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# SCALING COURSEWARE ADOPTION

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**Any institution can try out a new tool or instructional practice, but recognizing successful initiatives and moving beyond the pilot stage to scaled impact can be a challenge.**

## TIME FOR CLASS TOOLKIT

## QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

How broadly is courseware being adopted?

In what course contexts (level and discipline) is adoption highest?

What are the key reasons that faculty adopt courseware?

What instructional practices are associated with higher adoption?

How can you accelerate faculty adoption at your institution?

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## KEY INSIGHTS

Faculty play an important role in influencing courseware, but the role of administrators in influencing courseware selection and adoption is also growing.

Faculty report higher rates of courseware use compared to 2016. One third of faculty are current courseware users, and the vast majority of users (77%) plan to continue or increase use.

Undergraduate introductory courses are the most likely courseware adoption points.

Courseware is still being used by early adopter faculty. Faculty using courseware are more likely than non-users to be willing to experiment with “new yet-to-be proven technology.”

Faculty instructional practice drives the adoption of courseware; assessment-based instructional practices correlate with higher adoption, whereas discussion-based practices correlate with lower adoption.

Faculty adopt courseware for specific teaching and learning goals; these should be the focus of adoption planning and communications.

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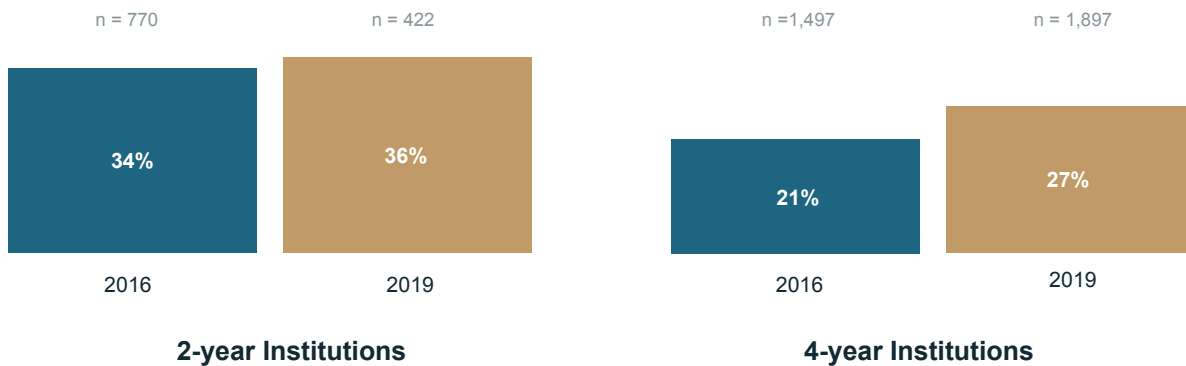
## Administrator influence in courseware decision-making is growing.

In the *Time for Class* 2019 survey, 74% of 2-year and 65% of 4-year administrators say that department-level and above leadership influence courseware selection, up from 63% and 47% in 2016. Comparatively, administrators say that faculty have less influence over the same decision-making process – 60% of 2-year and 61% of 4-year faculty – down from 84% and 94%. These shifts show the growing importance of administrators in technology decisions and emphasize that building momentum with all stakeholders is critical to scaling institutional adoption.

## Courseware has been adopted by almost a third of faculty, and current users plan to continue using courseware.

Out of a representative sample of 2,343 faculty across institutions in the United States, 36% of 2-year and 27% of 4-year report using courseware today or in the last three years. Faculty report higher usage at two-year institutions (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1: Faculty Courseware Adoption across Institutions<sup>2</sup>**



The majority of users (77%) plan to continue or increase use, demonstrating that faculty are finding these tools worthwhile.

One challenge to achieving impact is in expanding use across all institution types. Therefore, determining where and why courseware is being adopted at higher rates is important for understanding potential dynamics that enable further adoption.

