Clever Usage Among High School Students

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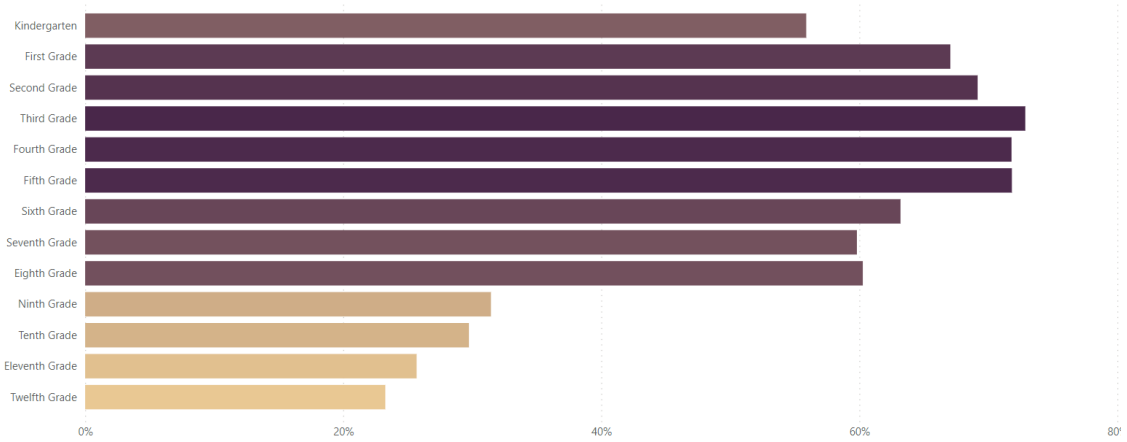
Clever is a digital learning platform designed to act as single sign-on tool where teachers and students can access online applications for K-12 curriculum. Teachers have the option to set up virtual classrooms to deliver core content as well as direct students to auxiliary applications for supplemental work. In the district, elementary and middle school students use Clever at much higher rates than high school students (figure 1).

Figure 1: Clever Usage by Grade



The research office conducted a focus group to talk with teachers about their Clever usage. The following were key takeaways from the discussion.

Key Theme 1: Student usage is low because teacher usage is low.

- "My students don't use Clever because I don't use Clever."
- *"My kids have seen it once or twice from me."*
- One teacher reported using Clever primarily for its textbook feature through Canvas but said that was virtually the only thing they used Clever for.
- Another teacher reported using Clever to introduce students to the Naviance application but does not regularly direct students to Clever.

Key Theme 2: In general, there is some confusion about the purpose and appropriate use of Clever.

- Teachers understand Clever to be a portal for other applications, but do not know how the platform should be utilized for high school instructional needs.
- Teachers also reported having not had extensive training on Clever and how it should be used.
- To increase usage among high school teachers, there should be additional training as well as clear communication and guidance for use within specific subjects with specific Clever apps.
    - *"It looked like you could do so much with it. It looked like it was almost too much. Does anyone know HOW to use Clever? I know it gets you places, but that's about it."*

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Key Theme 3: While Clever is convenient as a single sign-on platform, high school teachers are needing to access external applications not supported by Clever specific to high school curriculum.

- Teachers reported that, in theory, Clever is good because it is straightforward and can act as a portal to other applications. However, Clever does not have the same functionality as a program such as Teams which can de-motivate teachers to have students use Clever for course content.
- The message that teachers have received has been to prioritize Microsoft Teams which plays a vastly different role in delivering course materials.
  - *"I don't think I was fully made aware of why we should use clever and what it's true purpose is because I felt like they wanted us to focus on Teams."*
  - Though usage numbers are relatively low for high school students, teachers are reporting to use other applications to deliver content. While content may not be delivered through Clever, students are receiving course materials through other applications that are not linked to Clever.
  - Teachers reported using the following applications: Microsoft Teams, DreamBox, Nearpod, Edpuzzle, YouTube, and Kahoot. These apps are not currently tracked through Clever analytics.
- Grades K-8 are using more of the applications on Clever such as iReady and MasteryConnect. High school students do not need to access these applications with the same frequency as K-8 students.
  - *"We utilize Clever for the textbook and it's been a really helpful measure as well as using Clever for intervention, but not all students need the intervention."*

High school teachers were also asked to complete a short seven-question survey about their Clever usage. The survey was open from January 14th to January 26th, 2021, and 433 teachers gave their responses.

