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The Impact of Student Workload on Learning Experiences

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The impact of student workload on learning experiences

Contents

Preamble and project objectives

For many undergraduates, the amount and kind of work they are asked or expected to do is among the most crucial factors affecting their engagement with a course of study (UGC, 1964). Yet student workload is a neglected issue. In CUHK, evidence collected from various processes including programme reviews, discussions with students and alumni, and in Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) feedback indicates that CUHK students perceive that some programmes and courses overload them with work. There are methodological difficulties involved in relying on students' perceptions of workload, and a more rigorous method of calculating student workload is necessary. The issue is highlighted as studies on workload indicate that the term is a complex construct that not only concerns time commitment, but the quality and nature of work, as well as the characteristics and motivation of students. Moreover, studies suggest if students perceive that they are overloaded, they may complete their studies through adopting a surface approach to learning (Wilson, Lissio, & Ramsden, 1997; Lockwood, 1999), resulting in possible failure to attain the learning outcomes and attributes that CUHK sets for its graduates.

As noted above, workload is a complex construct that not only concerns time commitment, but also the quality and nature of work, students' other engagements inside and outside curriculum, and the characteristics and motivation of students. What previous studies have found is that workload is best studied through rich cases (Chambers, 1992; Kember, Charlesworth, Davies, McKay, & Scott, 1997; Kember, 2004). In this project we have chosen to use learning diaries as a case-study strategy, in conjunction with a survey study.

The project aims to help shape a balanced curriculum, where students perceive the workload is acceptable while at the same time inspiring students to their full potential to achieve the learning outcomes.

Description of process and deliverables

This study examined the issue of workload and how it impacts on the quality of the student learning experience at CUHK through: 1) asking students to record learning activities in the form of learning diaries, in which we closely monitored workload, students' perceptions of workload and their strategies in overcoming challenges; and 2) conducting surveys to students in multiple disciplines.

Methodology

Learning diaries

In the study related to the use of learning diaries, we were interested in how students spent their time on the following: the type of curriculum or non-curriculum activities that they were involved in; the nature of their curriculum-based learning activities; the learning outcomes students associated with these activities; as well as overall opinions that students had on these learning experiences, especially in areas related to workload and suggestions for improvement. TDG funding enabled payment to the students and hence maintained their motivation.

A template (Appendix 1) was prepared for 14 student informants to fill in at the end of every day for a total of 13 weeks in the second semester of 2010–2011. Students were asked to mark on the forms, in as much detail as possible, aspects including: the activities they engaged in from morning to night of the day, the time they spent on each of them, where they were held and anything they learnt as a result of going through the activities, etc. Then researchers made follow-up phone calls to these participants once a week to clarify anything

unclear or missing in their entries. Lastly, researchers met all student informants individually once a month for open-ended discussions relating to what students thought about their learning experiences over past month.

The target population of this study was CUHK students. Fourteen CUHK students (Table 1) from different departments were invited to participate in a five-month study from December 2009 to April 2010.

Number	*Student identifier*	*Gender*	*Major*	*Year*	*Faculty*
1	A	M	Systems Engineering & Engineering Management	2	Engineering
2	B	F	Translation	2	Arts
3	C	F	Nursing	2	Medicine
4	D	F	Hotel & Tourism Management	1	Business Administration
5	E	M	Physics	3	Science
6	F	F	Sociology	1	Social Science
7	G	F	English	1	Arts
8	H	F	Geography & Resources Management	2	Social Science
9	I	M	Life Sciences	1	Science
10	J	M	Computer Engineering	2	Engineering
11	K	M	Systems Engineering & Engineering Management	2	Engineering
12	L	M	Hotel & Tourism Management	1	Business Administration
13	M	F	Chemistry	2	Science
14	N	M	Information Engineering	1	Engineering

Table 1: Participants in the learning diary study

Survey study

In the survey study, we emailed the Learning Activity and Behaviour Questionnaire (LABQ) to 11,255 undergraduate and postgraduate students (all students in 2010) via an online system during June 2010. A total of 1504 responses were collected at the end. Basic demographic information of respondents is presented in Table 2. The demographic data in general show that the sample of students was acceptably balanced in various aspects. For example, the distribution of participants in each of the eight faculties was roughly proportional to the actual distribution of students who studied in each of these faculties at CUHK.

Demographic info	*Number of respondents*	*Percentage (%)*
Gender		
Female	883	58.7
Male	621	41.3
Faculty		
Arts	150	10.0
Business administration	412	27.4
Education	55	3.7
Engineering	192	12.8
Law	43	2.9
Medicine	160	10.7
Science	254	16.9
Social science	235	15.7
Year of study		
Year 1	636	42.3
Year 2	437	29.1
Year 3	317	21.1
Year 4	93	6.2
Year 5	18	1.2
Year 6	1	0.1
CGPA		
≤ 1.99	15	1.0
2.00 – 2.29	32	2.1
2.30 – 2.69	114	7.6
2.70 – 2.99	240	16.0
3.00 – 3.29	537	35.7
3.30 – 3.69	500	33.2
3.70 – 3.99	64	4.3
≥ 4.00	2	0.1

Note: number of respondents is varied among different questions.