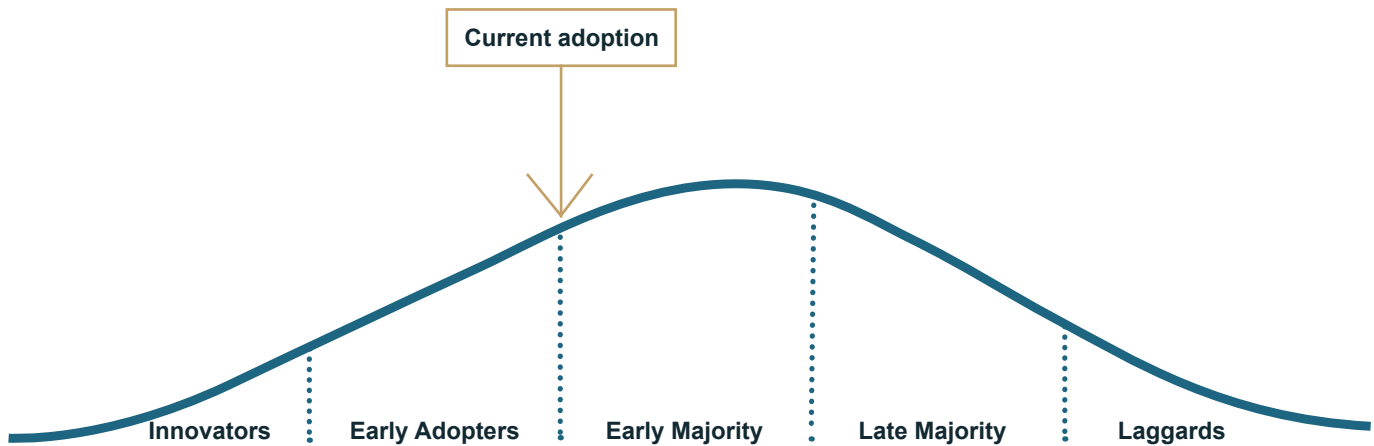


<sup>1</sup>High-distance institutions are defined as those with greater than 25% of undergraduate students enrolled in at least one distance education course.” <sup>2</sup>Question: “Describe your level of awareness of the following”; row: “Courseware”; answers: “Aware and currently using” or “Aware but not currently using.”

## Courseware users are still early on the adoption curve.

Courseware adoption has not yet achieved maturity. According to *Time for Class* survey, current users are “early adopters”<sup>3</sup> These faculty members are statistically more likely to prefer new, yet-to-be proven technology<sup>4</sup> over established, well-proven technology; they also prefer using “high-quality third-party content” over developing their own curriculum (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Courseware Adoption Curve**



Accelerating institutional adoption beyond this early group requires understanding faculty use cases where courseware has the most traction and the potential to grow further.



<sup>3</sup>“Early majority” adopters are those who will adopt courseware or are considering adoption in the next three years. <sup>4</sup>Question: “Please indicate your instructional tendencies and preferences using the sliders: Adopter of yet-to-be proven technology <-> Adopter of established, well-proven technology”; Question: “Please indicate your instructional tendencies and preferences using the sliders: Prefer to develop my own curriculum and content <-> Prefer to use high-quality third-party content.”

## Courseware is predominantly used in undergraduate courses and across disciplines.

Faculty members who reported courseware adoption were subsequently asked to elaborate on their course contexts.<sup>5</sup> Variations in course level and modality had large impacts on the percentage of courseware users, whereas specific discipline did not (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Variation in Courseware Use by Context**



Course Level <sup>6</sup>	Modality <sup>7</sup>	Discipline <sup>8</sup>
<p><b>Adoption is predominantly in undergraduate introductory courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 81% of faculty adopters use courseware in undergraduate intro courses</li> <li>• 43% use in undergraduate upper-level courses</li> <li>• 32% use in undergraduate developmental courses</li> </ul>	<p><b>Usage is primarily in face-to-face courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 84% of adopters report usage in face-to-face courses</li> <li>• 59% say they use in hybrid and online courses</li> </ul>	<p><b>There is slight difference in adoption by discipline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courseware is slightly more common in management, mathematics, and science courses</li> <li>• Slightly less common in the humanities</li> </ul>



<sup>5</sup>Questions prompted respondents to select all that apply given that faculty often teach across course levels and adopt courseware for a variety of reasons. <sup>6</sup>Question: "Which course level is the courseware product you chose primarily used in?" <sup>7</sup>Question: "Which modalities is the courseware product you chose primarily used in?" <sup>8</sup>Question: "What is your primary discipline?"