Thirty-two percent of teachers who responded said that they know how to use Clever, but they prefer different methods of getting content to their students. Nearly 60 percent of teachers reported that their students used it 'occasionally' or more frequently to access learning apps (figure 2). When asked how teachers typically share textbooks or other content resources with their students, 80 percent of teachers said they download content and post it to their Teams or classroom website. Teachers were able to include various ways they gave their students resources so about half of the teachers also included having students log on to specific platforms to view content and/or posting or emailing links to websites with content (figure 3).

Almost forty percent of teachers said they use their textbooks at least weekly in online instruction while 42 percent said they 'never' use them. However, 86 percent of teachers said they use source materials that are not from their textbooks weekly. Canvas, MasteryConnect, Naviance, and Edgenuity were the apps that teachers said they encourage their students to use regularly. This is shown in figure 4. Teachers were also asked to name some apps or websites that they used that were not mentioned in the survey; the most cited apps/websites were Nearpod, Kahoot!, Youtube, Edpuzzle, and Quizizz.

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Figure 2: Description of Clever Usage

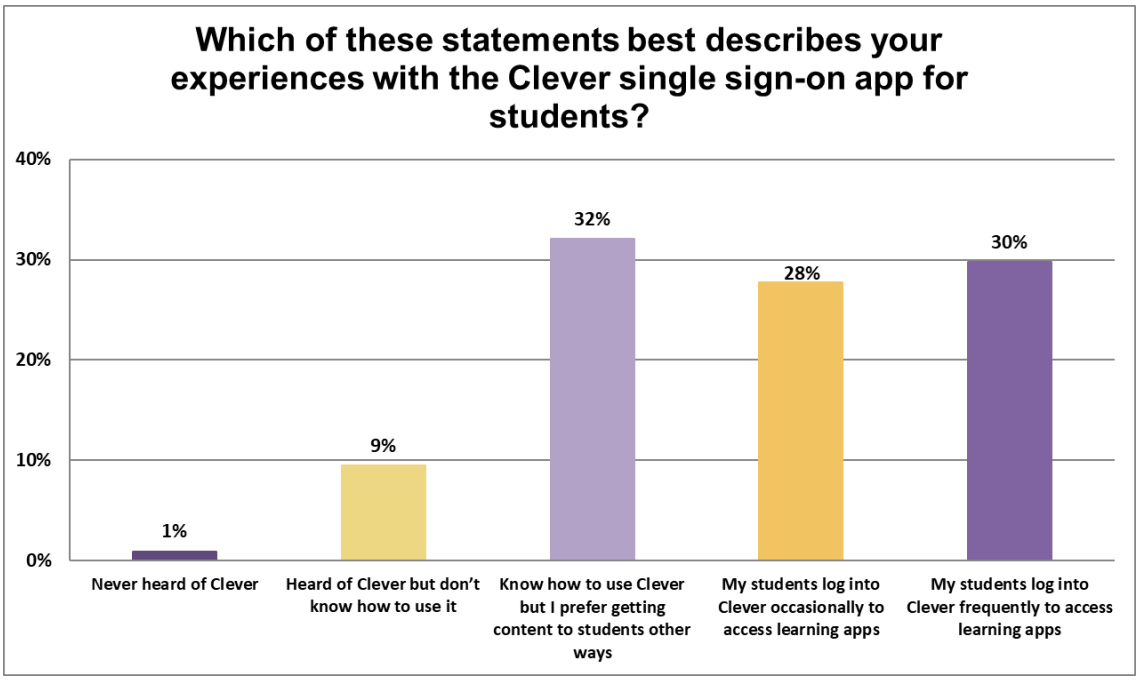
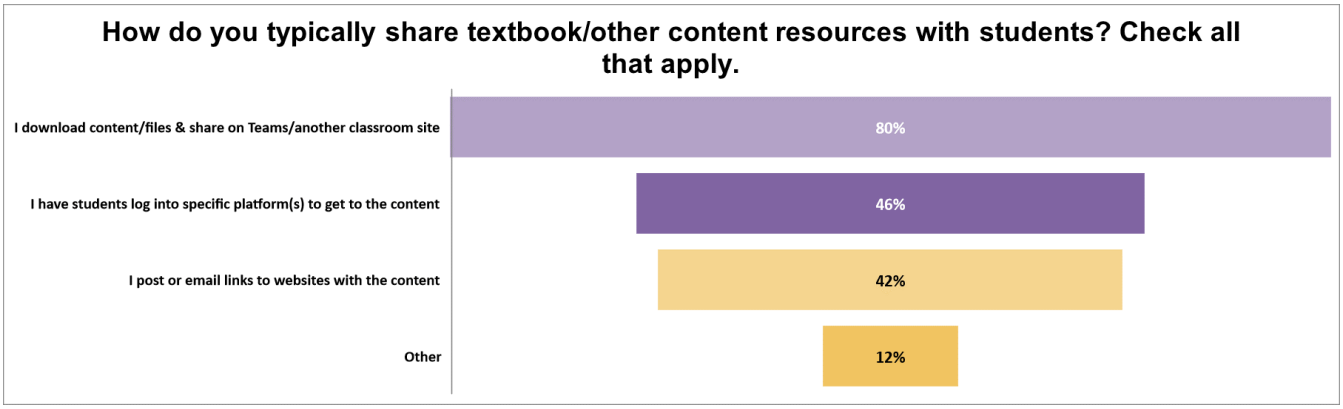


