Trends on Digital Course Material Use and OER Awareness in K-12

Results from our National Survey of K-12 Teachers

25 March 2025

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PRESENTATION DETAILS

Research background

Survey Details

Results and Trends
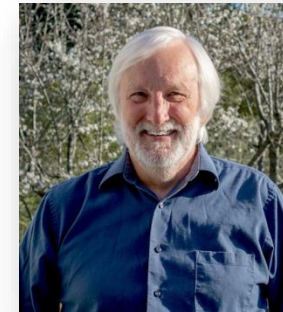
Conclusions & Q&A

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION TO BAY VIEW ANALYTICS

Bay View Analytics offers a comprehensive suite of consulting services in survey design and statistical research. Our services build on nearly two decades of research and survey design, sampling, and statistical analysis expertise.

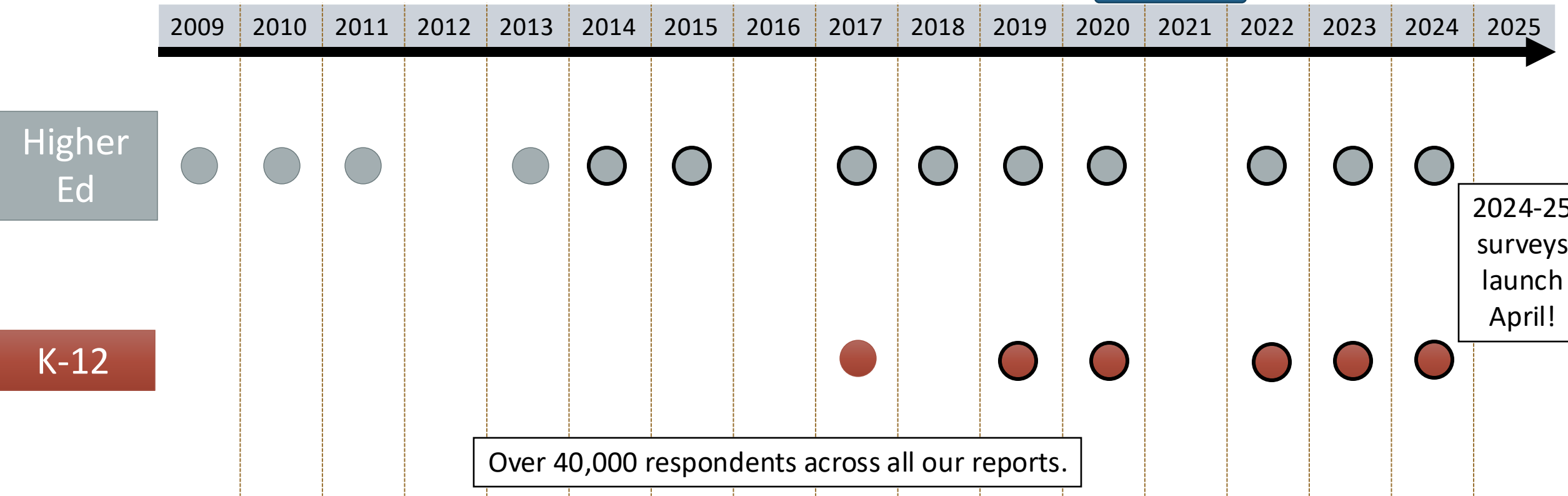Julia Seaman, Ph.D.
Director of Research

Jeff Seaman, Ph.D.
Director

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OVER A DECADE OF RESEARCH ON OER AWARENESS

○ Survey asked about OER awareness

COVID-19

| 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |

Higher Ed

K-12

2024-25 surveys launch April!

Over 40,000 respondents across all our reports.