## Courseware is used primarily for graded homework and to promote active learning.

Courseware products can be used throughout the course experience in a variety of ways—as a textbook replacement, practice assignment, or additional reference material. Faculty who have adopted courseware report that their primary uses are for graded homework (67%), for active learning (60%), or for flipping the classroom (60%).<sup>9</sup>

## Faculty cite teaching and learning as primary goals for adoption.

To identify courseware adoption drivers, faculty users were asked to prioritize their primary reasons for adopting courseware in their class (Figure 4). These reasons can be grouped into two categories: Faculty-Motivated and Institution-Motivated.

**Figure 4: Reasons for Adopting Courseware<sup>10</sup>**

Faculty-Motivated	Institution-Motivated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve student outcomes (27%)</li> <li>• Part of curriculum or course redesign effort (18%)</li> <li>• Wanted to try a new pedagogy (8%)</li> <li>• Increase use of course-level analytics (5%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courseware was mandated (22%)</li> <li>• Standardize instructional quality (16%)</li> <li>• Change the experience in large classes (4%)</li> </ul>

Adoption rationale is split across faculty-motivated and institution-motivated reasons and demonstrates the diversity of motives inherent in this type of decision. The most common motivation is to improve student outcomes, while the least common is to change the experience in large classes. Notably, courseware mandates are the most common reasons for institutional-motivated adoption, re-emphasizing the growing influence of administrators in the decision-making process.

Across institution types, faculty are primarily motivated to adopt based on their teaching and learning goals (58% of reasons). Therefore, adoption could be accelerated by appealing to faculty-driven motivations.

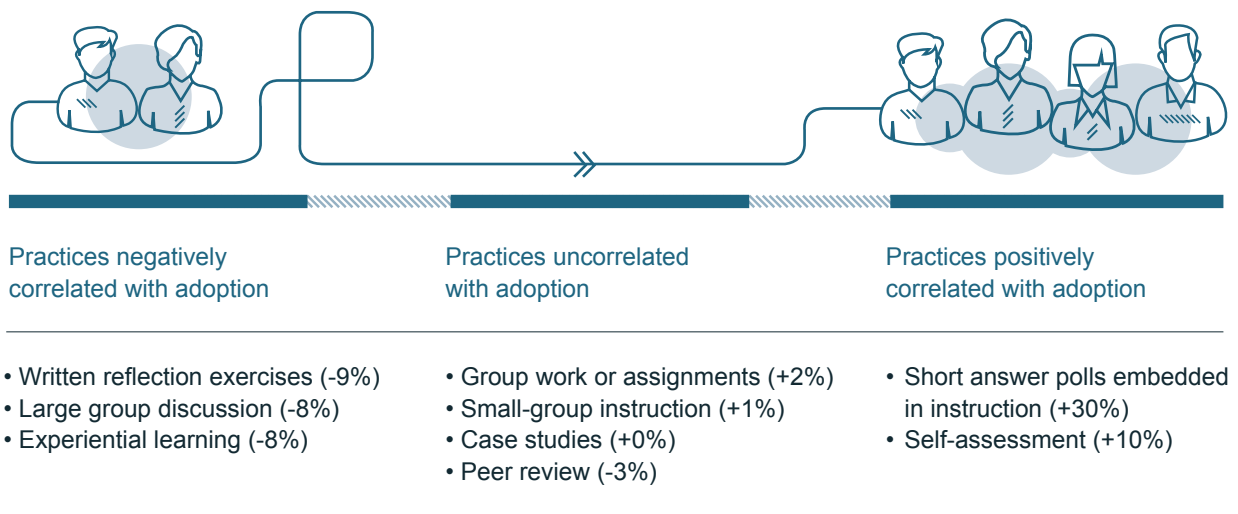


<sup>9</sup>Question: “How do you use the courseware product you chose in the course?” <sup>10</sup>Question: “Why was courseware adopted? Select your primary, secondary, and tertiary reasons based on the list provided.”

