Competency-based
learning for academia

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> CYPHER provides all the tools teachers need to make sure class content is compliant with standards and to track student progress using competency-based learning.

What is competency-based learning?

Competency-based learning emphasizes the demonstration of concrete and measurable skills. Usually, a class must cover certain standards or help students acquire certain competencies. By using competencies, teachers can track how well students are learning those skills, one by one. Competency-based learning also focuses on skill mastery. The main principle is that students progress through competencies as they learn and cannot advance from one module to another without having mastered them first.
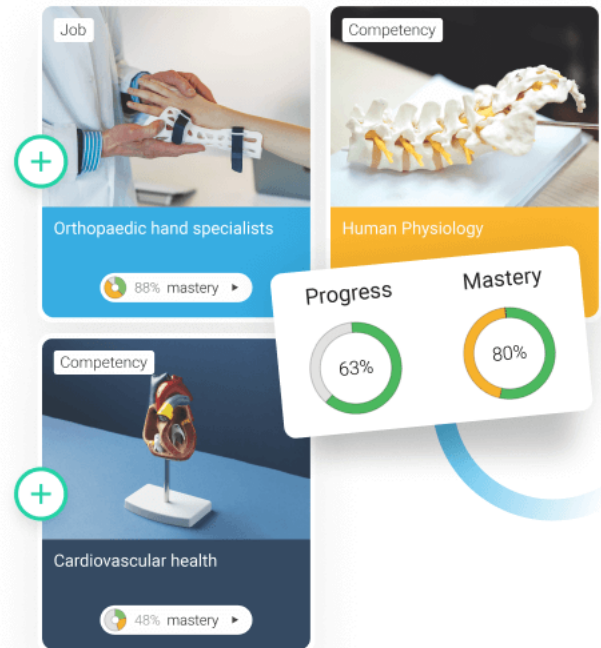
How does CYPHER support competency-based learning?

CYPHER helps institutions to successfully implement competency-based learning through our Mastery feature. Schools can upload competencies in CYPHER or create their own competencies, then tag class content with the competencies it should be teaching and assignments with the competencies it should be assessing.

Mastery helps teachers save time as well as ensuring that they can keep up with each student's progress through the class and have an overall view of how well the class teaches the competencies. It also allows educators to intervene if students are struggling with a particular topic or need additional help.

An example of competency-based learning using CYPHER

A 2nd grade Geography class has to teach all the concepts that students need to know for their grade level. The teacher can create a new competency set for the class or choose to use the built-in common core competency standards. Either way, each lesson and assignment can be tagged with the competencies that they are teaching and assessing. For example, a lesson about Weather types should teach students how to identify common weather phenomena such as rain or snow and less common ones such as hurricanes.

The teacher is then able to see if the lesson only partially teaches the concepts or if there are certain learning units that don't cover any competency. An incomplete lesson about Weather Types would mean that the lesson does teach students about uncommon weather types, but there is no assignment to assess what they know.