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All Reports available at BayViewAnalytics.com/OER

SURVEYS AIM TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF OER

Goals of Surveys

- To understand the role of OER in K-12
- To quantify perceptions and awareness of digital course materials and OER

Respondents

- Teachers
- Nationally representative for geography
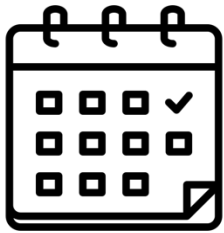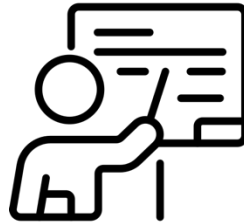
Project supported by WILLIAM + FLORA Hewlett Foundation   OLC ONLINE LEARNING CONSORTIUM   Pearson   ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION   KAPLAN UNIVERSITY

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SURVEY DETAILS

SURVEY DETAILS

April 2024

1,377 Teachers

48 States + DC

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WHAT IS OER?

What is OER?

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning or research **materials** that are **in the public domain or released with an intellectual property license** that allows for free use, adaptation, and distribution.	Educational material **offered freely and open to anyone under license agreements**	Source material **created under an open license can be reused, improved, redistributed or re-mixed**

Source: UNESCO http://en.unesco.org/ -(United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization)

WHAT IS OPEN ACCESS VS OER?

Open Access

▶ Open access refers to free, immediate, online availability of research articles with rights to these articles.

OER

▶ OER encompasses a broader set of **digital content which** works well in an online or blended learning course, *does not exclude classroom teaching*

▶ OER is attached to an **open license** that defines how it may be reused, redistributed, revised or remixed to meet the needs of the learning environment.

The license is an essential component of OER!

From a publicly released presentation by Amice Lindsey at Framingham State University

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https://slideplayer.com/slide/5774319/

SURVEY QUESTIONS & DEFINITIONS

Over our reports, similar questions were asked year to year to allow trends to be examined.

Definitions used in surveys

Open Educational Resources (OER): *OER is defined as "teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others." Unlike traditionally copyrighted material, these resources are available for "open" use, which means users can edit, modify, customize, and share them.*

Licensing Types
Public Domain: *A designation for content that is not protected by any copyright law or other restriction and may be freely copied, shared, altered, and republished by anyone.*
Creative Commons (CC): *Open license that gives everyone from individual authors to governments and institutions a simple, standardized way to grant copyright permissions to their creative work, provided by Creative Commons.*

HOW TO MEASURE OER AWARENESS?

How aware are you of Open Educational Resources (OER)? OER is defined as "teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others." Unlike traditionally copyrighted material, these resources are available for "open" use, which means users can edit, modify, customize, and share them.

○ I am not aware of OER

○ I have heard of OER, but don't know much about them

○ I am somewhat aware of OER but I am not sure how they can be used

○ I am aware of OER and some of their use cases

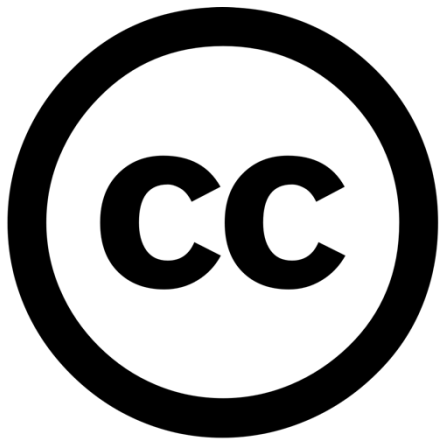○ I am very aware of OER and know how they can be used in the classroom

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How to Measure OER Awareness?

But can we trust faculty answers about OER?

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WE NEED A BETTER MEASURE OF OER AWARENESS

CC

Creative Commons Awareness

+

Open Educational Resources

OER Awareness

= "Strict" OER Awareness

This measure removes the number stating they are aware of OER but not aware of CC. We have high confidence in the remaining OER aware respondents are really aware of OER.