Table 2: Demographic information of the student respondents in the survey study

The questionnaire is in Appendix 2. The main scales of the questionnaire are included in Table 3. Table 3 also shows how indicators were grouped into six factors in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with Cronbach's alpha scores for each factor ranging from 0.64 to 0.83. The main focus of the questionnaire was on various aspects of the learning environment at CUHK. In a regression analysis, the results of which are reported on pp. 9–10, these various aspects were studied in relation to students' perception of the overall study workload as revealed by their answer to a single question at the end of the questionnaire about whether the workload of studying at CUHK was appropriate.

Factor	*Indicator*	*No. of items*	*Sample item*	*Cronbach's alpha*
Learning activity design	Sharing ideas with others	2	Allowed me to share my learning experiences with others.	0.83
	Opportunities to express oneself	1	Allowed me sufficient opportunities to express myself.	
	Critical arguments	2	Allowed for arguments, discussions and debates.	
	Resources targeted toward students knowledge and needs	2	Took into consideration my learning needs.	
	Originality ideas	1	Encouraged originality of ideas.	
	Refection	2	Required me to think over what I had been doing and considered alternative ways of doing it.	
Learning skills	Teamwork skills	2	I work as an effective member of a team.	0.80
	Problem solving	2	I can identify the components of complicated problem.	
	Communication skills	2	I can correctly structure essays and formal reports.	
	Self-evaluation skills	2	I can identify my own strengths and weaknesses as a learner.	
	Time management	2	I plan my own time to balance study, work and social activities.	
Learning engagement	Before a lesson starts	3	I revise contents of the last class before going to the next one.	0.78
	Before a course starts	3	I discuss the course outline and content with my classmates.	
	After a course	3	I keep good records of the class materials and notes.	
	In individual lessons	3	I attend most lessons of the course.	
	After the lesson	4	Apart from course materials, I look for additional information to consolidate my understanding.	
Personal social motivation	Achievement motivation	2	Challenging but manageable assignments motivate me to learn.	0.64
	Peer motivation	2	Peers' positive learning attitudes influence me to learn.	
	Enjoyment/ interest	2	I enjoy learning very much.	
	Value/ usefulness	2	It is important for me to do well at my studies.	
Practical motivation	Grade motivation	2	Earning a good grade is important to me.	0.72
	Career motivation	2	I am concerned about how my studies can help me earn a better living.	
Satisfaction	Satisfied with the activities	1	Overall, I am satisfied with the learning activities in the University.	0.78
	Learned a lot from the activities	1	On the whole, I learned a lot by going through the various learning activities.	

Table 3: EFA and reliability test results of the LABQ

Prior to the regression analysis, descriptive data (Table 4) indicated that students scored reasonably high on various factors, scoring from 3.47 to 3.97 (5-point Likert scale with 5 being 'strongly agree' in most questions). It is worthwhile to note that the standard deviations of students' scores were large in general, indicating noteworthy variation among students in their perceptions. The deviation of students' perception towards whether workload was appropriate, was particularly large (0.87), indicating that there were quite diverse views while some students found workload acceptable, there were many who found workload to be heavy in their programmes.

Factors/ indicators	*Mean (SD) (N=1504)*
Learning activity design	***3.61 (0.577)***
Sharing ideas with others	3.54 (0.765)
Opportunities to express oneself	3.41 (0.931)
Critical arguments	3.76 (0.711)
Resources targeted toward students knowledge and needs	3.64 (0.725)
Originality ideas	3.61 (0.868)
Refection	3.72 (0.697)
Learning skills	***3.68 (0.575)***
Teamwork skills	3.81 (0.795)
Problem solving	3.74 (0.689)
Communication skills	3.49 (0.821)
Self evaluation skills	3.78 (0.682)
Time management	3.58 (0.870)
Learning strategies	***3.47 (0.523)***
Before a lesson starts	3.02 (0.769)
Before a course starts	3.41 (0.766)
After a course	3.69 (0.635)
In individual lessons	3.75 (0.745)
After the lesson	3.46 (0.619)
Personal social motivation	***3.97 (0.481)***
Achievement motivation	4.04 (0.658)
Peer motivation	3.93 (0.624)
Enjoyment/ interest	4.13 (0.611)
Value/ usefulness	4.15 (0.750)
Practical motivation	***4.07 (0.632)***
Grade motivation	4.15 (0.750)
Career motivation	3.99 (0.726)
Satisfaction	***3.66 (0.736)***
Satisfied with the activities	3.62 (0.901)
Learned a lot from the activities	3.70 (0.813)
Appropriate workload	***3.58 (0.870)***

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the student respondents in the main study

Evaluation of outcomes

The evidence we have collected so far has provided deeper insights into the nature and characteristics of workload experienced by students at CUHK. Below is a summary of the main areas of findings:

Learning diary data

We developed a clearer understanding in what our students do to learn, not only in formal activities of the curriculum but also in other informal activities in which they engage. There were great variations in student experiences in many areas: the nature of learning activities they experience, the amount of time they spend on them, as well as their perception about whether their workload was appropriate; while some students found workload to be acceptable, many of them reported to have had heavy workload in programmes that they studied. Nevertheless, we were able to identify the following opinions and patterns which were generally common among the majority of the students in our study.

