



NEO

BY CYPHER LEARNING

Senatobia Middle School

Empowering students through technology

Introduction

Senatobia Middle School is part of the Senatobia Municipal School District, which is consistently recognized as one of Mississippi's outstanding educational organizations with all schools historically accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and a **tradition of educational excellence** that reliably stands the test of time.

The Senatobia Municipal School District offers a comprehensive educational program on 3 campuses, where students in grades K – 5 attend Senatobia Elementary School, students in grades 6 – 8 attend Senatobia Middle School, and students in grades 9 – 12 attend Senatobia High School. **Gieshala Mims, 8th Grade Teacher**, at Senatobia Middle School, shares her experiences with using NEO LMS.

What were the school's challenges before implementing NEO?

Gieshala Mims, 8th Grade Teacher: In searching for the **perfect online learning environment** for my classroom, I went through several different programs searching for that something extra that I could not quite name, but I would know when I found it. I had been moving toward implementing a flipped classroom philosophy before I officially knew the components of this teaching philosophy, however my plan was to flip the flipped ideology and create that experience during school as I facilitated my students' learning process.

How did the adoption process go?

Gieshala Mims, 8th Grade Teacher: I discovered NEO LMS on the iLearn Technology blog about 9 years ago and I have not looked back. During the adoption process of NEO LMS, I relied heavily upon feedback from students through direct and indirect means. I would include surveys about specific components as well as examining how my students responded to different assignments and other elements within NEO LMS, then I would adjust accordingly.

My first year using NEO LMS exclusively was a learning curve for me as well as my students, but I was fortunate to have a group of students who were **open and eager** to interact within their new learning management system that reminded them of a "Facebook for learning", as it affectionately became known as amongst my students. I look at my use of NEO as a way to convey my pedagogical content into a personalized version of myself for each student, as I facilitate the learning process. NEO has allowed me an opportunity to differentiate instruction for all my students as they become a part in creating their unique learning experience.



Which features are most helpful to you and why?

Gieshala Mims, 8th Grade Teacher: I absolutely love the **foundational interactive elements** found within NEO. My students are digitally blogging and debating weekly, as they can be creative in sharing their experiences and opinions in an interactive environment. The native blog feature allows me to share my blogs and promote creative thinking and writing as they experiment with adding images and embedding videos to help enhance the narrative that they are portraying to the class. After completing their blogs, they are then able to read and interact with their peers.

The debate assignment feature has encouraged my students to use their voice in a digital medium, when they might otherwise be hesitant to speak in front of the class. However I have found that as they **share their opinions digitally**, this often leads to small group and whole class discussions in which they are eager to contribute.

As a teacher, I love the **assignment and grade book capabilities** offered by NEO. I can personalize assignments as well as add competencies from my curriculum associated with each assignment, while **tracking their mastery** of those components for individual students or the whole class, as well as receiving the analytics for each competency. This helps me adjust my pedagogical practices for future assignments and classes.



What is the biggest improvement you have noticed since adopting NEO?

Gieshala Mims, 8th Grade Teacher: One of the biggest improvements that I have seen since adopting NEO is that my classroom management has improved dramatically. My students know upon entering my class where to go and what to do in my classroom, thanks to the organizational structure of NEO. My students can also **take ownership of their own learning experiences** as NEO helps them to keep track of their assignments, progress, graded assignments, and assignments due.

NEO also helps me elevate my pedagogical practices by taking advantage of the new components that are added throughout each school year, which allows me to **remain current and ahead of the technological trends** in society and education. I love that you can monitor what changes are being implemented within the learning management system and you can offer feedback and suggestions for elements coming in the future.

NEO has completely revolutionized my approach to teaching in terms of creating and maintaining a learning environment in which students are willing to become active participants in their learning experiences.