The educator can track each student's progress through the class and see how well they are doing on each competency. In addition, they can help when students are struggling with a particular concept. The teacher can also trigger actions such as automatically sending messages, enrolling students in groups, awarding badges, and more. This way, the teacher can make sure that students are assessed equally, that they are learning what they are supposed to learn, and that they receive support when they need it.
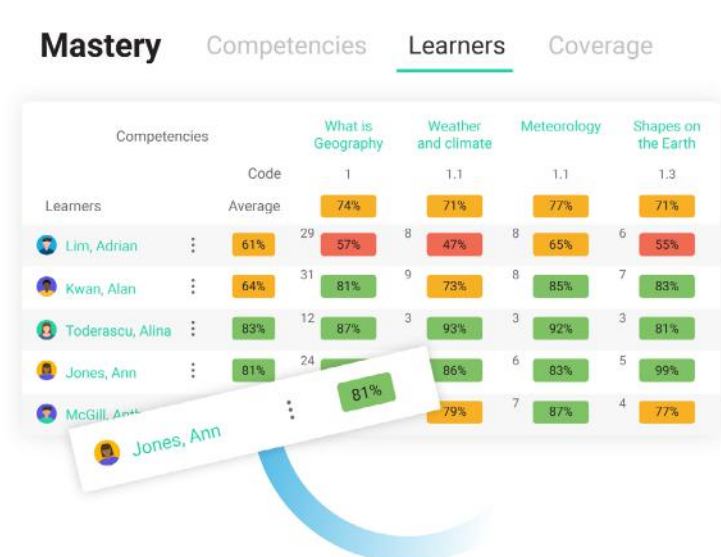
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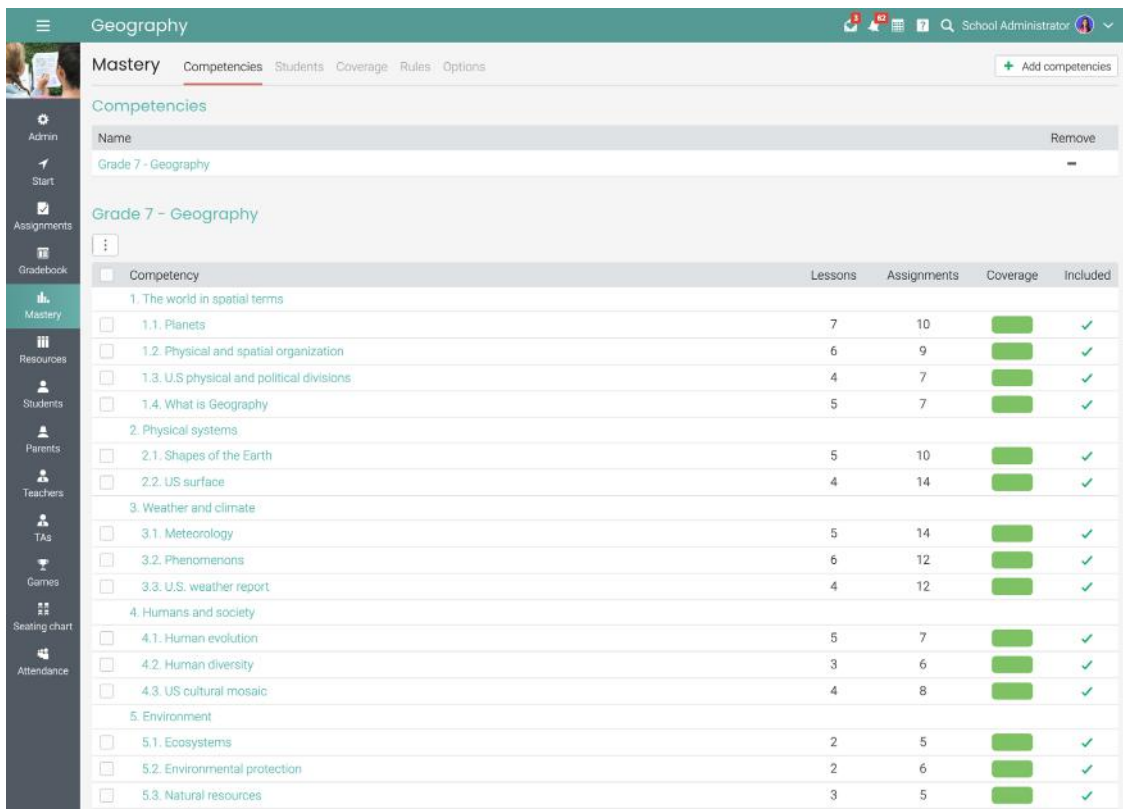
How to use Mastery in CYPHER

CYPHER provides all the tools teachers need to make sure class content is compliant with standards and to track student progress using competency-based learning. Here is an overview of the Mastery features available in CYPHER:

Upload or create competencies

Teachers can create competencies directly in CYPHER or they can upload their own. We also offer a library of built-in standards such as US Common Core Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, Philippines High School Standards and Math, English, and Science standards for CA, TX, NY, IL, CO and PA. You can add one or more sets of competencies to a class.