In general, **many students regarded the present workload as heavy**. Students stated that there were many assignments, projects and mid-term examinations. They had to meet different deadlines. In the monthly learning diary, students were asked ‘What do they think

about the workload in school?' Students responded by coding workload as light, appropriate or heavy in their learning diary entries. We found that students often considered the workload at CUHK to be heavy. 35 out of 65 collected comments (53.9%) on workload classified the quantity of learning tasks at CUHK as heavy. On the contrary, only 11 out of 65 comments (16.9%) considered the workload as light.

Workload was imbalanced throughout the semester. Students remarked that they had lighter workload during the start of semester (January and February) and heavier workload during the mid-term period (March and April). Workload was much heavier towards the end of semester as students had to meet different essay deadlines, exams, projects, etc., with many overlapping deadlines. It is particularly heavy during the mid-term period. One student thought the workload was too light at the beginning of the semester, but there was always very high workload after mid-term. He wished he could have the chance to finish more assignments at the beginning of the semester in order to shift the balance of workload. Another student stated that he sometimes got really busy but sometimes he did not have much to do. Work increased all of a sudden and there were many deadlines to meet at the end of April but not before.

Table 5 and Figure 1 illustrate students' engagement in 'formal learning activities' that were directly related to curriculum of their subject of study during the semester. Such formal learning activities are in two main types: in-class such as formal lectures students, or out-of-class activities such as those which require students to work in group projects, or self-study at home. At the beginning of semester, students spent on average 15.41 hours per week in class and less time on formal out-of-class learning activities. The number of study hours for formal out-of-class learning activities increased as the end of semester approached. It increased from an average of 6.29 at the beginning of the semester to 24.89 at the end of semester, and it peaked at the examination period, which was a mean of 33.43 hours per week. Even though students spent less time in class at the end of the semester, the total amount of time spent on the formal curriculum was actually high towards the end of the semester because of more out-of-class learning activities.

Learning activities/ Study hours (mean per week)	**Beginning of semester**	**Mid of semester**	**End of semester**	**Examin-ation period**	**Total study hours**
Formal learning activities					
• Lecture	12.73	11.59	10.07	0.31	34.7
• Tutorial	1.11	1.95	1.12	0.05	4.23
• Laboratory work	0.47	1.95	0.55	0	2.97
• Others	1.1	3.33	3.59	0.07	8.09
Total study hours (Formal learning activities)	**15.41**	**18.82**	**15.33**	**0.43**	**49.99**
Formal out-of-class activities					
• Self-study	1.96	4.48	4.79	25.04	36.27
• Individual assignment	2.77	7.08	14.03	3.49	27.37
• Reading and literature searching	1.21	2.45	2.23	2.62	8.51
• Study group	0	0.63	0.64	1.45	2.72
Total study hours (Formal out-of-class activities)	**6.29**	**16.51**	**24.89**	**33.43**	**81.12**
Total study hours (All activities)	**21.7**	**35.33**	**40.22**	**33.86**	**131.11**

Table 5: Students' study hours in learning activities throughout the semester (mean per week)

