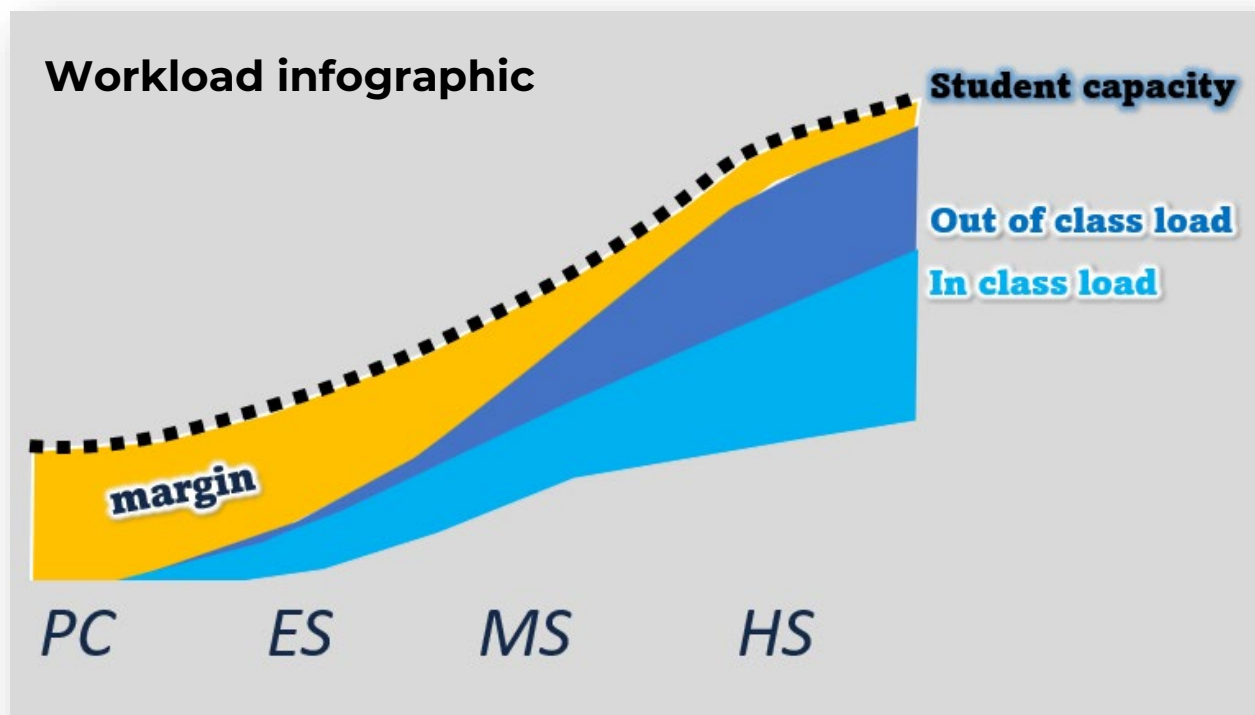


Student Workload Whitepaper



Our desire is for students to honor God through work and develop into eternity-focused, growing, and excellent learners. One method we use is appropriate, purposeful academic work both inside and outside the classroom.

BJA desires to help students reach their full academic potential. Teachers strive to challenge students through the curricula and learning activities. We realize that students come to us with differing learning capacities. In light of this, teachers, parents, and administrators work together to meet students where they are and help them grow appropriately. In addition, we desire to provide a margin for a work-life balance between academics and life outside of school. Parents and students should exercise discernment in how they choose to fill this margin.



Definitions

Workload is the scope of all work in the learning process completed in and out of the classroom. At the beginning stages of education, the majority of the workload is completed inside the classroom. As a student matriculates through school, the division of workload shifts to include a greater amount outside of the classroom to develop independent learning skills.

Homework refers to tasks that are completed outside the classroom. These tasks allow students to practice and review content and skills previously taught, prepare for future learning, enrich the learning process, and provide feedback to enhance student learning.

Margin refers to life activities outside of academic responsibilities, which could include church and family life and other optional worthy activities such as athletics, speech and debate, music, robotics, jobs, and other hobbies while allowing for appropriate rest.