Figure 3: How Teachers Share Textbooks/Content



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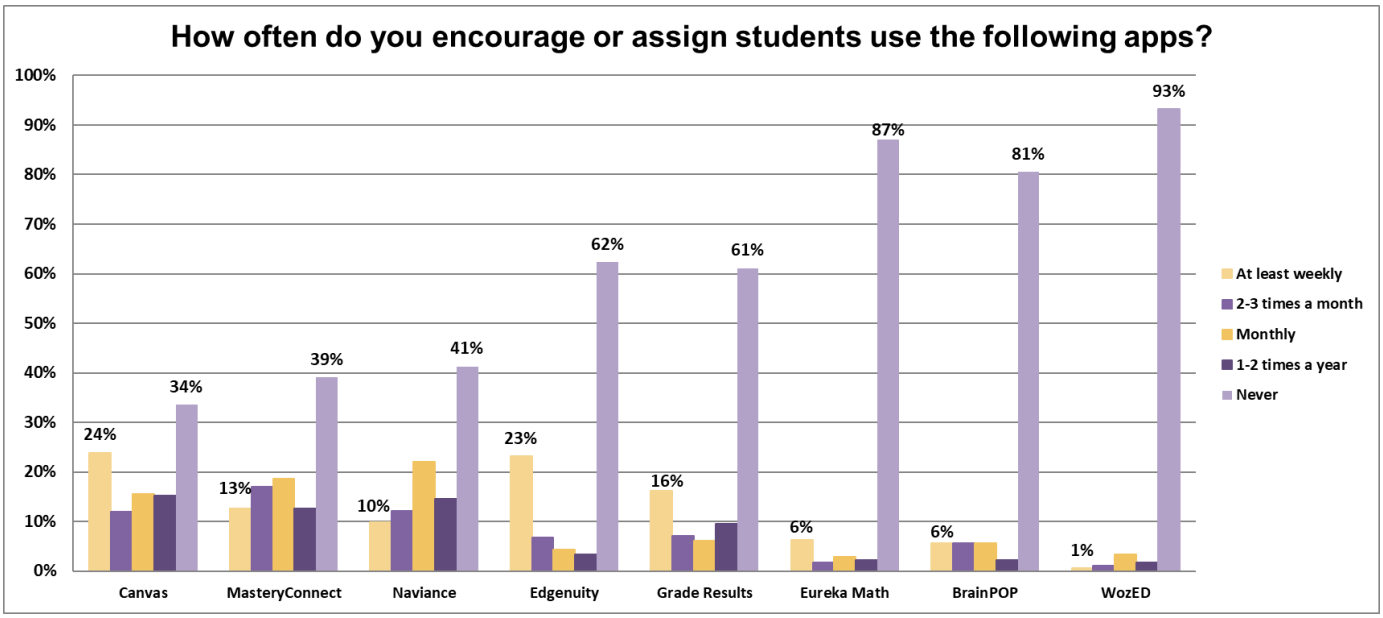
Figure 4: Usage of Apps