RESULTS

9 IN 10 TEACHERS REPORT ALL INSTRUCTION IS IN-PERSON

- The overwhelming majority of teachers report no remote or hybrid instruction

- There was no pattern related to grade level

- The proportion conducting any online instruction has remained consistent post-pandemic

K-12 Teachers: Teaching Modality by Year

Year	All instruction in-person	Some remote, hybrid or not in-person instruction
2020-21	24%	76%
2021-22	90%	10%
2022-23	92%	8%
2023-24	89%	11%

■ All instruction in-person
■ Some remote, hybrid or not in-person instruction
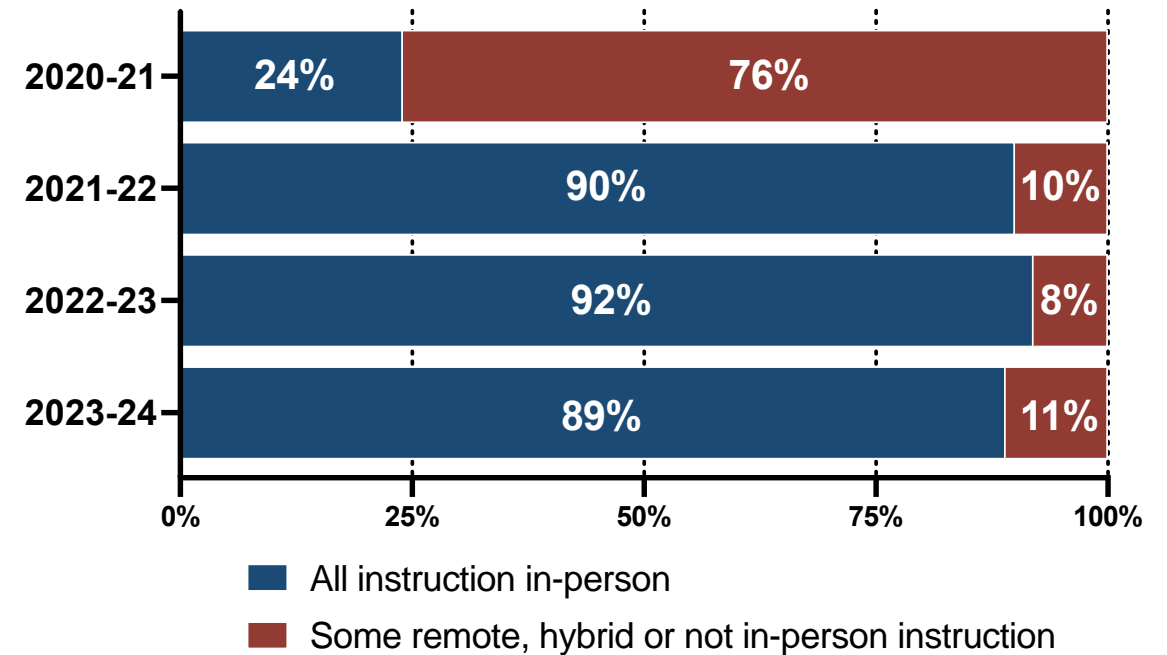
MOST TEACHERS REQUIRE A TEXTBOOK FOR STUDENTS

