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Visual Essay

Teachers' work patterns: when, where, and how much do U.S. teachers work?

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Excerpt from the visual essay:

Teachers' work patterns differ from those of many other professionals. In addition to teaching, they grade assignments, develop lesson plans, and perform other tasks in which they have some flexibility in determining when and where they work. Teachers' work schedules, too, are unique in that they often are tied to a traditional school year, with an extended break in the summer. This visual essay uses data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) to examine how much teachers work, where they work, when they work, and how their work patterns compare with those of other professionals.

In the ATUS, interviewers collect data in a time diary format, in which survey participants provide information about activities that they engaged in "yesterday." Because of the way in which the data are collected, it is possible to identify and quantify the work that teachers do at home, at a workplace, and at other locations and to examine the data by day of the week and time of day. Data are available for nearly every day of 2003–06, which is the reference period for this analysis.

In the presentation that follows, "teachers" refers to persons whose main job is teaching preschool-to–high school students. Persons in the "other professionals" occupations also are classified by their main job. With the exception of chart 1, all estimates presented are restricted to persons who were employed during the week prior to their interview and who did some work during that period. Thus, a teacher who was on summer or semester break during the week of the survey is not included in this analysis. Unless otherwise specified, data pertain to persons who work full time; that is, they usually work 35 hours or more per week. Estimates of work hours refer to persons' main job only. The time use of persons who were doing more than one activity simultaneously is classified according to their primary activity. The data are averages for the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population aged 15 and older, unless otherwise specified. For more information about the ATUS, see <http://www.bls.gov/tus>.

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