Teaching in a time of change
How do teachers spend their classroom time?

Report summary

Context

• Judging from the education news headlines over the past several years, it would be hard to escape the conclusion that traditional core curriculum is probably doomed, while classroom time and dollars are increasingly being spent on new, digital supplemental tools.
• But it is worth taking a step back to ask the question: what are teachers actually using in their classrooms?
• The EY-Parthenon team sought to answer this question through extensive primary research with teachers around the country, including a nationwide survey of teachers garnering 836 respondents.

Key findings

1. Contrary to popular belief, core curriculum materials are still the primary resource that teachers utilize in their classrooms.
   • Teachers spend 43% of their classroom time on core curriculum, relative to 27% of time on materials they created or sourced themselves and 22% on supplemental materials.
   • Teachers also reported turning to core curriculum first to source content and noted that core curriculum is “most important” relative to other types of materials.
   • 69% of teachers across demographic groups reported using a textbook at least once per week.

2. However, core curriculum’s position is not necessarily safe in the long term.
   • Teachers resoundingly rated core curriculum behind teacher-sourced materials and supplemental materials in terms of effectiveness.
   • Teachers also reported that they would “prefer to spend more time” on teacher-sourced materials and supplemental materials, and less time on core curriculum.

3. A substantial amount of core curriculum usage appears to be driven by district requirements.
   • Among teachers with a district requirement, 57% report utilizing core curriculum daily, compared with 29% of those without a requirement.
   • Our report also groups teachers into “clusters” utilizing cluster analysis, and found that the district core requirement heavily influences whether teachers utilize core curriculum materials.

Implications

• For core curriculum providers, there may be an opportunity to “rightsize” offerings that let teachers choose only what they really want and need (primarily, a scope/sequence and baseline level of instruction).
• Supplemental providers have a clear opportunity to take advantage of more flexible spending and a positive perception of these materials – as well as an opportunity to become even more central to teacher workflow.

Learn more from the full report at parthenon.ey.com.
About EY-Parthenon

EY-Parthenon professionals are global leaders in strategy consulting. EY-Parthenon teams are committed to bringing unconventional yet pragmatic thinking together with clients' smarts to deliver actionable strategies for real impact in today's complex business landscape. Innovation has become a necessary ingredient for sustained success. Critical to unlocking opportunities is the EY-Parthenon balance of strengths – specialized experience with broad executional capabilities – to help you optimize your portfolio of business, uncover industry insights to make investment decisions, find effective paths for strategic growth opportunities and make acquisitions more rewarding. EY-Parthenon methodologies, along with a progressive spirit, can deliver intelligent services for clients, amplify the impact of strategies and make EY-Parthenon consultants the global advisors of choice for business leaders.

About the EY-Parthenon Education teams

EY-Parthenon Education professionals have an explicit mission and vision to be the leading strategy advisors to the global education industry. To achieve this, significant investment is made in dedicated management and team resources so that the global EY-Parthenon education experience extends across public sector and nonprofit education providers, foundations, for-profit companies and service providers and investors. EY-Parthenon professionals have deep experience and a track record of consistent success in working closely with universities, colleges, states, districts, and leading educational reform and service organizations across the globe.