Add competencies to lessons and assignments

After competencies have been added to the class, teachers can tag lessons with the competencies it should be teaching and assignments with the competencies they should be assessing.
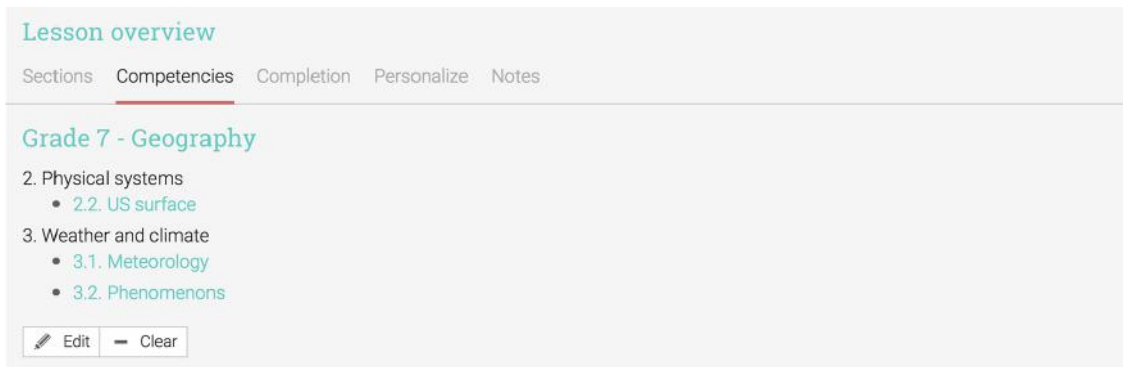
Coverage analysis of competencies

After tagging the class content and assignments with competencies, you can see an overview of how well your class covers the competencies. This is a great way of identifying weak spots in your class and making sure each competency is being taught and assessed during the class.
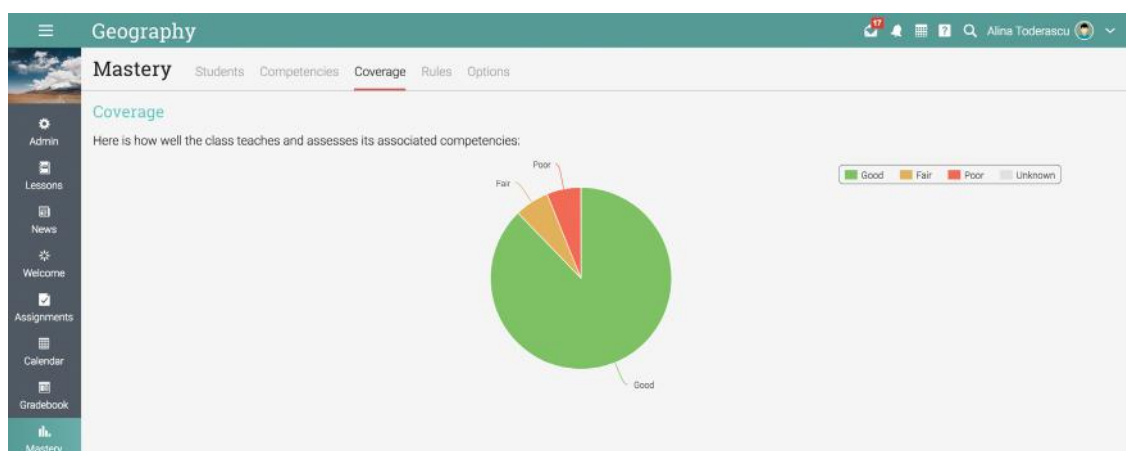
Automation for Mastery

You can add actions that should be performed when students reach a certain competency level. For example, if they achieve more than 80% on a competency you can unlock an advanced lesson.

If a student stays between a 30 - 40 % competency level for more than 10 days, you can set up a rule to get an alert when this happens and send students recommendations on how to improve in that area.

There are many options for actions that can be triggered, such as enrolling students in classes and paths, sending messages to students and teachers, locking lessons, and more.

Save and share competencies as Resources

Created competencies can be stored in the Resources library and reused for other classes. They can also be shared with other teachers at a school or district-level.
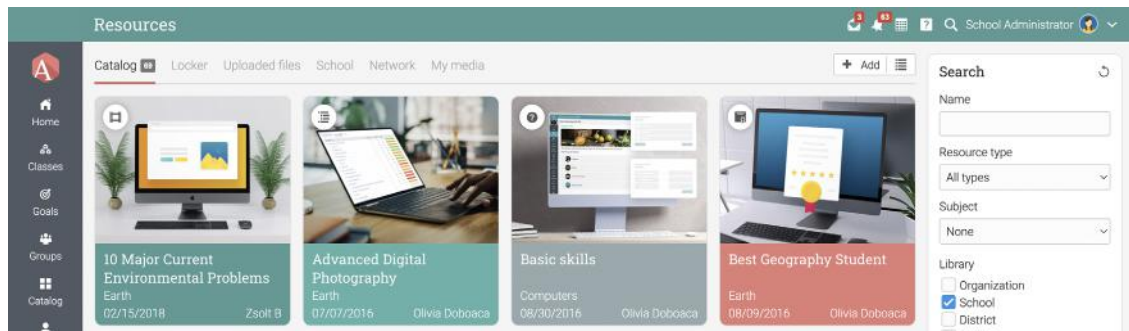
Tracking student progress in classes

