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COVID-19 Best Practices & Innovations Brief: How Mississippi Used Learning Management Systems as Supports During an Emergency Learning Situation

Kathleen Alley
Mississippi State University, mka143@msstate.edu

Kristin Javorsky
Mississippi State University, kj911@msstate.edu

Melody Dale
Mississippi State University, mcp67@msstate.edu

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COVID-19 Best Practices & Innovations Brief:

How Mississippi Used Learning Management Systems as Supports During an Emergency Learning Situation

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, K-12 schools across the state of Mississippi closed and teachers transitioned to some form of distance or remote learning. They had to adapt to an unprecedented situation, which resulted in both challenges and opportunities. Teachers had to develop new modes to deliver instruction, in real time, migrating from traditional teaching approaches to fully virtual and remote instruction. Many teachers were not for this transition; however, the pandemic provides a chance for all educators to evaluate their readiness for distance education and increase it for future emergency situations. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, few studies examined how teachers transitioned to distance learning in an emergency. Thus, it is important to understand what applications Mississippi teachers used to transition their classes for distance learning, which will help educators, technology support staff, and administrators better respond to similar challenges in the future.

Learning Management Systems Used

As Mississippi educators began to adapt to the long-term circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, many school districts either purchased an online Learning Management System (LMS) subscription or significantly increased the usage and application of the one in which they had already invested. Of the 676 general education teachers who responded to to a recent statewide survey (Javorsky et al, 2022), 65% were in schools using Google Classroom, 36% were using Canvas, 7% were using Schoology, and 1% were using Microsoft Teams. These percentages totaled to higher than 100% because some teachers reported their schools were using multiple platforms at once or had switched from one system to another during the pandemic.

In the **primary grades**, 160 of 217 teachers shared their schools used Google Classroom, 44 teachers shared their schools used Canvas, 21 teachers shared their schools used Schoology, and 5 teachers shared their schools used Microsoft Teams.

In the **middle grades**, 195 of 310 teachers shared their schools used Google Classroom,

3 TOP LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Google Classroom

was the most used LMS across all grade levels, with 65% of teachers reporting its use in their schools. This was more common in primary (74%) and middle (63%) grades, but 52% of high school teachers also indicated its use.

Canvas

was a second popular LMS, with 36% of teachers reporting its use in their schools. However, Canvas was more commonly used in high school (47%) in comparison to primary (20%) and middle grades (33%).
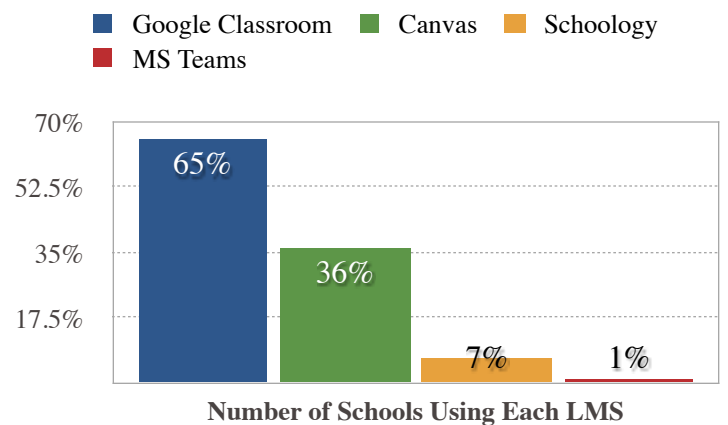
Schoology

was an LMS used by 7% of teachers across the grade levels, with slightly higher use in primary (10%) than middle or high school grades (6%).

102 teachers shared their schools used Canvas, 19 teachers shared their schools used Schoology, and 1 teacher shared his or her school used Microsoft Teams.

In the **high school grades**, 117 of 226 teachers shared their schools used Google Classroom, 105 teachers shared their schools used Canvas, 13 teachers shared their schools used Schoology, and no teachers shared their schools used Microsoft Teams.

Examining these numbers, Google Classroom was the most popular LMS option for schools and teachers serving the primary grades, with 74% reporting this use. Middle grades schools and teachers also cited using Google Classroom more than other LMS options, with 63% reporting this use. At the middle grades, it was more common for schools and teachers to use Canvas as well, in comparison to the primary grades. This aligned with choices at the high school level, where teachers cited the use of Google Classroom and Canvas almost equally, with 52% and 47% reporting this use respectively.

Legend: ■ Google Classroom   ■ Canvas   ■ Schoology   ■ MS Teams

Google Classroom 65%, Canvas 36%, Schoology 7%, MS Teams 1%

Number of Schools Using Each LMS

Ease of Use and Effectiveness of Delivery and Practice

Teachers were asked to assign letter grades to their school's LMS for how easy it was for them to set up their online learning and for their students to access and navigate the content, along with how well the LMS worked to effectively deliver the content and allow the students adequate practice while learning.

Regardless of grade levels taught, most of the general education teachers who used **Google Classroom** (n=440) rated it with an A for ease of use for the instructor to set up and deliver content/instruction. This dropped to a B however when it came to effectiveness for conveying the content they wanted to teach, although 96% of the teachers who relied on it still rated this as C or better. When asked about ease of use for the students to navigate and utilize on their own and effectiveness for students trying to learn and practice the content, the most popular grades were also B, with 99% and 93% rating it as C or better, respectively.

K-12 teachers using **Canvas** (n=245) did not rate their LMS as highly as Google Classroom, although it was still well-regarded. Most of these general education teachers rated Canvas with an B across all four areas, with a C or better being awarded by 93% of teachers for ease of use for the instructor to set up, 91% for effectiveness for conveying the content you want to teach. 92% for ease of use for the students to navigate and utilize on their own and 95% for effectiveness for students trying to learn and practice the content.

While the small sample size of those using **Schoology** (n=47) provides a more limited picture of this LMS, it may be worth noting that the percentage of teachers who awarded Schoology with C or better was lower than the other two platforms. While 98% of teachers did so for ease of use for the students to navigate and utilize on their own, this dropped to 89% of teachers for ease of use for the instructor to set up, 84% for effectiveness for conveying the content you want to teach and 83% for effectiveness for students trying to learn and practice the content.

Authors: Dr. Kathleen Alley & Dr. Kristin Javorsky

FULL REPORT

‣ Javorsky, K., Alley, K.M., Miller, N.C., Fondren, K.B., Lemley, S.M., & Hopper, P.F. (2022, June). Mississippi's K-12 public education response to the COVID-19 pandemic: From remote learning to recovery and beyond. Emergency online teaching - What works for Mississippi. https://guides.library.msstate.edu/c.php?g=1156773&p=8479156

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