



Schools Make Big Gains with Video Coaching

How intensive teacher support with Sibme's video coaching and collaboration platform helped two schools achieve major gains in student and teacher performance.

A case study by Melody S. Gee

A Tale of Two Schools

Though 400 miles apart, Neal Middle School in Durham, NC and Liberty Point Elementary in Union City, GA, experienced similar struggles with student performance and available technology for teacher observation and feedback.

Liberty principal James Payne describes his school as sitting in a tough neighborhood, with a low school climate rating and ELA, math, and reading proficiency rates hovering around 50%.

Neal principal Michael Fuga says that for the past 20 years, his school has struggled to meet state growth targets while serving diverse needs and challenges: 15% failed a previous grade; 22% are second language learners; 15% have IEPs.

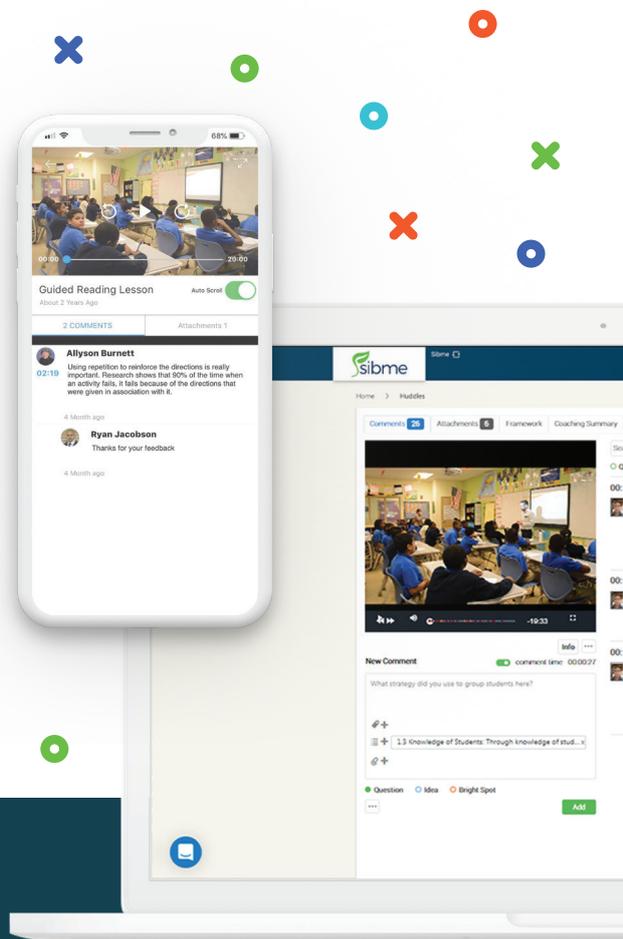
Instructional Coaching with Video

Amid these challenges, both principals knew that using video for classroom observation and feedback was a crucial component to teacher development and improving student performance. However, both also needed better video capabilities: more storage, centralized files, on-demand tech support, and an easy-to-use platform. Mr. Payne had been using Swivl recorders that weren't user-friendly. Meanwhile, Dr. Fuga simply filmed with his smartphone, which meant very short observations to keep file sizes in check, plus excruciating download and transfer times.



To improve their video observation and feedback, in 2018 both schools adopted Sibme, a web and mobile video coaching and collaboration platform that provides quick and seamless video recording, uploading, editing, annotating, and sharing.

For both principals, video feedback is part of a deep commitment to intensive and impactful teacher support. To provide that support, they pair an instructional coach with every teacher. "It's ingrained in our culture that everyone receives coaching," reflects Mr. Payne. "Our philosophy is, top athletes have coaches, no matter how good they are." Dr. Fuga mirrors those sentiments: "All 80 of our teachers work with coaches. Athletes watch game film to see exactly what they were doing, then go work on it. It's no different for teachers."