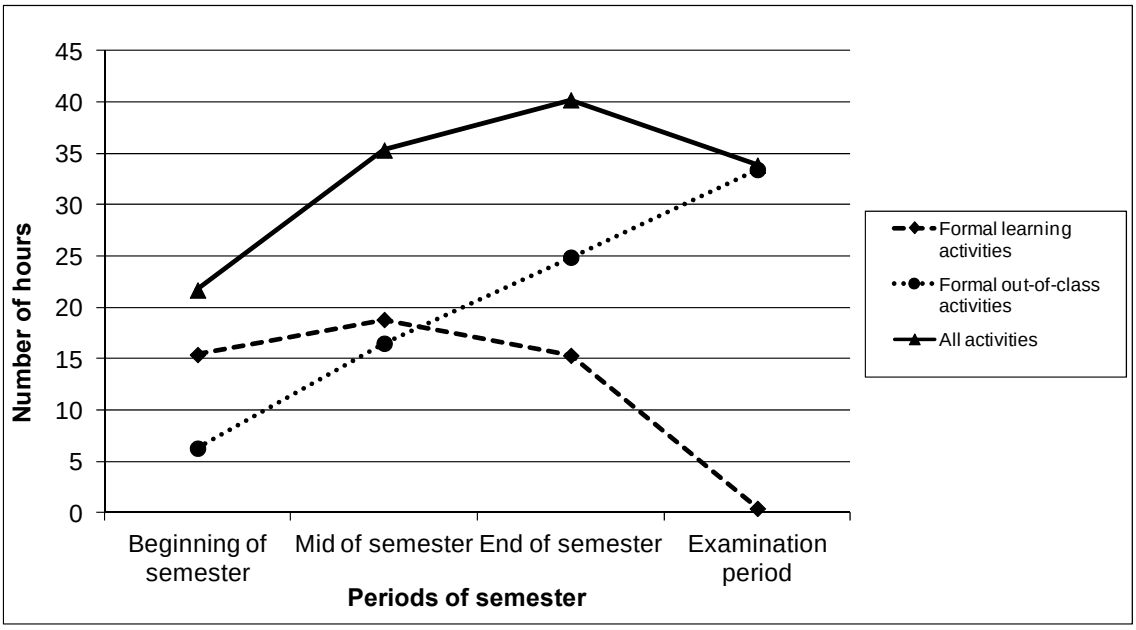
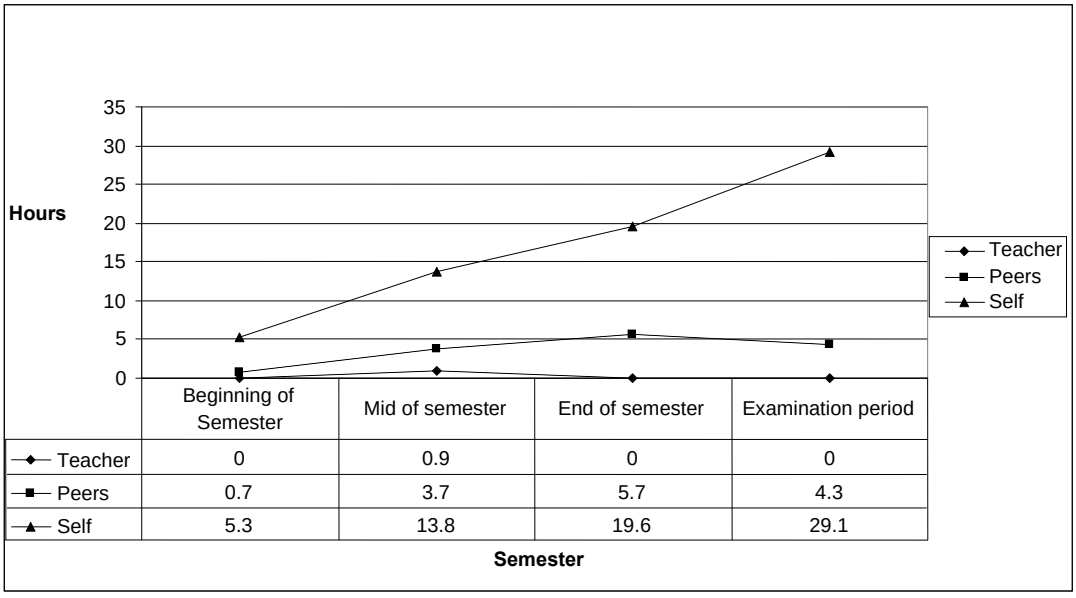


Figure 1: Students' study hours for learning activities throughout the semester

Peer learning does not seem to be common at CUHK as majority of participants in the learning diary studied alone (in out-of-class formal learning context). For example as shown in Figure 2, in the examination period, students spent around 25.04 hours per week for self-study whereas they spent only 1.45 hours per week to study with peers.



	Beginning of Semester	Mid of semester	End of semester	Examination period
Teacher	0	0.9	0	0
Peers	0.7	3.7	5.7	4.3
Self	5.3	13.8	19.6	29.1

Figure 2: Number of hours students spent on formal out-of-class learning activities with teachers, peers and alone

Many of the reported formal in-class learning activities in the learning diary study were of the traditional type. For example, previous research conducted by Tenenbaum, Naidu, Jegede, and Austin (2001), has provided a description of a number of features of more student-oriented and constructivist learning activities, including:

- argument or discussion or debate;
- conceptual conflicts and dilemma;
- sharing view with others;
- materials and resources targeted toward solutions;
- motivation toward reflections and concept investigation; and
- meeting students' needs together with making meaningful and real-life examples.

In the follow-up interviews, students were asked to explain the nature of formal in-class learning activities that they engaged in. We analyzed their descriptions based on the features as described above. We found among the 103 features mentioned by students, interactive types of activities (such as those noted above) amounted to only about 18.20% of the total number of learning activities recorded.

