

EMBARC User Group Series: Getting the Most Out of EMBARC

Part 1: Utilizing Classrooms and Lesson Plans

Length: 90 minutes

Format: Interactive webinar with live demonstrations, guided discussion, knowledge checks, and Q&A

Primary audience: EMBARC system administrators, curriculum leaders, instructional leaders, and teachers

Recommended presenters: One facilitator and one moderator/chat monitor

Webinar purpose

Help districts move beyond using EMBARC only as a curriculum repository. Participants will learn how administrative setup, courses, classes, classroom tools, curriculum activities, and lesson plans work together to support teachers' daily instruction.

Learning objectives

By the end of the webinar, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the beginning-of-year tasks required before teachers begin using Classrooms and Lesson Plans.
2. Explain the difference between a course, a class or section, a curriculum activity, an assignment, and a lesson plan.
3. Create or verify a course and connect it to an appropriate projection schedule.
4. Create or reset a class and connect it to the appropriate course and lesson-plan template.
5. Describe how teachers can use the Classroom area to organize instructional materials and assignments.
6. Create a lesson plan using curriculum learning targets, activities, and attachments.
7. Use recurrence, date-adjustment, and schedule-replication tools to save planning time.
8. Develop a practical implementation plan for increasing Classroom and Lesson Planner use in their district.

90-minute agenda at a glance

Time	Section	Focus
0:00–0:05	Welcome and introduction	Purpose, expectations, and series overview
0:05–0:12	Opening poll and EMBARC workflow	Determine current usage and establish terminology
0:12–0:22	Beginning-of-year readiness	Calendars, users, courses, standards, classes, and templates
0:22–0:34	Administrator setup	Lesson planning options, schedules, templates, and projection schedules
0:34–0:50	Courses, classes, and sections	Create a course; create or reset a class; connect curriculum
0:50–1:02	Using the Classroom area	Classroom organization, resources, assignments, and teacher workflow
1:02–1:17	Creating effective lesson plans	Build a plan from learning targets, activities, and attachments
1:17–1:22	Time-saving lesson-plan tools	Recurrence, bump dates, reset dates, and replicate schedules
1:22–1:30	Application, Q&A, and closing	Scenario, commitments, questions, and next steps
Total: 90 minutes		

Detailed facilitator outline

1. Welcome and introduction — 0:00–0:05

Facilitator talking points

- Welcome participants to Part 1 of the three-part “Getting the Most Out of EMBARC” series.
- Introduce the central message:

EMBARC is not only a place to store curriculum. It can connect district curriculum to teachers’ daily planning and classroom work.

- Explain that the session will move through the complete workflow:

District setup → Course curriculum → Teacher class/section → Classroom resources and assignments → Daily lesson plans

- Clarify that some tasks require system-administrator access, while others can be completed by teachers or other users.
- Encourage participants to:
 - Ask questions in the chat.
 - Share successful district practices.
 - Note any items they need to verify after the webinar.

Participation prompt

Ask participants to enter their role in the chat:

- System administrator
- Curriculum leader
- Building administrator
- Instructional coach
- Teacher
- Other

Presenter note

Avoid spending too much time on introductions. Explain that questions will be addressed throughout the session, with additional Q&A at the end.

2. Opening poll and EMBARC workflow — 0:05–0:12

Opening poll

How is your district currently using EMBARC?

- Primarily as a curriculum repository
- Curriculum and pacing
- Classroom tools

- Lesson planning
- Assignments or student-facing resources
- We are still exploring these features

Explain the EMBARC structure

Introduce the terms participants will hear throughout the webinar.

EMBARC component	Purpose
Department	Organizes related courses and associated standards
Course	Houses the district's curriculum, including units and topics
Unit	Organizes the sequence and pacing of a course
Topic	Houses learning targets and activities within a unit
Activity	Captures a reusable student learning experience and its resources
Class/section	Represents the teacher's current instructional group or scheduled course
Assignment	Provides classroom-specific work or resources for students
Lesson plan	Applies curriculum content to a specific date, class, and group of students

Key distinction

- A **course** represents the district curriculum.
- A **class** represents how a teacher delivers that course to a particular group during the current school year.
- A **curriculum activity** is reusable and generally remains in the curriculum from year to year.
- A **lesson plan** applies selected curriculum to a specific date and class and can include adjustments for the current students.