- Textbooks remain a core course material

- No difference across grade levels

- Overall:
  - 60% offered in both formats
  - 21% Digital-only
  - 19% Print-only
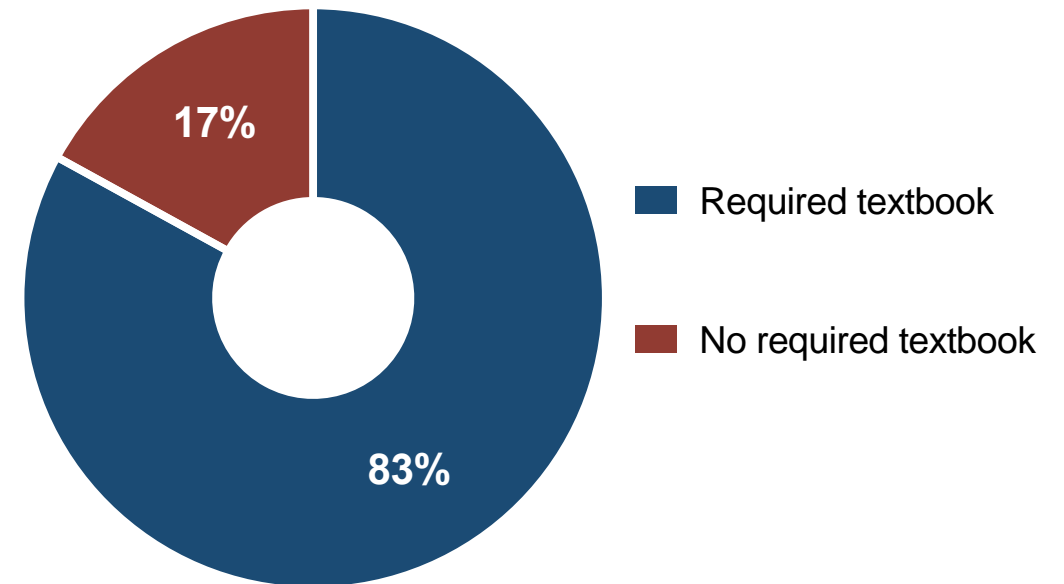
2023-24 K-12 Teachers: Textbook Use

17%

83%

■ Required textbook

■ No required textbook

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A DIGITAL TEXTBOOK OPTION IS THE NORM, EVEN IN IN-PERSON CLASSROOMS

The availability of digital textbooks for students is relatively constant across grade levels

However, print and print-only is slightly more common in lower grades.

"Students love learning through multiple ways material can be presented. If a teacher is creative, they should be able to develop materials to meet the needs of all students in a way that learning thrives!"
- English Language Arts, Grades Pre-K - 3

2023-24 K-12 Teachers: Required Textbook Format by Grade Level

Grade Level	Print-only	Both formats	Digital-only
9 to 12	20%	56%	24%
6 to 8	15%	59%	25%
4 to 5	20%	65%	15%
Pre-K to 3	26%	62%	12%
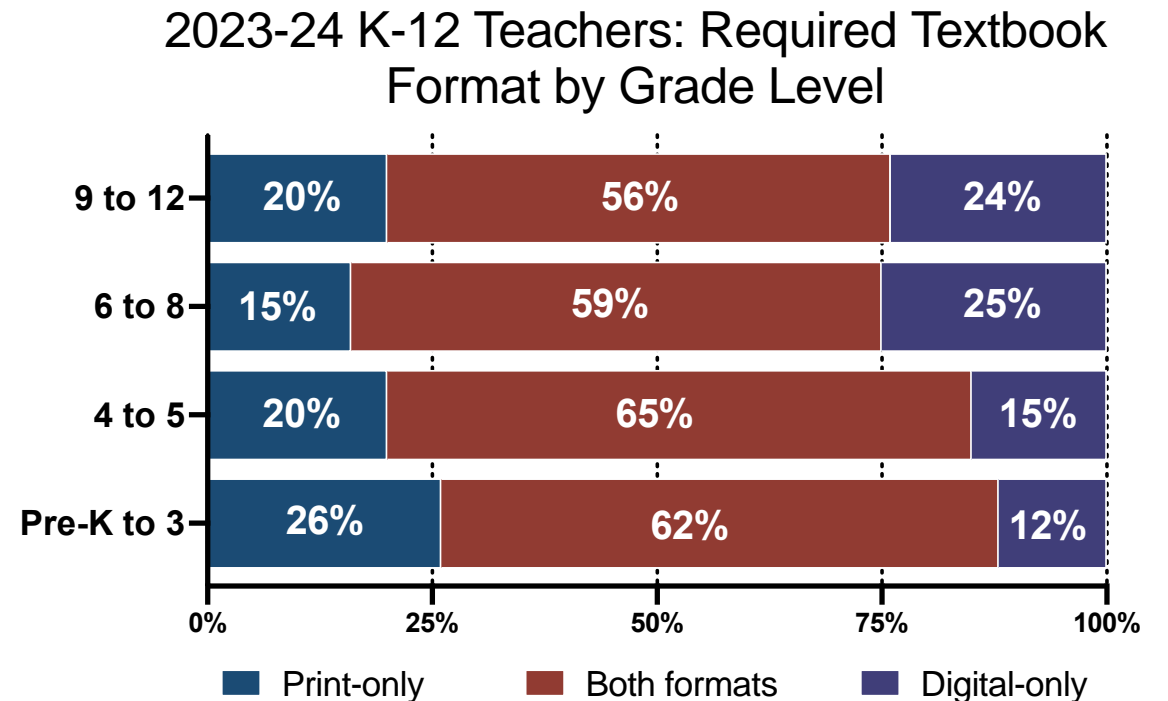
TEACHERS STILL LEAN TOWARDS PRINT FOR LEARNING