Apart from activities required or initiated by the formal curriculum, students spent time on informal learning activities, which can be categorized into two types. First was related to joining clubs/ societies and participating in events, or enrolling in courses that were neither related to nor required by the discipline area of students' majors. In general, such informal learning activities as defined in the current study, can lead to fruitful learning outcomes that sometimes cannot be easily achieved through a formal curriculum, such as changes in attitude. The second type of informal learning activities referred to paid work and leisure activities. Figure 3 reports the amount of time spent on formal, informal and work/leisure activities based on students' self-reports in the learning diary. We found that **students spent most of their time on formal learning activities**.

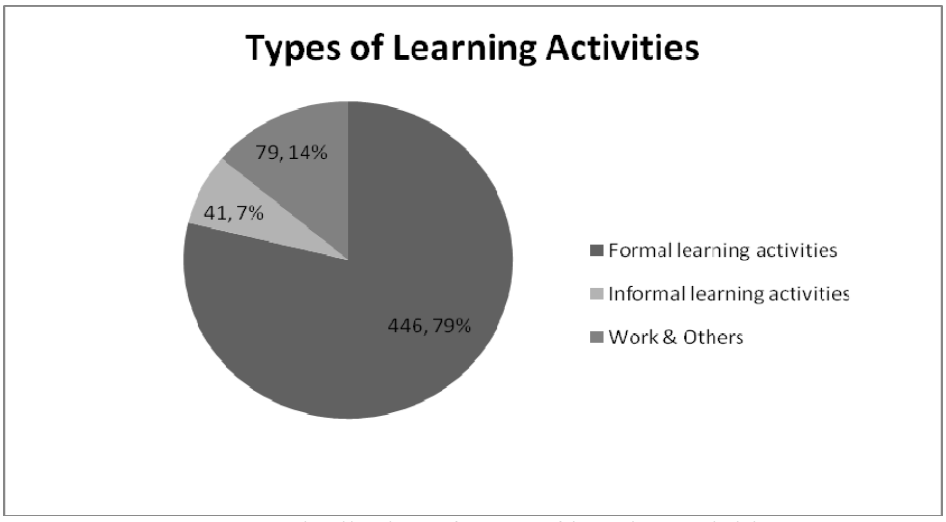


Figure 3: Distribution of types of learning activities

Table 6 shows the relative distribution of each type of informal learning activity that students noted as being engaged in. **Joining university society activities was the most common informal learning activity**.

Informal learning activities	***Percentage (%)***
University society activities	65.85
• Organizing activities	
• Joining activities	
Others	24.39
• For interest purpose	
• For academic purpose	
Academic class organized by CUHK	4.88
Interest class organized by others	4.88
Interest class organized by CUHK	0
Academic class organized by others	0

Table 6: The numbers of modes for informal learning activities

The open-ended feedback obtained from the learning diary form provided explicit reasons that explained students' perception about heavy workload at CUHK. Three major reasons were identified. First, heavy workload can be attributed to overwhelming number of papers, projects and mid-term tests (25 out of the 35 remarks collected). Second, students stated that workload was imbalanced throughout the semester, with 7 out of 35 remarks we classified to fall into this category. Lastly, 3 comments indicated that extra-curriculum activities (such as those listed on Table 6) added pressure to schoolwork.

Similar opinions were heard in the interviews we had with students who participated in the learning diary study. For example, one student stated that he had to spend 19 hours on average each week on his assignments. There were about 5 assignments every week, which meant he had to finish around one per day. Moreover, he found that he did not have enough time to revise. Another student reported to have spent more than 8 hours on average for each assignment. Furthermore, she said participation in societal activities created extra time burden for students to cope with. Normally, the time to conduct and finish these extra-curriculum activities clashed with that of course work. Therefore, students had to possess excellent time-management skills in order to do well academically. However, many students remarked that they were not good at time management. One of them stated that the workload for society activities was especially heavy during the time before the congregation in which they had to meet up every day for about 3 to 4 hours. Apart from spending around 3 hours per week regularly for the BA Festival performance, she reported to have stayed up until 3 am occasionally to work on her course work when the meetings ended at 11 pm.

Survey data

The LABQ data extended our understanding of workload by enabling us to relate students' perceptions on workload with a number of factors, such as actual time spent and various other qualities of the learning tasks.

Regression analysis was done on the 1504 responses of the survey. Results of the regression analysis (Table 7) showed that the six predictors overall were significantly related to the perception of students towards 'appropriate workload' (F (6,1497)=95.96, p=0.000), with 27.8% of the total variance being explained by the six factors.

