

CASE STUDY

131 YEARS OF DEDICATION TO PREPARING TEACHERS CONTINUES WITH ATLAS[®]

Northwestern State University embraces the online library of accomplished teaching practices to continue its rich tradition of training high performing teachers.

Background

Given its rich history as a normal college producing high performing teachers and its current position as a leader in teacher preparation, Northwestern State University (NSU) in Natchitoches, Louisiana is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the many features and benefits of ATLAS, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' unique, searchable online library of authentic videos showing National Board Certified Teachers at work in the classroom.

Students at NSU use ATLAS to fulfill required field observation hours and to see teaching indexed to common frameworks, and specific subjects and grades.

Over the last year the platform has grown in popularity across the NSU campus, as more and more professors have incorporated ATLAS into their curriculum.

ATLAS allows [faculty] to provide a snapshot or a short vignette of a very specific teaching strategy or an interaction or a technique between students and teachers. It's exciting to hear faculty talk about something they use and want to share with a colleague.

—Dr. Kim McAlister, Department Head of Teaching, Leadership, and Counseling



ATLAS allows us to bring a whole cadre of experts from whom our students can learn. Our students can watch, emulate, and can get hands-on lessons from, in a virtual sense at a very affordable price.

—Dr. James Henderson, President of Northwestern State University

Northwestern State University: A Louisiana teaching legacy

1884

Founded as a women's normal school—a teacher training institution

1921

Expanded from a two-year degree for teachers at Louisiana State Normal School to the four-year education degree at Louisiana Normal College

1944

Became Northwestern State College

1970

Became Northwestern State University

The university faculty bears a tremendous responsibility for maintaining the school's legacy and rich historical roots in teaching. They also know that they have to prepare candidates for today's classrooms, so they engage in professional learning on an ongoing basis. Key to Northwestern State's continued

success is the faculty and administration's ability to maintain high standards in their education programs. Higher standards for teachers means higher standards for students. ATLAS is part of this continuum of continual improvement.

The real-world challenge

As at many teaching programs across the country, students at NSU are required to complete numerous field experience hours before graduating. But with limited options in the immediate area, NSU students are often left observing subjects and grades other than those they're preparing to teach.

Additionally, when students go out into the field, the quality of the instruction students are observing may vastly differ, especially with students who are taking classes via the web. With many of their teacher candidates studying remotely, NSU

needed to address these challenges in a way that would satisfy their students both on campus and online.

We cannot control what our candidates are seeing when they are going out into classrooms and doing their field experience work. Through ATLAS we can control what they are seeing and we can utilize it as a teaching tool to open discussions about what was viewed.

—*Ramona Wynder, Coordinator of Alternate Certification*

The ATLAS solution

ATLAS's vast library of authentic cases is the only teacher preparation resource that exclusively features National Board Certified Teachers in their own classrooms. With written reflections that give insight into the teacher's thought process, pre-service teachers are able to pull back the curtain on accomplished teaching as they prepare to lead a classroom of their own.

With ATLAS, students at NSU are able to find exactly what they're looking for to fulfill their field experience requirements. ATLAS cases are sortable by grade, subject, and framework. Professors can be confident that the content their students are viewing is fully vetted because each video case has been assessed as accomplished practice, according to the standards that the teaching profession has set for itself.

More than just a video library, ATLAS cases demonstrate Board-certified teachers' approaches to teaching:



Each video case has been assessed as accomplished practice, according to the standards the teaching profession has set for itself



Cases include authentic, in-classroom video and instruction materials together with the teachers' own written reflection and analysis



Select cases are indexed to common frameworks including National Board, edTPA™, InTASC, Deeper Learning, Common Core State Standards, and many others

Students at NSU especially find the written reflections to be of enormous value:

Teachers who submit these videos have also written out how the lessons are working. You're seeing the teacher's thought process, you're learning about her students and the processes that they usually follow, and so it makes more sense. In a physical classroom, you don't get that. You don't always know what the teacher is doing. You can't interrupt her lesson to ask her or him about why

they're teaching that way or what they're teaching. I thought it was really awesome that you can be reading and listening while you're watching a video.

—*Rebekah Broussard, Pre-Service Teacher at NSU*

By utilizing ATLAS in the classroom, Northwestern State University continues to pioneer new technologies and methods of teacher preparation, further solidifying its position as a leader in teacher preparation.

To learn more about ATLAS, visit nbpts.org/ATLAS or email us at ATLAS@nbpts.org

ATLAS

Accomplished Teaching, Learning and Schools®