Rigor makes learning challenging in a way that should foster excitement, build confidence, and help students cultivate disciplined forms of critical thinking, argumentation, and problem-solving (Crimson Education, 2023).

Practice work reviews and reinforces skills and concepts taught during instructional time.

Previewing is appropriate when introducing the simplified, basic idea of a new concept where the student makes connections to prior knowledge, makes observations, or predicts future learning to create interest. Previewing is not a substitute for teacher instruction. Direct instruction is a necessary step before graded assessment.

Enrichment is an extension of content previously mastered that builds critical thinking skills

Philosophical/Theoretical Framework

Workload should be developmentally appropriate and purposeful to reinforce and enrich the subject matter. Well-designed workload strengthens students' academic skills and complements classroom learning (Vatterott, 2018).

Workload **Inside of Class** should:

- Be guided by purposeful **learning objectives**
- Give students **timely feedback** for learning, practicing and mastering new concepts
- Give students adequate time to **process and apply** material before they are assessed for a grade

Workload **Outside of Class** should:

- Reinforce concepts previously **taught and practiced** in class
- Have reasonable **expectations of parental involvement** clearly communicated
- Have clear **connections to inside of class** activities (students should be able to articulate these connections)

Homework should NOT...

- As a general rule **introduce new or difficult concepts** that students are assessed on before the concept is taught in the classroom
- Be repetitious **busywork** (i.e. "because it is in the textbook")
- Be inappropriate in **amount or intensity** for the age of students
- Require regular access to **technology** (elementary and middle school levels)
- Expect **parents** to have knowledge to be skilled co-teachers, tutors, or educators
- Be used as a **punishment or discipline** for poor behavior

BJA Homework Directives by Level:

- **Elementary School (grades 1-5)**
 - Practice basic skills
 - Encourage student's curiosity
 - Complete majority of workload in class
- **Middle School (grades 6-8)**
 - Develop critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis of information
 - Practice concepts previously taught, apply learning to a new situation
 - Check for understanding, preview new content, reflect on learning
 - Should be between 60-80 minutes per day (**3 to 5 hours per week**) (Weir, 2016)
- **High School (grades 9-12)**
 - Develop critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis of information
 - Practice concepts previously taught, apply learning to a new situation
 - Check for understanding, preview new content, reflect on learning
 - Should be approximately 2 hours per day at most (**8 to 10 hours per week**) (Vatterott, 2018)

BJA's Three-fold Partnership

- **Teacher expectations**
 - Communicates the **purpose and details** of assignments to parent and student
 - Prepares students with adequate knowledge and **practice** to complete assignments
 - Designs compelling assignments to help students reach the **learning objectives**
 - Proactively monitors students' workload and provides timely **feedback**
 - Considers the impact of homework on students' **margin** (holidays, weekends)
 - Evaluates the **benefits and impact** of individual assignments
- **Parent expectations**
 - Initiates **communication** with student and teacher regarding progress
 - **Monitors** their student's progress at home and through FACTS
 - Provides a suitable **space** and appropriate **support** for student to complete homework
- **Student expectations**
 - Fully **engages** in the learning process during class
 - Maximizes discretionary **time** during the school day (study hall, help sessions)
 - Avoids **multitasking and distractions** when working at home
 - Organizes and uses **class notes and textbooks** when completing assignments
 - **Plans** for both immediate and long-term assignments as appropriate to age
 - Gives regular **feedback** to both teacher and parent regarding progress

Steps to Take When Parents Believe Workload Needs to Be Evaluated

Step 1: Evaluate the student's study practices and habits

- Does the student have a good study routine?
 - Work at the same time and in the same place
 - Schedule short breaks and/or snacks as needed
- What does the student's work space look like?
 - Have a table and supplies available
 - Be in a well-lit area
 - Identify unnecessary distractions (multitasking, phone, music)
- Is support available to the student at home?
- Is the student looking ahead to plan for upcoming assignments (e.g. using a schedule, planner, calendar, FACTS, or Google classroom)?

Step 2: (If age appropriate) Ensure that student has communicated with teacher first

Step 3: Communicate with teacher(s) to discuss student's specific situation and experience

Step 4: Coordinate with the teacher to involve the student's principal to discuss additional support or accommodations

References

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