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients
Intercept	*0.176*	
Learning activity design	**0.107 ****	**0.071**
Learning skills	**0.302*****	**0.200**
Learning engagement	0.090	0.054
Personal social motivation	0.067	0.037
Practical motivation	-0.015	-0.011
Satisfaction	**0.379*****	**0.319**

Note: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Table 7: Regression analysis results

When we looked at the individual items in Table 1, three of the six factors were found to be significantly related to workload: suggesting that learning activity design, learning skills and satisfaction were particularly useful in the prediction of students' perceptions on workload. It is important to note that we found no statistically significant relationship between the amount of time spent by students (the learning engagement factor on the table) on tasks and students' perception of workload.

The results of our regression analysis thus suggested that time and effort spent does not necessarily lead to the perception of high workload. In other words, students may be required to study hard and for long hours, and yet regard workload as acceptable. Instead, the nature of learning environment and learning outcomes are more important factors in influencing students' perception.

Overall interpretation

All in all, the understanding we have has led us to formulate the following guidance for planning and organizing learning activities at CUHK so that students feel positive about the workload.

- *Workload in curriculum planning*: Perception of workload is an important issue. We found that many students' perception of workload tends to be negative. Discussions are needed on a departmental basis to debate and, where necessary, restructure the learning experiences students have in their courses.

- *Learning activity quality rather than amount:* The way to make students feel more able to cope with workload, however, is not to merely cut the number of tasks and assignments. Even though heavy workload has been suggested to possess negative effects on learning in past research (Ross, Niebling & Heckert, 1999; van Dick & Wagner, 2001; Jacobs & Dodd, 2003), as educators, we should not directly resort to cutting down the number of contact hours or tasks. This study shows that a good learning environment aligned to relevant learning outcomes are decisive factors in perceptions of workload. A learning environment that is student-centred is central to nurturing better feelings of workload (in terms of workload being appropriate). As for learning outcomes, perceived achievement of learning outcomes and satisfaction are important factors in the perception of appropriate workload. Ideally, students will see the learning tasks as an enjoyment rather than a burden.

- *Balancing workload over the semester:* Last but not least, the distribution of work over the semester should be more balanced. Ways to do this may include the use of continuous assessments as well as beginning assignment tasks, stage by stage for example, as early as possible in a course. One expects that summative tasks that enable students to demonstrate overall understanding and application of course content will mean a higher workload towards the end of each semester; however, the balance between progressive feedback to students on their learning (formative assessment) and holistic summative assessments needs to be carefully considered. It is important to check that summative assessments are not atomistic and really require students to integrate and consolidate the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

Dissemination of results and deliverables

Our better understanding of the issue of workload has been disseminated through consultations and personal contacts with teachers. Because of the workload project, we are able to give concrete and evidence-based advice to teachers who are concerned about giving too much workload to students.

The suggestions in the Learning Activity website http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/LA/ are entirely congruent with the findings of this workload study. The suggestions for learning activities in that website provide practical examples of how to implement the guidance offered above.

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Appendix 1: Template for learning diary

Name: _____.
Programme & Year: _____.
Date: _____.

1. Please complete the following timesheet.

For Category A (*A1/A2/A3*) – Please write down the *detailed schedule on your timetable*.
***** *A1-Lecture* – Please write down both the *hours scheduled on the timetable* **and** *hours that your have attended*.
****** *Others* – Please specify/ list the activities (one by one) that you have participated.
# Person involved – Please tick the box (alone/ with teachers) and write down the number of person (peers (min/max)) involved.
^ Location – Please write down/ lost the place where you have the activities.

	Category	Types of activities	Overall Time spent (e.g 4 hr)	Course-required (C)/ Self-initiated (S)?	Person involved #			Use of Computer? Please tick √ / X	Location^
					Alone	With teachers	With peers (min/max)		
Weekday	**(A) Formal Learning Activities**	*A1-Lecture* *****							
		A2-Tutorial							
		A3-Laboratory work							
		A4-Others ******							
	(B) Formal Out-of-class Learning Activities	*B1-Discussion of group project*							
		B2-Individual assignments (include doing your own part of group project)							
		B3-Reading & literature searching							
		B4-Study group							
		B5-Self-study							
		B6-Field trip							
		B7-Internship							
		B8-Others ******							
Weekday	**(C) Informal Learning Activities**	*C1-University society activities*							
		C2-Academic class organized by CUHK							

		(e.g. language course)							
		C3-Interest class organized by CUHK (e.g. musical instrument)							
		C4-Academic class organized by other organizations (e.g. language course)							
		C5-Interest class organized by other organizations (e.g. musical instrument)							
		C6-Others **							
	(D) Works & Others	*D1-Part-time job*							
		D2-Leisure activities (e.g. sports, gathering etc)							
		D3-Others **							
Weekend	**(A) Formal Learning Activities**	*A1-Lecture* *							
		A2-Tutorial							
		A3-Laboratory work							
		A4-Others **							
	(B) Formal Out-of-class Learning Activities	*B1-Discussion of group project*							
		B2-Individual assignments (include doing your own part of group project)							
		B3-Reading & literature searching							
		B4-Study group							
		B5-Self-study							
		B6-Field trip							
		B7-Internship							
		B8-Others **							

