Accelerated Learning: A Study of Faculty and Student Experiences

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Abstract In this study we explored faculty and student experiences of accelerated learning. We conducted interviews with faculty members who had delivered the same course in 12 and 6-week timeframes, and we analysed a student survey. Students reported overall positive experiences in the accelerated courses, particularly in the social aspects of learning, higher than usual motivation, and confidence in their learning. However, both faculty and students raised concerns about the scope and timing of assessment tasks, student workload expectations, faculty workload, and administration of courses. We offer recommendations regarding implementation, assessment practices, and management of learning in an accelerated timeframe.

Key words accelerated learning · academic calendar · curriculum

Acceleration of existing courses into shorter delivery timeframes has enabled many universities in Australia and internationally to extend their academic calendar (Baldwin and McInnes 2002; Wlodkowski 2003). There are incentives to do so, including financial benefits, fulfilling student demand for flexibility, and increasing compatibility with overseas university calendars (Baldwin and McInnes 2002; Daniel 2000; Davies 2006). While accelerated courses are being implemented more widely, compared to research on related topics such as the translation of courses to distance learning contexts there is relatively little

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research regarding the impact of changes in delivery timeframes on curriculum design or on learning experiences.

At an Australian metropolitan university, Swinburne University of Technology, we undertook an exploratory study to investigate student and faculty perceptions of the differences between 12 and 6-week timeframes for the conduct of a course. At this university, the traditional 12-week semester had recently been supplemented by 6-week terms, scheduled during semester breaks. We sought faculty views on the implementation of this shorter timeframe. We also analysed a survey of students who had recently completed 6-week courses.

Definition of Accelerated Learning and Key Concepts

As we began this project, we realized that there was inconsistency in the literature in use of the term "accelerated learning". Two key concepts describing accelerated learning emerged from a literature review: one relates to timeframes and one to an approach to learning and teaching.

First, accelerated learning has most frequently been conceptualized in reference to "time". From this perspective, accelerated learning involves a course delivered in a shorter length of time than "normal" (Anastasi 2007; Daniel 2000; Davies 2006; Scott 2003; Wlodkowski 2003). There is some confusion about what constitutes an accelerated delivery timeframe, with definitions varying from just being a shorter period of time than existing delivery (Anastasi 2007; Scott 2003) to a specified number of weeks or days (Davies 2006).

Second, accelerated learning can be conceptualized as an approach to education in which learning and teaching methods emphasize active, holistic experiences designed to increase the learning that can be achieved within any given timeframe. Elements recurrent in the literature include building close rapport between students and teachers; providing for collaboration, small group work, learning to learn, sensory experiences, and creative class activities; linking new material to the real world and previous knowledge; and providing alternative forms of assessment (Boyd 2004; Daniel 2000; Imel 2002; Scott 2003; Swenson 2003).

Our purpose in conducting this study was to explore accelerated learning as a time-based phenomenon. The timeframe adopted depends upon institutional schedules, administrative demands, and course content to be covered (Baldwin and McInnes 2002; Daniel 2000; Husson and Kennedy 2003; Wlodkowski 2003). While our initial concern was with timeframe, as will be seen from the findings of the study, in several cases participants focused on active learning approaches as a key concern in delivering courses in shortened timeframes.

Themes in the Accelerated Learning Literature

The literature on teaching in accelerated learning contexts emphasises a need for active learning approaches, including group projects, creative in-class activities, and problem-solving. Scott (2003) conducted a qualitative study investigating the attributes of high quality intensive courses using student interviews and ethnographic observation. According

to her findings, high quality accelerated courses were delivered using active, experiential methods, in-class activities, and collaborative problem-solving rather than using more passive approaches, such as lectures. In contrast, Vreven and McFadden (2007) reported that cooperative (group) learning techniques did not facilitate student performance in a 3 week accelerated psychology course. Scott, however, found that students also felt quality accelerated courses had facilitated focused and uninterrupted learning experiences. Scott reported that students felt the accelerated courses had given them a more memorable learning experience compared to traditional classes. Some researchers have recommended the accelerated format for mature-age students in particular (Daniel 2000; Wlodkowski 2003). These authors have argued that mature-age students are highly motivated and tend to have previous experience in the area of study. In a study conducted by Kasworm (2003), students who attained what she called a "successful adult student identity"—an identity involving motivation, dedication, and responsibility towards learning—gave more positive feedback about their experiences in accelerated courses.