The Knowledge Base describes activities as the main instructional content that teachers can pull into lesson plans. Lesson plans then combine learning targets, activities, and attachments for a particular day or group of students. [Activities and Lesson Plans](#)

Knowledge check

Ask:

If a resource should be available to every teacher using a course next year, should it live only in one teacher's daily lesson plan—or should it be incorporated into the curriculum activity?

Expected response: Incorporate reusable instructional content into the curriculum activity, when appropriate.

3. Beginning-of-year readiness — 0:12–0:22

Purpose

Very quickly review the items that should be completed before teachers begin creating classes, assignments, or lesson plans.

The EMBARC Back to School Checklist identifies different responsibilities for system administrators and all users. [Back to School Checklist](#)

System administrator checklist

Review the following:

- Enter or verify the district calendar for the current school year.
- Update projection schedules for the current school year.
- Update the user list and add new users.
- Verify user roles, department access, and grade-level access.
- Update lesson-plan templates so they are tied to the current calendar.
- Confirm that all new courses have been created.
- Check departments for current standard sets.
- Update standards in existing classes when standards have changed.
- Confirm that the Classroom and Lesson Plan components are enabled, if the district intends to use them.

Teacher/all-user checklist

- Create new courses when the user's permissions and district process allow it.

- Reset existing classes before reusing them for the new school year.
- Confirm that courses have the correct standards.
- Review curriculum comments and requested changes.
- Verify that the appropriate course, lesson-plan template, calendar, and projection schedule are available.

Important reset warning

Explain the difference between these actions:

- **Clear Class/Reset:** Keeps the class information but removes student data, assignments, discussions, and other prior-year class information.
- **Power Delete:** Deletes the class and everything associated with it.

Participants should carefully review the warning messages before completing either action. [How to Reset Classes](#)

Interactive readiness check

Ask participants to respond with:

- **Green:** Our setup is complete.
- **Yellow:** Some items still need to be verified.
- **Red:** We have not started our beginning-of-year review.

Transition

Once the district foundation is ready, teachers can successfully connect their scheduled classes to the district curriculum.

4. Administrator setup for Classrooms and Lesson Plans — 0:22–0:34

A. Enable the Lesson Plan component

Demonstration path:

Administrative Functions → District Options → Classroom and Assessment Configuration

Show or discuss:

- Locate the option to use the Lesson Plan component.

- Verify that it is enabled.
- Explain that teachers cannot begin lesson planning until the administrative configuration is complete.

B. Create or verify lesson-plan schedules

Demonstration path:

Administrative Functions → Lesson Plan Schedules → Add New

Explain that schedules may represent:

- Secondary bell schedules
- Elementary instructional blocks
- Intervention periods
- Other district-defined planning periods

Compare the two schedule types:

Schedule type Common use

Time-based Secondary schedules with defined start and end times

Duration-based Elementary schedules organized by instructional minutes

Demonstrate:

1. Enter a schedule name.
2. Select time-based or duration-based.
3. Add periods or instructional blocks.
4. Enter times or durations.
5. Save the completed schedule.

C. Review lesson-plan configuration and templates

Demonstration path:

Administrative Functions → District Options → Lesson Plan Configuration

Review available decisions:

- Show lesson plans at the unit level.

- Predefine lesson-plan schedules.
- Select district naming conventions.
- Create and name templates.
- Determine public visibility.
- Allow non-curricular lesson plans.
- Add district-defined fields.
- Select curriculum information that will display.
- Determine whether lesson-plan approval is required.
- Allow view-only sharing.
- Default learning targets from activities.
- Display times or period names.
- Attach the appropriate schedule and calendar.
- Add district-specific help information.

D. Tie templates to the current calendar

Demonstrate:

1. Open the applicable lesson-plan template.
2. Locate **Tie to School Calendar**.
3. Select the current district calendar.
4. Save.
5. Repeat for every applicable template.

These setup options and steps are detailed in the Knowledge Base's lesson-planner and template instructions. [How to Use the Lesson Planner](#) and [How to Update Lesson Plan Templates](#)

Discussion question

What information does your district genuinely need teachers to enter in a lesson plan—and what information is already captured in the curriculum activity?

Emphasize avoiding duplicate entry when designing lesson-plan templates.

5. Courses, classes, and sections — 0:34–0:50

A. Creating or verifying a course

Demonstration path:

Curriculum → Courses → Add Course

Demonstrate:

1. Enter the district-defined general course information.
2. Complete applicable optional course fields.
3. Select the correct projection schedule.
4. Save the course.