Weekend	**(C) Informal Learning Activities**	*C1-University society activities*							
		C2-Academic class organized by CUHK (e.g. language course)							
		C3-Interest class organized by CUHK (e.g. musical instrument)							
		C4-Academic class organized by other organizations (e.g. language course)							
		C5-Interest class organized by other organizations (e.g. musical instrument)							
		C6-Others **							
	(D) Works & Others	*D1-Part-time job*							
		D2-Leisure activities (e.g. sports, gathering etc)							
		D3-Others **							

2. Please give detailed answers to the questions below.

a) What was/ were the most important thing(s) you have learnt in the past week?

b) How did you learn them?

c) How much workload (work required by the curriculum) did you have in the past week (e.g. papers/ assignments/ project etc)? Can you give some examples

to elaborate?

d) Did you find the course-related workload appropriate (too light/ too heavy)? Please explain.

e) How would you like the workload be further adjusted to suit your needs? For example, what types of activities could be added or subtracted to make learning more meaningful?

f) What could have done better in the past week in any of the above activities/ learning activities? How? Why?

Appendix 2

Learner Activity and Behaviour Questionnaire (LABQ 2010)

Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR)
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
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In this questionnaire, we would like to know the range and features of the learning activities in your major courses. All of the information collected is for research purposes only and will be kept in strict confidence.

The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please answer the questions by shading the most appropriate oval completely: Right ● Wrong ⊙ ⊕ ◎

Thank you for your help

Background Information

I)	Gender	Female ○	Male ○			
II)	Faculty	Arts ○	Business Administration ○	Education ○	Engineering ○	
		Law ○	Medicine ○	Science ○	Social Science ○	
IV)	Programme	_____				
III)	Year	1 ○ 2 ○	3 ○ 4 ○	5 ○ 6 ○	Other: _____	
V)	Your CGPA	≤1.99 ○	2.00-2.29 ○	2.30-2.69 ○	2.70-2.99 ○	
	(last term)	3.00-3.29 ○	3.30-3.69 ○	3.70-3.99 ○	≥4.00 ○	
VI)	I am a/an	local student ○	mainland student ○	overseas student ○		
VII)	I live	on-campus ○	off-campus ○			

1. Learning strategies

The following statements are about the learning strategies you use in and out of class. Please indicate how much you agree with each of the statements below. Consider how you ***usually*** behave:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Before a course starts					
1. I discuss the course outline and content with my classmates.	⑤	④	③	②	①
2. I look for relevant information such as reference books.	⑤	④	③	②	①
3. I set study goals.	⑤	④	③	②	①
Before a lesson starts					
4. I revise contents of the last class before going to the next one.	⑤	④	③	②	①
5. I prepare for the class by reading about the topics beforehand.	⑤	④	③	②	①
6. I read the required readings.	⑤	④	③	②	①
In individual lessons					
7. I attend most lessons of the course.	⑤	④	③	②	①
8. I make detailed notes.	⑤	④	③	②	①
9. I participate actively in in-class activities such as discussion or Q&A.	⑤	④	③	②	①
After the lesson					
10. Apart from course materials, I look for additional information to consolidate my understanding .	⑤	④	③	②	①
11. I discuss with my classmates when encountering difficulties in learning.	⑤	④	③	②	①
12. I seek advice from the teachers for learning difficulties.	⑤	④	③	②	①
13. I often study with my classmates.	⑤	④	③	②	①

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
About assignments and examinations					
14. I ask my classmates to give comments on my assignments.	⑤	④	③	②	①
15. I do past papers to practise for examination(s).	⑤	④	③	②	①
16. I memorize a lot of content in order to prepare for examination(s).	⑤	④	③	②	①
After a course					
17. I keep good records of the class materials and notes.	⑤	④	③	②	①
18. I try to apply what I have learnt into practical situations.	⑤	④	③	②	①
19. I consider whether I have achieved the goals set at the beginning of the semester.	⑤	④	③	②	①

2. Learning motivation

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the statements below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20. I enjoy learning very much.	⑤	④	③	②	①
21. Peers' positive learning attitudes influence me to learn.	⑤	④	③	②	①
22. Challenging but manageable assignments motivate me to learn.	⑤	④	③	②	①
23. Earning a good grade is important to me**.**	⑤	④	③	②	①
24. It is important for me to do well at my studies.	⑤	④	③	②	①
25. I think that learning is useful for my personal growth.	⑤	④	③	②	①
26. A teacher's praise is important for me to learn.	⑤	④	③	②	①
27. I am concerned about how my studies can help me earn a better living.	⑤	④	③	②	①
28. I am concerned about how my course grades will affect my overall GPA.	⑤	④	③	②	①
29. Learning is fun.	⑤	④	③	②	①
30. I am concerned about how learning can help my career.	⑤	④	③	②	①
31. I want to be outstanding in teachers' eyes.	⑤	④	③	②	①
32. Encouragement from friends motivates me to learn.	⑤	④	③	②	①
33. I feel satisfied when I finished a challenging assignment.	⑤	④	③	②	①

34. What make you study hard? Please name a few reasons that are most important to you.

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3. Learning activities in my Major

In this section, we would like to focus on the learning activities (e.g. lectures, tutorials) that are directly related to the courses that are part of your Major at CUHK. Looking back at your experience last year, please indicate how much you agree with each of the statements below.