There is little literature documenting faculty decision-making about content and how to maintain or improve academic standards in the adaptation of courses to suit a shorter timeframe (Hyun et al. 2006). In a quantitative study involving faculty members, Kretovics et al. (2005) reported that 47% of the faculty members surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they changed their teaching methods when adapting full-length courses for an accelerated timeframe. In another study, Hyun et al. (2006) found that faculty members try to keep their teaching, course content, and assessment the same across courses in order to maintain standards and expectations. However, they also indicated that there was evidence that some faculty members were seeking to use innovative teaching practices and a wider variety of learning activities to assist students' learning in compressed timeframes.

The literature contains support for adapting the assessment of student learning according to the timeframe of the course (Daniel 2000; Davies 2006; Kretovics et al. 2005; Scott 2003). In particular, authors have advocated adaptation of the type, scope, and timing of assessment tasks. Kretovics et al. (2005) reported that over one-third of faculty members surveyed made changes to assignments and assessment methods. However, reasons for changes to assessment were not explored. Scott (2003) and Daniel (2000) advocated designing assignments such as essays, class presentations, and hands-on projects as progressive assessment tasks throughout a course rather than relying on a single, large assessment task at the end of the course. Students in Scott's (2003) study felt that short, frequent tests were more manageable in shortened timeframes. The students also preferred, as they might in any circumstance, assignments that were meaningful to the course material, including in-class group assignments, to enable them to apply and experience more concretely what they were learning.

The accelerated learning literature does not distinguish specific disciplines as being more or less suitable for accelerated formats (Daniel 2000; Davies 2006). Davies (2006) has argued that the appropriateness of a course for acceleration is reliant on curriculum design and specific teaching methods rather than on the nature of the discipline. There is, however, disagreement as to whether content should emphasize depth or breadth in an accelerated timeframe. For instance, Scott (2003) favored concentrating on core concepts and depth. The literature also contains unresolved debate contrasting skill-based content and conceptual content. Arguments favouring skills over conceptual material have been based on the assumption that the latter requires a greater length of time to learn despite little empirical evidence connecting time and learning outcomes (Davies 2006). Studies

that mention time for reflection and analysis of material have indicated that some faculty members perceive that a reduction in the time available has a negative impact on student learning outcomes (Davies 2006; Hyun et al. 2006). Swenson (2003) advocated embedding reflective tasks and time for reflection into accelerated courses, for example, by using journals and small group discussions. In the broader literature on reflection and learning, Eraut (1995) argued that there are different types of reflection, each appropriate for different timeframes. With substantial thinking time available, learners can engage in a period of deliberation or slow reflection following an action. Given moderate thinking time, he argued learners can engage in monitoring and reflecting while action is occurring, creating what Schön referred to as "reflection-in-action" (Schön 1987). However, what constitutes substantial or moderate thinking time for individual tasks, or between tasks, is unclear.

A number of researchers have addressed learning outcomes associated with acceleration. Daniel (2000) concluded that the majority of studies comparing accelerated and full length courses show neutral or positive effects of acceleration on short-term learning and neutral effects on long-term retention. Similarly, Davies (2006), Anastasi (2007), Wlodkowski (2003) and Seamon (2004) reported mostly positive or neutral effects on learning experiences from courses delivered in a shorter timeframe, both in students' perceptions of the courses and in the recorded learning outcomes. A study at the University of Melbourne showed that learning outcomes, as indicated by student grades and attitudes, were improved in nine accelerated courses, no different in 13 courses, and lower in one course when compared to standard semester-length courses (Davies 2006).

Workload issues for both faculty members and students have been identified in the adoption of accelerated course structures. Baldwin and McInnes (2002) argued that faculty face additional workload pressures if assignment to teaching accelerated courses results in a year-round teaching load. Similarly, Daniel (2000) reported that faculty members have raised concerns about instructor fatigue and workload. As Baldwin and McInnes (2002) argued, staff teaching workloads are complicated by the competing demands of administrative tasks and research.

Some authors have identified implications of shorter timeframes for student workloads and student absences. Hyun et al. (2006) reported that the faculty members in their study believed an administrative policy was needed to limit the number of accelerated courses students could take. Daniel (2000) also reported that students in some accelerated courses experienced stress and fatigue and were less satisfied with their achievements than in traditional courses. Walvoord (2003) noted that students undertaking accelerated programs may have greater family and employment responsibilities than their counterparts in standard programs.