As students advance through the class you will see an overview of their mastery level and how well they are understanding the conc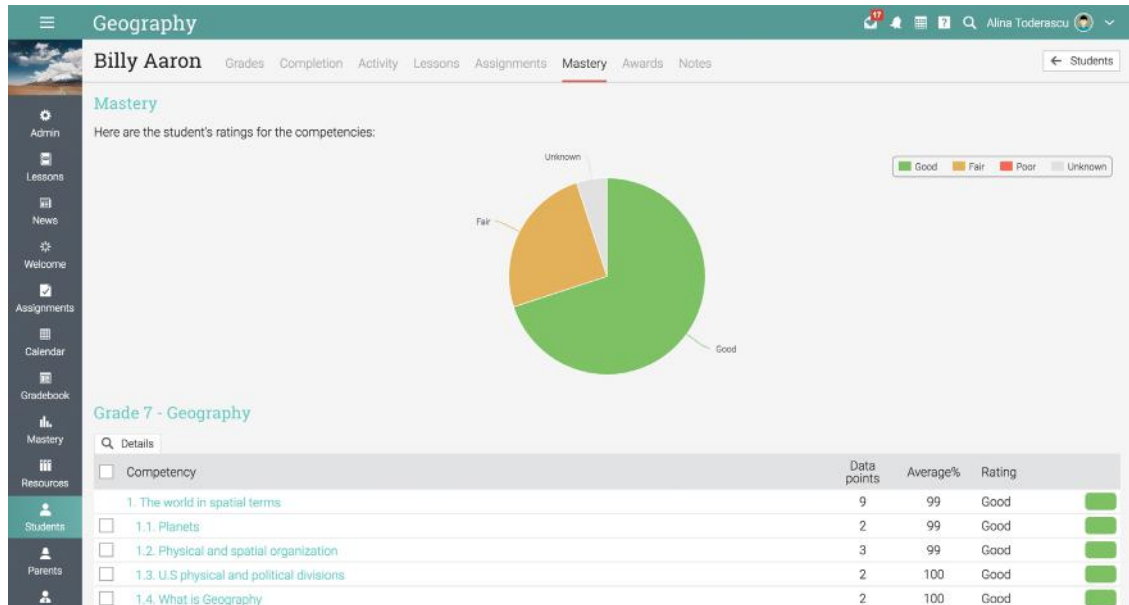epts. The mastery grid displays details about the level of each competency and you can easily identify areas where students are doing well or where they are struggling.

Mastery levels for all students are also displayed in the Students area of a class and information is updated in real-time.

You can also see details about a student's mastery level by clicking on the Mastery chart in the Students section.

Mastery progress is also displayed on the profile pages of students.

