh outlook to your team dynamic. Maybe they're a good baker and you start finding homemade muffins in the teacher's lounge from time to time – SCORE!  BUT, new teachers also have a lot to learn. They are teaching professionals, of course, but they need to get to know the ins and outs of your school.

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## Step 1: Explain WHAT curriculum mapping is.

You know what curriculum mapping is, but your new teachers may not. Try organizing a meeting and starting your day by simply defining what curriculum mapping is. We define curriculum mapping as the process of capturing the written curriculum, which includes a written articulation of what students will learn within each course and grade level. What's your definition?

## Step 2: Explain HOW it will help them and WHY you do it.

Do you remember why your school started curriculum mapping in the first place? There are A LOT of good reasons and when you talk to your new teachers about why your school maps, focus on the big picture. Develop a purpose statement around mapping that clearly states why you do it. For example: **We curriculum map to support teacher communication and collaboration in order to build a better educational experience for students.**

Anytime a new teacher sits down and starts to map, this is the statement that can guide their work. When it's late afternoon on a Friday and they've been through a long first week, hopefully, they'll use their last 15 minutes of the day to jot down notes within their maps. Why? Not because they were told to, but because it enhances their students' education.

## Step 3: TEACH them how to map with SIMPLICITY.

On their first day, all the capabilities within a mapping program can feel a bit daunting. When you're introducing it to your new teachers, start with the basics and give them an overview of all it can do. But be careful not to bombard them with too much. Try these pro tips out:

- Show them how to login

- Explain the dashboard

- Show them how to search for and edit their course

- Using a map that has strong examples, drill down into a unit and walk them through how a unit is organized and where information is placed

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- Show them the reporting/communication capabilities that tie back to your purpose statement

After these, you may already be getting a few wide-eyed looks. That's why simplicity is key. Your new teachers in Atlas won't be motivated to map if they feel overwhelmed. Reassure them that there will be time to learn it all and the first step is for them to get comfortable doing it. Consider having some of mentors there to guide teachers through the process and answer questions as they come up

# Step 4: Let them PRACTICE with a mentor.

Here's the fun part. Create a worksheet or an activity for your teachers to go through in order to get hands on experience mapping. It could be a scavenger hunt, a "Unit Fill-in" challenge, or a race to follow and complete directions. Your teachers may have been sitting and listening to you for a while, so make it fun and get them moving. Make sure the content to fill in on your worksheet ties back to what you just showed them.  Again, have seasoned users standing by to help guide the process.

Some example tasks include:

- Login to your Atlas

- Search for your courses

- Add a new unit and start to fill in the Unit Planner

When the group is finished with the activity, come back together to share-out and verify that everyone is on the same page. From here, have your teachers work on their maps for 45 minutes to an hour. Have them add units to courses and add content for each unit. When the meeting wraps up, give them a content goal to hit by the next meeting and encourage them to develop their units on their own and send questions to their mentors.

# Step 5: CHECK-IN on their progress regularly and offer SUPPORT.

Set aside time during the year to meet with your new teachers and check-in on how their mapping is going. Consider checking in once a month. Have teacher leaders attend as well and address any problems they are having. This might be a good time to show them some of the reports that will be invaluable to them. Keep in mind that a lot of this time may be used to continue to update maps and add more information if there aren't many questions.

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Don't let these meetings become something they feel like they HAVE TO do. Take a look back at the work they've done in [Atlas](#) and illustrate how it's helping students. Get examples from your teachers on how maps are being used. Review together and give feedback as well. It all ties back to your purpose statement and making curriculum mapping a part of your school culture. As they get the hang of it, don't forget to celebrate your success!

## *AND...*

Voila! Before you know it you'll have a staff full of Curriculum Mapping pros on your team! Well, not really. It takes time. But, if you keep at it, make sure they have the support they need and provide time to keep working on it – YOU WILL HAVE MAPPING PROS!