Finally, in terms of themes in the literature, Baldwin and McInnes (2002) identified the utilization of facilities year-round as a significant benefit for institutions running accelerated courses between semesters. However, they also noted that the additional demand for facilities during traditional "down-time" might pose difficulties for cleaning and maintenance tasks, thus creating additional pressure on those services.

The Study

Our goal was to explore the experiences of faculty and students following the introduction of 6-week terms at Swinburne University of Technology. The central focus of the study was

faculty and student perspectives, based on their experiences transitioning from 12 to 6-week timeframes for courses. There were differences in accessibility and numbers of participants who had the pre-requisite experience of both 12 and 6-week courses. A significant number of students (500+) had undertaken 6 week units, and all had had some experience of 12 week units. Only 12 faculty members who had delivered units in both 12 and 6-week timeframes could be identified from university records. The researchers therefore took a different methodological approach for each group. Students completed an online survey while faculty members were interviewed. Creswell and Miller (2000) have suggested that using multiple methods enables a 'convergence among … sources of information' on a single topic.

As part of a Swinburne University evaluation of the trial of 6-week terms, staff in the Higher Education Office conducted an online survey comprising 21 items (nine demographic items). Following receipt of human ethics committee approval, the Higher Education Office invited students via email to respond to the survey; and it was open for 6 weeks. We, the authors, were involved in the development of 18 of the questions for this survey including the demographic questions; and collated results were made available to us for independent secondary analysis. The survey included quantitative and qualitative (free-response) questions comparing 12- and 6-week learning experiences. Students were asked to rate their experiences and comment on confidence in knowledge gained, feedback received from teachers, assessment, social experience, motivation, and possible improvements.

One hundred and fourteen students (41% male, 59% female) completed the survey. Students from the Faculties (Colleges) of Business and Enterprise, Design, Engineering and Industrial Sciences, Information and Communication Technologies, and Life and Social Sciences were represented in the student sample. Students were enrolled in courses from both their own disciplines and elective courses from other faculties. Students were spread across all stages of their undergraduate degrees, including honors program students. Most students were studying full-time (78%), and 80% were also working in paid employment.

The faculty participants chosen had experience in teaching the same course in a 12-week and 6-week timeframe. This allowed for investigation into what adjustments they had made to courses in order to deliver them in the shorter timeframe. As previously noted, across the institution we were able to identify 12 faculty members with this experience. Given the small number of participants and the depth of information desired, we chose interviews as the most appropriate data collection method. Following human ethics committee approval, eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty members. In one interview two faculty members who taught the same course were present and answered questions both individually and in conversation with one another, at their own request. The sample of 12 faculty members was drawn from the same Faculties as the students. However, no faculty members from the Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Sciences were included as none met the criterion of having taught the same course in both time formats. Three of the faculty members interviewed were involved in teaching courses open to students from multiple disciplines. We asked interviewees about their perspectives regarding assessment and learning outcomes, curriculum and teaching methods, changes made to courses, perceptions of the student experience, policy and procedures, and management and organization. We conducted a thematic analysis of the interview data. Due to the small sample size and to ensure anonymity and internal confidentiality, individual faculty are not directly cited in the results.

Findings and Discussion

We performed an analysis of the interviews with faculty and the student survey data in order to discover themes relating to their shared and contrasting experiences of accelerated learning.

The Overall Learning Experience

Overall, students from the 6-week term trial reported positive experiences. Of the student respondents, 76% rated their overall accelerated learning experience as positive while 17% felt neutral, and only 7% felt negatively about the experience. The majority of respondents perceived the difficulty of the learning material to be similar (68%) and for some students easier (18%) in comparison to learning material in a normal 12-week semester course. In terms of their confidence about their knowledge of material 25% felt more confident than for a regular term, 61% felt similarly confident, and only 14% felt less confident. They also reported a substantial comparative increase in their effort and motivation (74%).

Findings from both faculty and student responses showed that learning experiences were influenced by a wide range of factors. The majority of the 12 faculty members (n=8) reported that accelerated delivery was most effective where students were highly motivated, regardless of ability. Half of the faculty interviewees raised concerns about the degree of diversity in the student cohort. Aspects of this diversity included discipline of the students' major study, level of previous achievement, previous learning experiences, culture, language background, and expectations. Four faculty members also reported that they perceived some cohorts as more prepared than others to engage in accelerated study. Perceptions of "weakness" in cohorts were attributed to students being poorly prepared in relation to their perceptions of the workload required, language skills, or previous learning experiences.