2023-24 K-12 Teachers: Agreement with "Students learn better from print materials than they do from digital materials."

Pro-digital | Pro-print

Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
25%	32%	34%	7%	2%

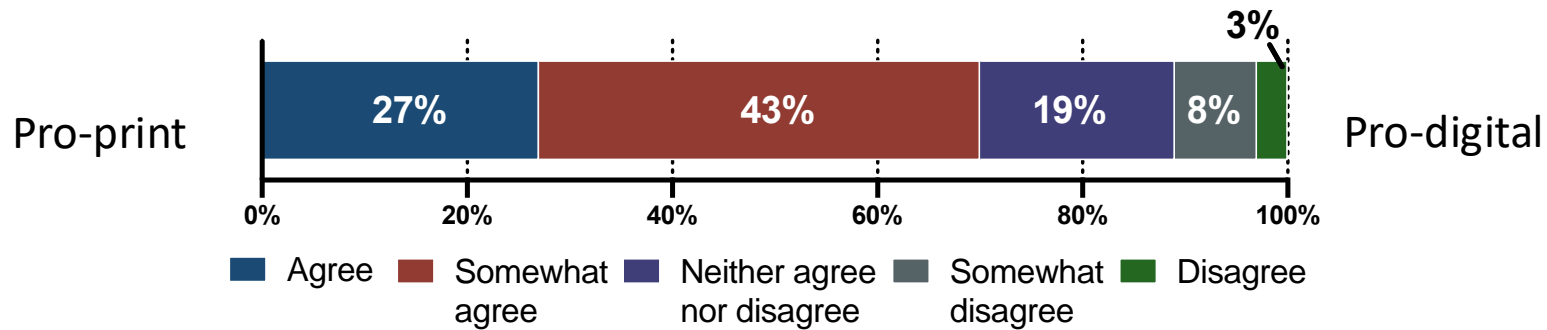0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
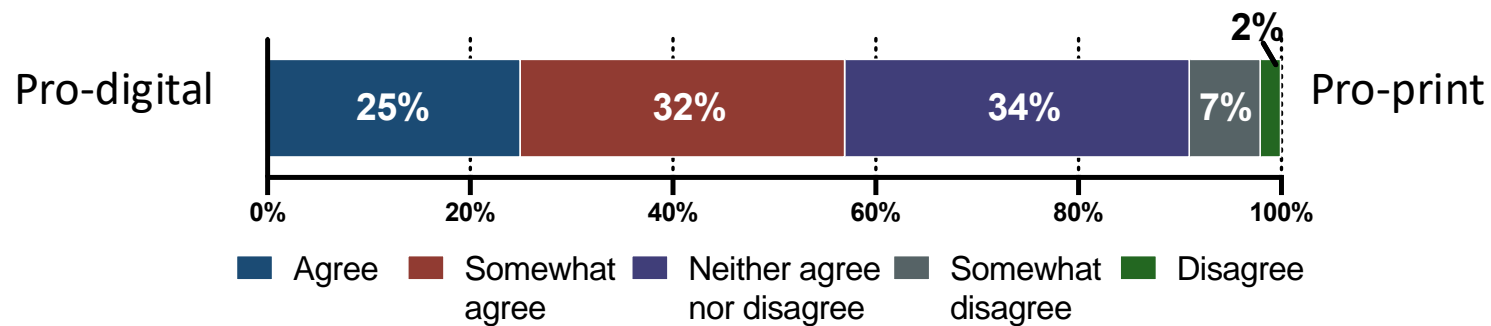
- **Over half of all teachers agree print is better for student learning**