The Power of Seeing

Video observation and feedback offers a complete view of teacher performance, capturing details that are impossible for just one live observer. "When you're in it," says Dr. Fuga, "it's easy to get caught up in the teaching. But video helps teachers see their classroom from an outside perspective. I can say, 'hey, you need to move around the room,' but when they see themselves not engaging half the room, it's real. It's not just my word."

For Mr. Payne, video improves his own effectiveness. "As an instructional leader, you have to inspect what you expect. Sibme has been an eye in the sky that eliminates talking about what you thought you did in the classroom. There's no gray area, and it's helped me improve my craft of giving effective feedback. Being able to slow down the instruction helps me give more meaningful and quality feedback."

With objective video evidence, coaching also becomes more productive. Mr. Payne has teachers review and self-evaluate their own videos prior to a feedback conversation. "Instead of focusing on the past," he notes, "we build change, talking about what to do next to improve. There's power in seeing teachers light up when they do well on video. Those conversations have brought things to life in our school."



Proof in Measurable Gains

Within two years, Neal Middle School and Liberty Point Elementary have seen noticeable improvements, beginning with school atmosphere. "There's definitely more engagement in the classrooms," notes Mr. Payne of his elementary students. "Teachers are improving instructional strategies and delivery. Students are participating. I see happier kids who are passionate about coming to school." Similarly, Dr. Fuga notes that his middle school teachers "are growing. They're being explicit about their feedback and plan to improve their craft."

And when teachers grow in their craft, student achievement follows. The numbers indicating growth at both schools are impressive. At Neal, grade level proficiency is up 3 points across the school and student behavior incidents and referrals dropped by 36%. Dr. Fuga adds, "Over the last two years of full implementation of Sibme, we have exceeded growth goals for the first time in our school's history."

Mr. Payne also cites major gains in performance: Liberty's overall school accountability score jumped from 58 to 83; students reading at or above 3rd-5th grade level rose from 53% to 70%; ELA proficiency went from 22% to 40%; and in math, proficiency leapt from 18% to 45%. Most notably, just before Mr. Payne started at Liberty, out-of-school suspensions hit 113. Last year, there were a total of 4.

Grade level proficiency

+3 across the school

Student behavior incidents & referrals

36% reduction

Overall School Accountability Score

83 from 58

Students reading at or above 3rd-5th grade level

70% from 53%

ELA proficiency

40% from 22%

Math proficiency

45% from 18%

Out-of-school suspensions

4 from 113

But beyond the numbers, Mr. Payne, explains, *“I see the faces of the students we serve every day. The work we’ve done around observation and feedback, it’s changing the life trajectory for these kids, giving them options they wouldn’t have if we weren’t pushing them to maximize their potential.”*



A Cultural Shift

An entire school’s culture can change with strong teacher support. At Neal Middle School and Liberty Elementary, a platform that makes video feedback easy, fast, shareable, and meaningful has improved classroom engagement, student behavior, and teacher satisfaction. “Improved teaching and improved performance build self-esteem and build a school culture—that changes behavior,” Dr. Fuga explains.

At Liberty, “Sibme has been a game changer for us,” says Mr. Payne. “We had the highest teacher retention rate last year. When we started this work, we were a 2-star school for climate. Now, we’re the only 5-star elementary in our area. Teachers know this is a place for them to grow, develop, and have opportunities to take risks. Teaching is hard and we don’t expect perfection. We’re here to support teachers as they progress and get better every day.”

Culture, too, is the key to integrating a platform like Sibme into teacher observation, with well-timed, gradual rollouts. Once teachers are comfortable, the possibilities are endless. Going forward, Liberty teachers will take more ownership of the platform by exchanging videos and feedback among themselves. And Neal is building a library of best practice videos, with plans to share them during staff professional development. After two successful years, these schools are aiming even higher and hitting every mark.





Sibme has a virtual coaching service that is designed to help new and/or struggling teachers in a 6 week coaching cycle that blends weekly personalized web-based conversations with feedback on teacher-submitted snapshot videos using the Sibme platform.

To learn more about what Sibme can do, please visit www.sibme.com/virtual-coaching.html or email us at info@sibme.com.