From both faculty and student responses, findings indicated that the benefits of acceleration for learning rested largely on an intensified, active learning cycle of theory, practice, and feedback and a stronger social learning experience derived from peer support, guidance and feedback. This finding is in accord with literature emphasising the value of active, real-world qualities in accelerated learning (Scott 2003; Swenson 2003).

Students who perceived the level of difficulty as easier and felt more confident in the accelerated format as compared to the full semester explained that they had benefited from the intensity of acceleration, had become more focused and immersed in the learning experience, and more motivated as a result. One student commented, "I found that by completing two classes a week I was more engaged in the process so wanted to keep up to date." Another said, "double classes a week meant more immersion in the subject."

Faculty members observed that students developed early team cohesiveness. Students also felt it was important for motivation and learning to have close relationships with fellow students during accelerated courses and reported a sense of responsibility to peers and to the learning itself: "you see each other more often and are more motivated as a group to get the job done" and "the intense group work exercise helped me to understand how others worked and also how to work better in a group." Most (58%) of the 6-week term students agreed that developing peer support and friendship was easier than during their regular semester experiences: "we found that we settled into our group very quickly, despite being from different disciplines and had no problems working with each other." Reflecting Kasworm's (2003) findings about successful adult student identity, we found the student

group to have exhibited a sense of responsibility to peers, and to the learning itself, as well as higher than usual motivation and confidence in learning.

Discipline and Type of Content

We found no consistent patterns relating to the suitability for acceleration of a course based on discipline or type of content. Some faculty members expressed contrasting opinions about what they felt was appropriate content for accelerated formats. Two faculty members felt that technical or skill-based content was inappropriate due to reduced time for familiarity, practice, and investigation. Conversely, three faculty members felt that conceptual content was inappropriate but that technical content would be very appropriate for acceleration. Seven faculty members reported no preference. Of these, four argued that accelerated courses were successful depending on the teaching methods utilized; and three felt they had insufficient knowledge to comment. In the student survey, we found no significant patterns indicating differences in learning experience or satisfaction based on the course discipline or type of content. Five of the students did, however, report that they were concerned with having insufficient time to read academic texts in accelerated courses.

Similarly, we found no significant pattern in perceptions about the sequencing of courses across the two cohorts of participants. While three faculty members felt that accelerated courses needed to be chosen to fit in with a defined sequence of learning experiences, only one student commented about the sequencing of courses in the survey responses, indicating that the course s/he had taken had been "substantially different" in both content and teaching style from previous experiences and that this had been challenging.

Student Workload

Five faculty members identified student workload as a concern for the 6-week accelerated courses. Two of these five also indicated a belief that some students may have enrolled with the perception that the accelerated courses would be easier than semester equivalents. Certainly this finding is consistent with student responses ($n=23$) indicating that they found the courses to be more time consuming than they had expected. Two students were very direct about their expectation that they would be able to work full-time and still complete two courses: "the main issue was the workload, which does not cater for students who work full-time" and "you need to make [university] your main priority… while … trying to meet expectations of your employers".

Faculty members considered restricting the number of courses taken simultaneously by a student to be a major contributor to a student's ability to attend to the topic. Three faculty members reported that some students overloaded themselves by enrolling in more than two accelerated courses. Five faculty members argued that courses were more difficult in 6 weeks as a result of the intensity of the learning experience and that students should be restricted to only one course during this period. Hyun et al. (2006) had also reported that the faculty members in their study felt the number of accelerated courses in which students could enrol should be limited. In our study, there was an association between doing one accelerated course and positive survey responses. Most of the students (about 80%) who provided positive comments indicated that they had only undertaken one course during the accelerated term. Some ($n=7$) especially noted that this was important in their capacity to deal successfully with the course "I was very

confident with the material because I only did one subject in winter term and I normally do four subjects in a semester."