- **Only 9% believe that digital is better**

"I have increased my usage of digital resources as more high-quality products and materials have become available in recent years."
- English Language Arts, Grades Pre-K - 3

But digital does have its benefits

2023-24 K-12 Teachers: Agreement with "Digital materials provide greater flexibility for students."

Pro-print

| 27% | 43% | 19% | 8% | 3% |

Pro-digital

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

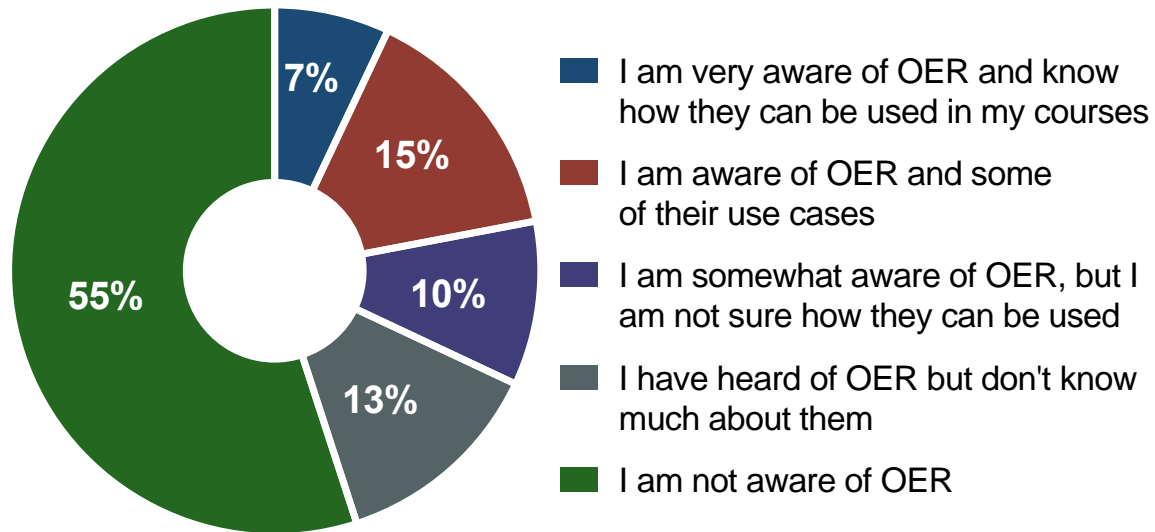■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree

- However, 70% acknowledge digital offers more flexibility for students

"Technology is a wonderful TOOL but paper is great. Paper doesn't fail you when there are connectivity issues."
- Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Grades 9 - 12

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OVER HALF OF TEACHERS ARE UNAWARE OF OER

2023-24 K-12 Teachers: OER Awareness

- 7% — I am very aware of OER and know how they can be used in my courses
- 15% — I am aware of OER and some of their use cases
- 10% — I am somewhat aware of OER, but I am not sure how they can be used
- 13% — I have heard of OER but don't know much about them
- 55% — I am not aware of OER

- 55% of teachers have no awareness of OER, even name recognition
- 32% of teachers have some level of awareness (somewhat to very)

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OER Awareness grew slightly though remains low