The Knowledge Base identifies the projection schedule as part of course creation. [How to Add a Course](#)

Course-readiness discussion

Before connecting a class, verify that the course has:

- The appropriate department and grade level
- Current standards
- Units and topics
- Appropriate durations and pacing
- Learning targets
- Curriculum activities
- Necessary attachments or instructional resources
- The correct publication or revision status

B. Creating a teacher's class or section

Explain that EMBARC uses a **class** to represent the teacher's instructional group or section.

The Knowledge Base recommends:

- Elementary teachers may have one class.

- Secondary teachers will typically create multiple classes.
- Secondary class names should identify the current schedule clearly, such as “1st Period Spanish I.”

Demonstration path:

Classroom → Add a Class

Demonstrate:

1. Enter a clear class name.
2. Choose the lesson-plan template.
3. Review optional class settings.
4. Select a display color.
5. Save the class.
6. Add a co-teacher, when appropriate.
7. Add general documents and links, such as a syllabus, classroom procedures, or course resources.
8. Select the primary course or courses.
9. Add the course to the class.
10. Select the appropriate projection schedule.
11. Choose a calendar color.
12. Create the course projections.
13. View the projected curriculum from the class’s Curriculum area.

Important co-teacher point

A co-teacher receives the same rights and access to the class as the educator who created it. Encourage participants to add co-teachers intentionally.

Interactive practice

Present this scenario:

A secondary teacher teaches three sections of Algebra I and one section of Algebra II. How should the classes be named?

Possible response:

- Period 1 – Algebra I
- Period 2 – Algebra I
- Period 4 – Algebra I
- Period 6 – Algebra II

Discuss why specific class names make lesson-plan recurrence, assignments, calendars, and class management easier.

6. Using the Classroom area — 0:50–1:02

Purpose

Show how the Classroom area turns district curriculum into a practical workspace for teachers and students.

Classroom orientation

Tour the applicable areas in the live EMBARC environment:

- Class home page
- Curriculum
- Calendar
- Lesson Plans
- Assignments
- Documents and links
- Student or roster area
- Class settings
- Co-teacher settings

Suggested demonstration

Use a prepared sample class to demonstrate how a teacher might:

1. Open the class.
2. Confirm that the correct course is attached.

3. View the projected curriculum.
4. Add a class-level resource.
5. Navigate to the assignment area.
6. Create or preview a sample assignment using the options available in the district's configuration.
7. Confirm dates and visibility.
8. Show where teachers and students would locate the assignment.

Facilitation emphasis

Explain the distinction between:

- **Curriculum-level content:** Reusable across classes and school years
- **Classroom-level content:** Specific to a teacher, group of students, or current school year
- **Lesson-plan content:** Scheduled instructional application for a particular date or period

Discussion prompt

What materials should remain consistent across the district, and what materials should teachers be able to customize for their own classes?

Invite two or three chat responses.

Best-practice callout

Encourage districts to establish common expectations for:

- Class naming
- Course connections
- Co-teacher access
- Where shared resources should be stored
- Assignment naming
- Due-date conventions
- What belongs in curriculum versus the teacher's classroom

7. Creating effective lesson plans — 1:02–1:17

Explain how curriculum supports lesson planning

Activities are created at the curriculum topic level and can contain:

- Teacher actions
- Student actions
- Learning targets
- Standards
- Instructional resources
- Attachments and links
- Best practices

Lesson plans use these existing curriculum components for a specific class, date, and student group. This reduces duplicate work and allows teachers to add classroom-specific considerations. [Activities and Lesson Plans](#)

Live demonstration: Create a lesson plan

Demonstration path:

Classroom → Lesson Plans → Add Lesson Plan

Demonstrate:

1. Select the class.
2. Select the lesson-plan template.
3. Choose the date and period.
4. Select the department.
5. Select the course.
6. Select the unit and topic.
7. Save and continue.
8. Choose the appropriate learning targets.
9. Select curriculum activities.

10. Add appropriate attachments.
11. Save and continue.
12. Name the lesson plan.
13. Complete the district-defined fields.
14. Add or create any additional activities.
15. Add classroom-specific attachments.
16. Save the lesson plan.
17. View it in calendar view.
18. View it in plan-book view.

“Think aloud” during the demonstration

Explain why each item is selected:

- The learning target establishes the intended learning.
- The curriculum activity provides the core instructional experience.
- Attachments give teachers and students access to needed resources.
- District-defined fields capture local planning expectations.
- The date and period connect the plan to the teacher’s actual schedule.

