

Global Workload Inefficiencies: Educators Face 10 “Time Sinks”

Executive Summary

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The financial crisis and the uneven recovery by country have put increased pressure on governments, educators, and parents to maximize the teaching and learning opportunity for children. Austerity measures in many countries and fiscal conservativeness in other countries had put additional financial pressures on school districts, schools, and individual educators in recent years.

To continue to improve schools with limited additional resources, school administrators and educators must find ways to improve the efficiency of teaching and learning. In research sponsored by Microsoft, IDC has identified and quantified what teachers globally describe as the 10 most inefficient activities.

The school year for most teachers is about 180 days over about 43 weeks in the academic year. Teachers believe that about 1 day per week — or 227–312 hours per year — is inefficient or wasted time. Some of those activities are core instructional activities, but they are often time consuming without adding equivalent value. Some of those inefficient activities are simply administrative, and reducing the number of such activities could permit reallocation of time back to higher-value instructional activities. Globally, the 10 largest time sinks that could return about 200 hours to instructional activities are:

- » Planning/preparing lesson, practical test, or assessment
- » Helping struggling students
- » Assessing/marking student work and writing reports on student progress
- » Facilitating in-class group projects
- » Keeping records
- » Administering quizzes and tests
- » Nonregular teaching
- » Passing out and collecting handouts
- » Organizing resources in the classroom
- » General staff/management meeting

IDC research also found that educators are using technologies to directly address these time sinks. In interviews with over 20 educators who use Microsoft OneNote, educators said the biggest benefits of OneNote directly address the top 10 time sinks. This white paper describes the research and its findings and shares anecdotes on how teachers are using Microsoft OneNote to reduce inefficiencies and spend more time teaching students.

Using OneNote can help educators recover 68% of the time lost to all of the biggest time-wasters. That equates to 143 hours or 16 days per year.