Concern About Absences

We found that there was a perception that faculty or student absences could quickly result in negative effects due to the pace of accelerated courses. In the free-response area for making recommendations to improve the 6-week term, some students ($n=8$) indicated a need for a procedure for dealing with faculty absences. It was suggested by two students that the university intranet system could be utilised to maintain study during these events. One faculty participant also suggested that online resources could be extended to support off-site learning in the case of short faculty absences. Three faculty members felt that students also needed to be more aware of the impact of missing classes during accelerated courses. They argued that the pace of acceleration made it difficult for students to catch-up and for instructors to bring students back up to the level of the rest of the class. Having acknowledged this issue, one faculty member felt student absences were noticeably lower in an accelerated course and attributed this outcome to the stronger social and motivational effects of the intense delivery process. This was borne out by student comments: "[I] found [it] easier to learn when doing the same subject twice a week. Plus having homework checked twice a week made me do my homework and attend."

Assessment Practices

Recommendations in the literature have supported adapting assessment practices according to the timeframe of the course (Daniel 2000; Davies 2006; Kretovics et al. 2005; Scott 2003). In these prior studies, elements with potential for adaptation included purpose, scope, and timing of assessments. Purposes include providing feedback to assist student learning (formative assessment) and making judgements on student learning (summative assessment).

The majority of faculty members ($n=9$) reported that they used multiple assessment methods. In two cases, these were designed as progressive assessment, with grades accumulating throughout the course. One faculty participant suggested that having progressive assessment tasks had the benefit of spreading assessment and maintaining student commitment. Another suggested that small, in-class, formative assessment activities helped students be organized and understand how they could achieve a task. Similar to student opinion in Scott's (2003) study, students also expressed a preference for staged, meaningful, progressive, and formative assessment tasks that directly contributed to their learning experience. For example, one student suggested that: "shorter assignments and quick assessment pieces are more relevant and probably reflect the workplace pressure more closely".

In cases where conventional examinations were used for assessment, we found no indication that the reduced timeframe had been problematic for the faculty or students. Report writing was also used as an assessment technique in a number of the 6-week courses, but there was no indication from faculty members that this type of writing raised issues. On the other hand, three faculty participants identified long essays as an area of concern because of the time needed to absorb material and reflect on it. The concern with having sufficient time for writing essays was not expressed by student respondents. However, as previously noted, five students did express concern about completing reading tasks.

Two faculty members raised the use of group projects as a potential issue. They indicated concern that students struggled to arrange sufficient collaborative time between classes in the shortened timeframe. Students commenting on group work in their qualitative feedback did not indicate any particular problems with coordinating their work to complete the task. Rather the element that troubled them related to equitable contributions to the group and dealing with those students who were "not willing to do any work". As one faculty member noted, this problem is not unique to accelerated courses.

Students reported that the timing of assessment was a major factor in their experiences of the 6-week courses. In the free-response section for suggesting improvements, the most common suggestion ($n=15$) was that assessment needed to be planned more carefully to suit the accelerated timeframe, particularly aligning assessment tasks with class work and pacing tasks so that they were not overlapping or concentrated at the end of the term. Reflecting previous research reporting that faculty members tend to make some adaptations when teaching accelerated courses (Kretovics et al. 2005), in four of the 11 courses investigated instructors reported some adaptation of assessment practices other than changes to timing. In our study, the amount of assessment was reportedly altered in three courses while the perceived level of difficulty of the assessment was reduced in only one. Of the four faculty involved in these changes, two felt that these changes had a negative impact on course quality; and two felt that learning outcomes had not diminished as a result. More broadly, faculty participants expressed concern about managing presentation and assessment schedules with other staff duties, fine-tuning assessment while keeping within the authorized curriculum, managing external time pressures on assignments that required industry partners, and managing student expectations with regard to ease of completing a shortened course.

Feedback to students and assessment turnaround was investigated in the student survey. One of the benefits of the shortened delivery time in the perceptions of students was the quick receipt of feedback from the instructor. When asked about the amount of feedback received compared to semester courses, 24% of student respondents felt they had received more or much more feedback from their teacher. In qualitative responses to this question, several students ($n=9$) reported they had a faster turn-around on tasks and that their teacher was more available to give feedback as compared to a 12-week semester. Confidence in learning material quickly was also attributed to faster feedback. The majority of the faculty members ($n=7$) also reported that the accelerated format facilitated a faster assessment turnaround. However, some students commented that they had not received any feedback during the course at all ($n=3$). Three faculty members indicated that where there were large classes and a large number of assessment activities, they had significant difficulty with assessment turnaround, so as to provide sufficient and timely feedback. Students, however, attributed the quality of feedback to individual teachers, rather than the timeframe: "it is the approach adopted by the instructor that makes the big difference."