In general, the learning activities I experienced …	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35. allowed for arguments, discussions and debates.	⑤	④	③	②	①
36. demonstrated to me that there can be many different theories to explain a situation.	⑤	④	③	②	①
37. encouraged originality of ideas.	⑤	④	③	②	①
38. allowed me to share my learning experiences with others.	⑤	④	③	②	①
39. took into consideration my learning needs.	⑤	④	③	②	①
In general, the learning activities I experienced …	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

40.	provided many real-life examples to illustrate the concepts.	⑤	④	③	②	①
41.	allowed social interaction.	⑤	④	③	②	①
42.	allowed me sufficient opportunities to express myself.	⑤	④	③	②	①
43.	required me to learn standard procedures and rules to solve problems.	⑤	④	③	②	①
44.	were easy to do.	⑤	④	③	②	①
45.	included case-study tasks for decision making.	⑤	④	③	②	①
46.	required strategic planning.	⑤	④	③	②	①
47.	required me to think over what I had been doing and consider alternative ways of doing it.	⑤	④	③	②	①
48.	were based on examples that required me to make decisions or take action.	⑤	④	③	②	①
49.	allowed me to question the way others tackled the task and try to think of a better way.	⑤	④	③	②	①
50.	required me to constantly evaluate the strategies used to solve a problem.	⑤	④	③	②	①
51.	made me realize the considerations and operations of real practitioners in my field.	⑤	④	③	②	①
52.	allowed me to complete them by recalling the facts in the courses.	⑤	④	③	②	①
53.	required me to apply standard procedures and rules to solve problems.	⑤	④	③	②	①
54.	required me to apply judgments based on understanding the role of professionals in my field.	⑤	④	③	②	①

4. Learning skills

How would you rate your abilities in the following learning skills? Please indicate how confident you feel with these skills.

		Very Confident	Quite Confident	Neutral	Not very confident	Not confident at all
Time management						
55.	I plan my own time to balance study, work and social activities.	⑤	④	③	②	①
56.	I plan my own time to meet straightforward study targets and deadlines.	⑤	④	③	②	①
Communication skills						
57.	I can correctly structure essays and formal reports.	⑤	④	③	②	①
58.	I can contribute effectively to a discussion session in class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
IT skills						
59.	I use Microsoft Office (e.g. Word/ Excel/ PowerPoint) effectively.	⑤	④	③	②	①
60.	I can use the internet/ World Wide Web (www) to search for information effectively.	⑤	④	③	②	①
Problem-solving skills						
61.	I can identify the components of complicated problem.	⑤	④	③	②	①
62.	I can identify possible solutions to a problem or its components.	⑤	④	③	②	①
Teamwork skills						
63.	I work as an effective member of a team.	⑤	④	③	②	①
64.	I can lead a small team of fellow students to carry out a project.	⑤	④	③	②	①
Self evaluation skills						
65.	I can identify my own strengths and weaknesses as a learner.	⑤	④	③	②	①
66.	I make plans for improving myself.	⑤	④	③	②	①

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67. ***The following skills are important for me.***					
Time management	⑤	④	③	②	①
Communication skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
IT skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
Problem-solving skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
Teamwork skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
Self-evaluate skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
68. ***The University has provided enough opportunities to assist me in gaining learning skills.***					
Time management	⑤	④	③	②	①
Communication skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
IT skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
Problem-solving skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
Teamwork skills	⑤	④	③	②	①
Self-evaluate skills	⑤	④	③	②	①

69. What else can the University do to assist you in gaining useful learning skills?

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5. Overall comments

The following statements are about the workload and satisfaction with all the learning activities you have experienced at CUHK. Please indicate how much you agree with each of these statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70. Overall, the amount of effort I was required to spend on my study (learning activities) was appropriate.	⑤	④	③	②	①
71. I was generally given enough time to understand the things I had to learn.	⑤	④	③	②	①
72. I usually had a clear idea of what was expected of me.	⑤	④	③	②	①
73. It was always easy to know the expected standard of work.	⑤	④	③	②	①
74. On the whole, I learned a lot by going through the various learning activities.	⑤	④	③	②	①
75. Overall, I am satisfied with the learning activities in the University.	⑤	④	③	②	①

76. Any additional points you want to make concerning the learning activities at CUHK.

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- End of questionnaire –