Example lesson-plan structure

Use a simple example such as:

Lesson: Comparing Fractions

- Learning target: I can compare fractions using visual models.
- Curriculum activity: Fraction comparison stations.
- Teacher action: Model two visual comparison strategies.
- Student action: Rotate through stations and justify comparisons.
- Resources: Fraction strips and digital practice link.
- Differentiation: Pre-selected models and extension problems.
- Evidence of learning: Exit ticket.

- Classroom consideration: Small-group reteaching for identified students.

Knowledge check

Ask participants to identify where each item belongs:

1. A district-approved instructional strategy used by every fifth-grade teacher

Answer: Curriculum activity

2. A note that one class needs additional vocabulary support tomorrow

Answer: Lesson plan

3. A syllabus for the current class

Answer: Class documents or links

4. A learning target aligned to the district course

Answer: Curriculum, then selected for the lesson plan

8. Time-saving lesson-plan tools — 1:17–1:22

Briefly demonstrate or describe the following tools from the lesson planner:

Recurrence

Use when the same lesson plan applies to multiple sections or repeats on a schedule.

- Recur a single occurrence.
- Recur by day.
- Recur by week.
- Review the indicator showing that a plan has been recurred.

Manually reset dates and times

Use when individual lesson plans need different dates or periods.

Automatically bump dates

Use when instruction is interrupted by:

- Weather closures
- Assemblies
- Testing

- Fire drills
- Unexpected schedule changes

The tool can move a plan and subsequent plans by up to ten days or skip selected plans.

Replicate schedule

Use to copy:

- A single day of plans
- An entire week
- Plans from one class or schedule location to another

Caution

Mention **Mass Delete** only briefly. Stress that users should filter carefully, review the generated list, and verify selections before deleting lesson plans.

These functions are described in the “Lesson Plan: Other Features” section of the [Lesson Planner guide](#).

9. Application, Q&A, and closing — 1:22–1:30

Application scenario

Present the following scenario:

Your district has completed its curriculum maps, but most teachers still plan in separate documents. Teachers say that entering lesson plans in EMBARC will create extra work. What changes could make EMBARC useful rather than duplicative?

Possible participant responses

- Place reusable instructional materials in curriculum activities.
- Enable learning targets to default from activities.
- Simplify lesson-plan templates.
- Remove fields that duplicate curriculum content.
- Connect templates to the correct calendar and schedule.
- Teach recurrence and replication tools.

- Establish consistent class and course naming.
- Provide teachers with one complete model class and lesson plan.
- Clearly define district expectations before implementation.

Final reflection

Ask participants to complete this sentence in the chat:

One action I will take after today's webinar is...

Q&A

Use the remaining time to address questions. Sort questions into three categories:

- District configuration
- Course/classroom setup
- Teacher lesson planning

Record questions requiring account-specific investigation for follow-up.

Closing message

Reinforce the central idea:

When courses, classes, activities, and lesson plans are connected, EMBARC becomes more than a curriculum storage system. It becomes a practical bridge between the district's curriculum and teachers' daily instruction.

Preview Part 2 of the user-group series, if its topic has been determined.

Recommended facilitator preparation

Before the webinar:

- Use a demonstration account containing both administrator and teacher access.
- Create one complete sample course with:
 - o At least one unit
 - o At least one topic
 - o Two learning targets
 - o Two curriculum activities

- o One attachment or link
- Prepare one elementary and one secondary lesson-plan schedule.
- Verify that the current calendar and projection schedule are available.
- Prepare a sample lesson-plan template.
- Create one existing class that can be reset.
- Prepare a second class that can be created live.
- Prepare one sample assignment for the Classroom-area demonstration.
- Prepare one lesson plan that can be recurred, replicated, and bumped.
- Keep a backup set of screenshots in case the live demonstration is interrupted.
- Have the [EMBARC Knowledge Base](#) and support-ticket link ready to share.

Suggested participant follow-up resources

- [Back to School Checklist](#)
- [How to Add a Course](#)
- [How to Reset Classes](#)
- [How to Update Lesson Plan Templates](#)
- [Activities and Lesson Plans](#)
- [How to Use the Lesson Planner](#)

Because EMBARC options can vary according to district configuration and user permissions, the presenter should verify the exact Assignment-area labels and workflow in the demonstration district before delivering that portion of the webinar.