Student view of mastery

Students can see their mastery progress on the class landing page.
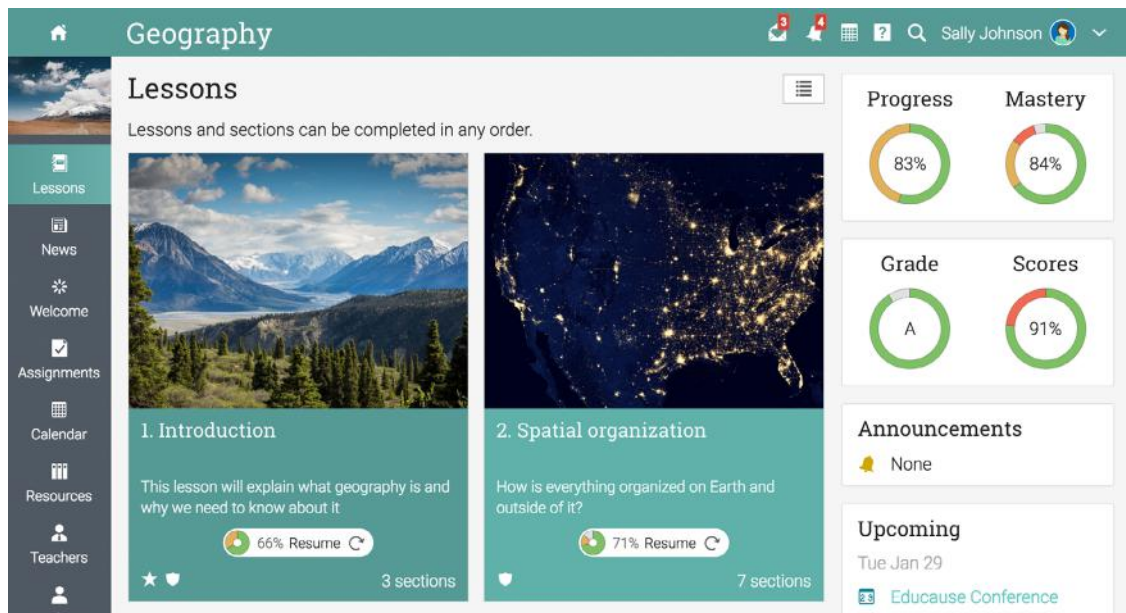
If they click on the Mastery chart, they will see a detailed overview of their progress through the class competencies.
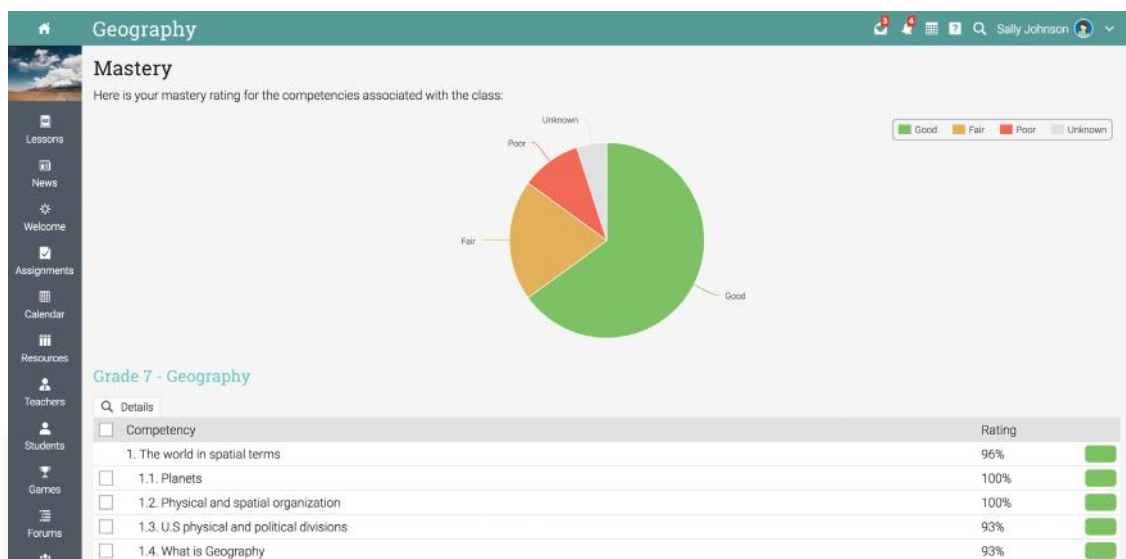
About CYPHER Learning

CYPHER Learning is leading the necessary disruption of learning platforms to unleash human potential with modern learning.

CYPHER exists to ignite lifelong passions through personalized, engaging, and limitless learning experiences for all. We give teachers and professors more time to teach, build human connection into everything we do, and deliver tailored learning experiences that are meaningful and measurable.

Just the way modern learners expect.

The CYPHER platform is easy-to-use, beautifully designed, and infused with AI-powered technology. Every aspect beams thoughtful innovation and engineering that puts people first. Millions of users experience their "just in time, just for me, just the way I want it" approach in 50+ languages with the CYPHER award-winning platform.

To learn more about CYPHER Learning and our modern learning platform, visit us at

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