## Faculty who engage in instructional practices that include frequent assessment of learning are more likely to adopt courseware.

While some faculty instructional practices correlate positively with a higher rate of courseware adoption,<sup>11</sup> others—written reflection and experiential learning, for example—negatively correlate with courseware adoption (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Faculty Instructional Practices and Adoption Correlation**



These results indicate that courseware is currently adopted by those who incorporate assessment-based practices into their teaching, and that those who focus on discussions and long-form writing are less likely to adopt a courseware product as part of their teaching.

## Match predisposed faculty with courseware solutions that can help them meet their goals.

Given that faculty instructional practices are a driver of courseware use, administrators and faculty can accelerate adoption at their institution using the following approaches:

- ✓ Encourage faculty with assessment-based instructional practices to be early adopters of courseware.
- ✓ Frame courseware initiatives as aids to faculty-driven teaching and learning goals.

<sup>11</sup>Question: "Which of the following instructional practices do you apply throughout a typical course?"

## TOOL FOR ACTION

### Course and Faculty Readiness Self-Assessment

To determine if you are leading courses that could benefit from a courseware adoption if you are ready to take on this work, consider the following short quiz to faculty members:

#### Which best describes...

1. **...the size of your largest course**
  - a) Small (0–50 students)
  - b) Medium (51–150 students)
  - c) Large (151 students or more)
2. **...your students’ backgrounds upon entering your classroom**
  - a) Extremely similar levels of academic preparation
  - b) Moderately similar levels of academic preparation
  - c) Extremely diverse levels of academic preparation
3. **...the resources provided by your institution**
  - a) Totally sufficient to provide 1:1 support to all my students
  - b) Mostly sufficient to provide 1:1 support to all my students
  - c) Totally insufficient to provide 1:1 support to all my students
4. **...your typical course outcomes**
  - a) DFW<sup>12</sup> below institution average
  - b) DFW around institution average
  - c) DFW above institution average
5. **...your own comfort level with technology**
  - a) Uncomfortable
  - b) Neutral
  - c) Confident
6. **...your commonly employed instructional practices**
  - a) Mainly discussion and individual written reflection
  - b) Primarily group work and small-group instruction
  - c) Mostly self-assessments and short-answer polls embedded in instruction

Mostly a’s: Propitious Professor	Mostly b’s: Teacher to Track	Mostly c’s: Apt for Adoption
<p>Based on the resources you have been allotted, you are likely already able to tailor content to students’ individual needs. Courseware may not be the top priority for you.</p>	<p>Although you have some challenges, you are not inherently likely to be a courseware advocate. Take on the opportunity if resources allow, or wait and monitor for any changes in circumstance.</p>	<p>With the pressure already being exerted on you and your classes, anything that can be done to help improve student outcomes is likely to be valuable. Consider yourself a good candidate for courseware adoption.</p>

<sup>12</sup>DFW rate refers to the total percentage of students in a class who get a D or an F, or who withdraw from a course.



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information, visit [Every Learner Everywhere Resources](#) or the [Tyton Partners Library](#).

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## ABOUT

**Time for Class** is a comprehensive longitudinal survey of 4,000+ higher education faculty and administrators, fielded since 2014 by [Tyton Partners](#) and the [Babson Survey Research Group](#) and underwritten by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#). Results inform a comprehensive fact base focused particularly on the postsecondary digital courseware landscape, in the service of making this diverse and complex market easier to navigate for institutions and education professionals.



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For more information, visit [www.onlinelearningsurvey.com](http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com).



**Every Learner Everywhere** is a network of 12 partner organizations focused on providing a comprehensive, coordinated approach to help colleges and universities take advantage of the rapidly evolving digital learning landscape.

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