Organizational Issues

Some faculty members ($n=4$) identified issues regarding students at risk of failing courses and the activation of support services. It was noted that the time required for administrative processes meant that instructors and students may not know whether a student had satisfactorily completed pre-requisite courses prior to enrolment as grades from the previous full term semester may not be available prior to enrolment. In addition, while the intensity

of contact between students and faculty members could feasibly facilitate early identification of students in difficulty, resolution of issues was not necessarily achieved. Faculty members reported problems implementing support for students failing their progressive assessments in accelerated courses. The most difficult area to resolve appeared to be the capacity of student support services to respond quickly and the limits of a student's capacity to improve study habits while doing the necessary class work in a 6-week semester. Students, however, did not raise concerns about support systems in their qualitative feedback.

The close scheduling of classes was also perceived as a factor with implications. While it is usual for each course in a 12-week semester to have one class per week of 2–4 hours, in the 6-week mode class time each week was doubled. Eight of the faculty participants identified the timing of classes through the week as a substantial problem. This supports the concerns reported by Hyun et al. (2006) about the amount of time allocated between classes during accelerated courses. However, while concerns were raised about the timing and sequence of classes, there was no general agreement about the best arrangement for the distribution of those classes. One faculty participant felt that several days between classes would provide more time for reflection and completion of assigned work outside class. Two faculty members suggested that it would be better to have classes scheduled close together, rather than spread over the week. Five believed that the scheduling of classes was sensitive but dependent on a wide range of variables relating to how the course was structured. In their recommendations for improvements three students indicated a preference for classes to be run on the same day. No students commented on the need for more time between classes.

Supporting concerns about additional academic workload pressures (Baldwin and McInnes 2002; Daniel 2000), we found that there were workload implications for faculty members teaching accelerated courses. Some faculty members ($n=6$) felt they had insufficient time to prepare courses, a process that would normally occur between semesters. Two faculty members indicated concerns that they were overloaded with teaching hours during the accelerated course period. However, three faculty members said that the reduction in the number of courses they were teaching concurrently provided time to reflect on topics and student learning experiences. Two stated that the frequent intensive contact had improved their communication with students and allowed them to be more involved in student progress.

There are also management issues relating to contract teaching staff. Significant numbers of teaching staff in Australian universities are employed on short-term contracts. The locating, hiring, and briefing of these staff members often occurs on short notice after enrolment numbers and budgets have been confirmed. Several faculty members ($n=5$) indicated that the management of contract teaching staff was a significant concern when planning an accelerated course. Faculty responsible for convening courses felt that locating, hiring, and preparing casual teaching staff for accelerated courses added to their workload and especially so when there were large numbers of students enrolled in the classes, requiring a larger number of additional teaching staff members. The increased pressure to carry out these tasks between semesters was felt to add significantly to faculty workload and stress levels.

Reflecting the conclusions drawn by Baldwin and McInnes (2002), issues were identified by both students and faculty regarding room cleaning, maintenance, classroom access, and general student services. One faculty participant pointed out that year-round courses result in an increased demand for computer labs, thereby reducing the usual time for maintenance. Three faculty members and 12 students indicated that, on occasion, rooms

were not prepared or open when they arrived. Eight faculty members noted that the spread of courses into traditional breaks came at a cost to the university, requiring increased service distribution. One faculty member noted in particular that an "organization-wide" planning approach was needed in order to provide students enrolled in 6-week courses with the same level of service provided for regular semesters.

Conclusion

Our study was designed to examine faculty and student experiences of accelerated learning in the context of a trial 6-week term compared to their experiences of teaching and learning in a traditional 12-week semester. The responses of faculty members and students indicated that the introduction of accelerated learning can be a positive experience. Importantly, students reported that significant benefits of shortened timeframes for learning were the increased sense of community with and responsibility to their peers, frequency of feedback, and the ability to immerse themselves in a single topic. Faculty members also shared the students' perceptions of social and motivational benefits to learning in shortened timeframes. However, there are important issues to be taken into account. In particular, the need for active learning techniques, adapting course content and assessment timing for accelerated formats, providing sufficient and timely feedback, and clearly communicating to students the commitment involved in accelerated courses. Beyond the course delivery, there are also organizational matters requiring attention. These include ensuring that faculty absences can be covered; managing faculty workload; and ensuring preparedness of the whole system to deliver accelerated programs including student administration, student support and facilities management.

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