NEO
BY CYPHER LEARNING

Burleson Independent School District

Providing personalized learning through gamification

Introduction

The **REALM at Burleson Independent School District** offers students a **blended learning environment** that applies **game-based learning** theory to its curriculum and instruction. Various elements of instruction will be translated into gaming applications, or "gamified," to peak student interest as they master a rigorous, individualized curriculum requiring critical thinking and problem-solving skills to advance or "level up." Workshops, games and quests are **student-paced, engaging and motivational.**

Why did The REALM need an LMS?

Cheryl Essex, Dean of The REALM: The REALM stands for Rigorous Education Arcade Learning Model, we're a gaming school. That means lessons are plated in such a way to give the feel of gaming. NEO offered us an opportunity to plate the games and house the games in a LMS.

We kept going back to the fact that we needed something that would **keep kids engaged.** Because of the blended learning strategy that we wanted to infuse in our school, we needed something that could be self-paced, something they can do at home - eventually something they can do outside of school and on their own time.

And what we found was NEO - an amazing product. NEO gave us all the components that we needed:

- It lets us go **from blended learning, to self-pacing** to some still traditional delivery;
- It gives us a **grading system;**
- It provides us with **all the structure we need** to give us that true feel of ownership of learning;
- It gives **autonomy** to students.

What do students like about NEO?

Anna Lappin, 6th grade student: Within the REALM, most of the stuff we do is basically on NEO. For example, I can see the lessons I've completed over the last six weeks, and the 'progress meter' shows I've done 85% of what I'm supposed to do.

Some of the things that NEO offers in terms of lessons – which is one of my favorite features – is the **video recording**. For one assignment, we had to make a video about our life; you can click the 'Record' button in the editor and **it allows you to record a video and turn that in as an assignment.**

In the REALM, we have the "Mastery Level" that we must achieve and that's a 90% or above. In NEO, you have the chance to correct a bad grade. If I get less than what I wanted on an assignment, I can go back and redo it and fix that grade.

Teacher notifications are very helpful, because they can tell us when workshops are due, what you're supposed to sign up for and what grades you're missing. Why teachers enjoy using NEO?

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Angela Lappin, English and Language Arts Teacher: NEO plays an important role within our gaming school. One of the best features I like about it is the 'Stages'. These are sections where I can put all sorts of different lessons that I want my students to be subjected to. In Texas, we have State Standards that we need to meet and I was able to implement each standard in the chapters and lessons that I do for the children.

NEO provides me with a lot of options in how I want to portray a lesson. For example, I can choose to go ahead and just put statements in and let the kids know exactly what I want them to learn. I can also **add quizzes or essay questions.** Within each lesson that I have in NEO, there is a different number of ways that I can use to assess the student.

One of the features that I like best about NEO is the "Gradebook". It has made grading so much easier and it allows me to make sure that I can assess the kids in different ways.

The communication sector in NEO is an awesome way for me to communicate with the students at all times. One of the neat things is that **I can have NEO on my cell phone and whenever a student turns in an assignment it will alert me on my mobile device.** Also, I get messages on my phone. It' s a great way to communicate with kids and let them know what they need to do.

Cheryl Essex: NEO affords our students an opportunity for immediate feedback. Because our grades are filtered in slowly, the teachers can stay on top of the grading process and see if the child doesn' t meet the qualifications necessary. The amount of communication the teacher can have is so superior to anything that you would experience with most typical learning management systems.