K-12 Teachers: OER Awareness by Year

Year	Very aware	Aware of use cases	Somewhat aware	Total
2018-19	5%	12%	10%	27%
2020-21	5%	12%	11%	28%
2021-22	4%	9%	9%	24%
2022-23	7%	12%	9%	28%
2023-24	7%	15%	10%	32%

- ■ I am very aware of OER and know how they can be used in my courses
- ■ I am somewhat aware of OER, but I am not sure how they can be used
- ■ I am aware of OER and some of their use cases
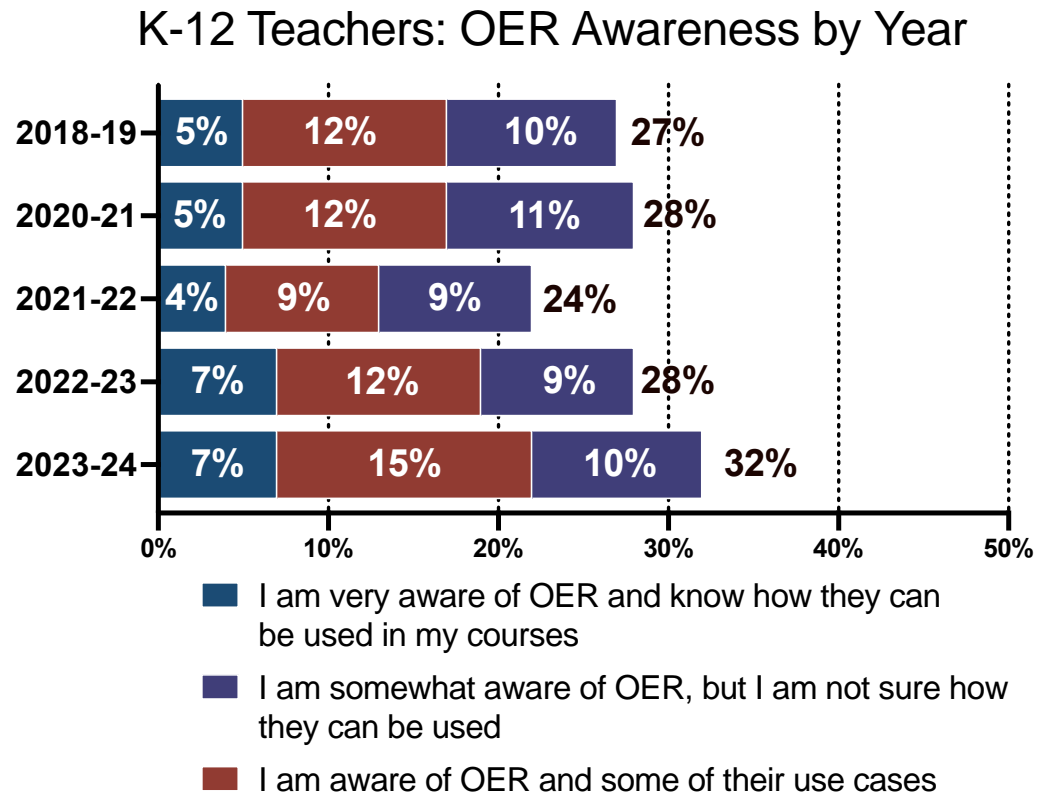
- OER awareness is the highest level measured in this series
- Largest growth to the "aware" category over the years
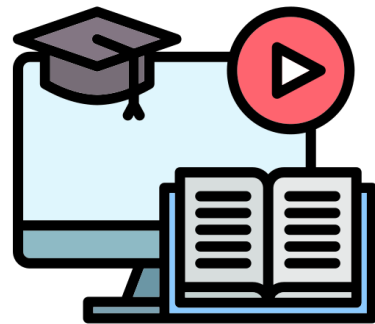
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TEACHER WHO ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE AWARE OF OER:

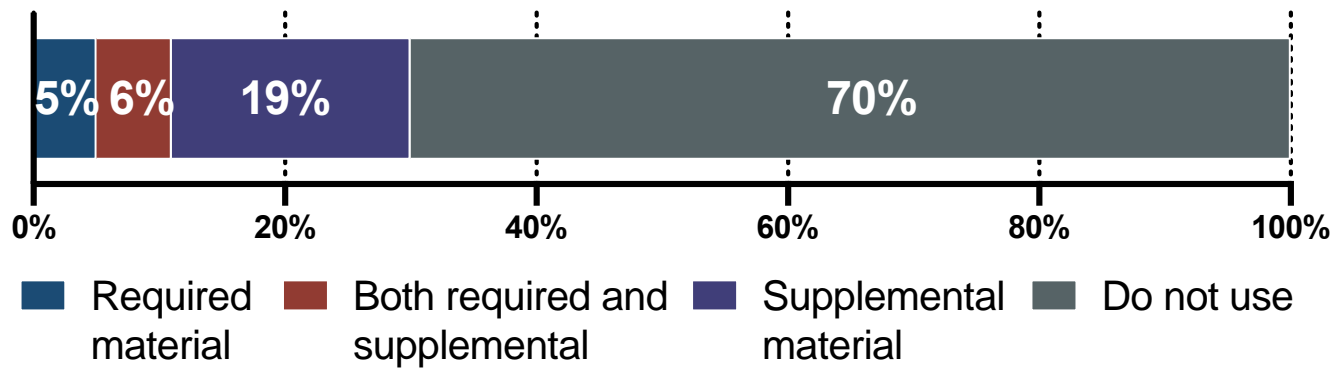Teachers with at least 5 years of experience
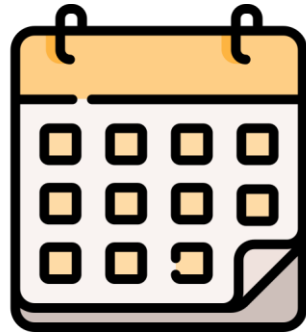
Higher grade levels

Teachers doing some remote or hybrid instruction

Computer science, natural science, or social science teachers

OER USE AT SIMILAR RATE TO OER AWARENESS

2023-24 K-12 Teachers: OER Use

5%	6%	19%	70%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Required material ■ Both required and supplemental ■ Supplemental material ■ Do not use

- **30% of teachers report using OER**
  - 11% use it as required materials
  - 25% use it as supplemental materials

"Sometimes I provide [OER] as supplemental materials, or exchange material from the curriculum the district uses to something that I think will support the majority of my students better… I wish I had more time to explore them and really dig in. There is just not enough time to plan for what I need to plan, and to also explore enough to shift."
- Natural Science, Grades 6 - 8

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Note: Responses are by individual teachers, and not by class: teachers can teach multiple classes and use OER in only one or across all for this question.

CONCLUSIONS

DIGITAL TRENDS IN US K-12 EDUCATION

Use of digital instructional materials continues to rise despite teacher concerns and in-person instruction.

Awareness for OER, a type of open digital materials, continues to grow but is a minority of teachers who know or use it.

Teachers commented that many new digital K-12 tools are developing (AI!) that have potential to further change instructional materials but had not fully entered the classroom.

Including these topics in our current 2025 survey!

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WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL AND OER?

Digital Materials

- How will the tension between increasing digital adoption and teacher print preferences play out?

- What are student (and parent) expectations for course materials?

OER

- Can OER Awareness continue to grow?

- How can teachers learn about OER materials?

- What barriers are there to OER adoption as required materials?

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MORE INFORMATION

Presentation data are available on our website and a PDF download:
bayviewanalytics.com/OER

Additional short reports and findings:

bayviewanalytics.com/ResearchBrief

- Student Readiness for Higher Education
- OER & Cost Savings Initiatives
- Faculty Demographics of OER Users
- Inclusive Access Billing Preferences
- [Future!] AI Perceptions and Use

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