A STUDY TO GATHER DATA FOR THE CREATION OF
ACCELERATED ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM
DEVELOPMENT PROTOCOL FOR CHIPPEWA
VALLEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

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A Study To Gather Data For The Creation Of Accelerated Associate Degree Program
Protocol For Chippewa Valley Technical College
(Title)

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(Name of the Style Manual Used in this Study)

The purpose of this research was to provide data for the creation of accelerated

degree program development protocol that will be used in the development of an

accelerated Administrative Assistant degree program at Chippewa Valley Technical

College (CVTC). CVTC administrative/leadership staff and Wisconsin Technical College

System (WTCS) staff involved with accelerated learning and accelerated program

development at the other WTCS colleges were surveyed to identify program development

requirements for accelerated programs.

The results of the study identified the need to include staff from program

departments; instructional design, curriculum, and assessment specialists; administrators;

general education instructors; support services staff; and the advisory committee along

with employers and business/industrial content experts. Program development requires

the input of individuals from a board range of areas and requires a supporting

infrastructure that spans the entire organization.

Data from this study identified accelerated format program criteria. Criteria categories or themes identified in this study were: program structure and content, program admission requirements and student responsibilities, quality of instruction and consistency of staff, teacher time, teacher training, and infrastructure support. The number and complexity of criteria required in the development of accelerated program is immense. Although much respondent data was given, very little quantifiable criteria were presented

Specific stages related to the development of accelerated degree programs were also identified in this study. Identified stages of development include: pre-program, development, implementation, and evaluation. Literature and survey responses support the fact that the majority of work load related to accelerated programs is completed before the program is implemented. .

Finally, this study identified specific administrative, leadership, and/or management staff expectations of a successful accelerated program. Themes identified as needed in determining the success of an accelerated program: student/teacher/employer feedback, student success, and program evaluation. The data gathered during this study clearly indicates the importance of assessment in evaluating the success of an accelerated program. No specific quantifiable measures where provided by respondents in relation to assessment.

Data from this study will assist the Business Technology Department at Chippewa Valley Technical College in the development of an accelerated Administrative Assistant associate degree program.

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In reflecting on my graduate studies, it is evident that the support of others helped me in obtaining this goal.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

<u>Background</u>

When we think of traditional students, we think of students between the ages of five and 22 years old who follow a progression of educational steps beginning with kindergarten and progressing through secondary and/or postsecondary education (Whisnant, Sullivan, and Slayton, 1993). Traditionally, educational institutions are structured to meet the needs of students who attend school during a nine-month period, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Most postsecondary students earn degrees by satisfactorily meeting the criteria of a degree program following this traditional time frame (Whisnant, et al., 1993).

Not every individual has the opportunity or desire to attend a postsecondary institution during this traditional time frame. Historically, it was difficult for adults over the age of 25 to return to school in order to obtain a postsecondary degree. Work, family, distance, and economic commitments make the attainment of a postsecondary degree impossible for many (Whisnant, et al., 1993). Over time, educational institutions have begun to recognize and discuss this dilemma. In an effort to meet the needs of these "nontraditional" students, educational institutions are repackaging their traditional instructional delivery by offering evening, weekend, and online classes. Although these changes offer additional options, obstacles still exist for many nontraditional students wishing to fully complete the degree of choice.

For those nontraditional students who must work full-time, little time is left within a typical day to pursue a degree. In a traditional degree program structure at the postsecondary level, courses meet during an entire semester. Many nontraditional students can only take one or two classes a semester. At this rate, an associate degree program containing 65 credits could take approximately 10 years to complete assuming a student attends school during each fall, spring, and summer semester. Technical colleges, providers of associate degree programs, may take particular notice of this type of situation. One such technical college is Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC), one of 16 technical colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), serves an eleven-county area as illustrated in Figure 1. The main campus is located in Eau Claire with major outreach centers in Chippewa Falls, Menomonie, Neillsville, and River Falls.

Figure 1. Chippewa Valley Technical College Region/Campuses and WTCS Campuses (CVTC On-line).

Part of CVTC's mission statement is that CVTC delivers "progressive technical education that . . . meets the workforce needs of the region . . .." The vision statement professes a dedication to student success and a commitment that confirms value to students' "diverse" background. The outcome statement encourages the college to "utilize a variety of instructional delivery technologies, improve student success, and meet customer needs of time, distance, and style of learning through flexible programming" (CVTC On-line).

The Administrative Assistant program is an associate degree program offered by 14 colleges within the Wisconsin Technical College System. Chippewa Valley Technical College is one of those colleges (WTCS On-line). Individuals in the Chippewa Valley who want to obtain an Administrative Assistant associate degree are required to successfully complete 67 credits of coursework (CVTC On-line). The majority of Administrative Assistant core program courses are offered during the traditional school day, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the main campus in Eau Claire. No courses are offered on weekends. Many program core classes, but not all, are offered at the Chippewa Falls, Menomonie, River Falls, and Neillsville locations. This means that a student who wants to finish this degree must ultimately travel to Eau Claire for some of his/her classes, in some cases requiring the student to travel a distance of over 60 miles. In addition, the majority of Administrative Associate degree program core courses meet during the entire 16-week semester.

However, a new instructional design exists that would allow a full-time working adult in an administrative profession an opportunity to obtain an Administrative Assistant associate degree in as little as 3.5 years. This design presents material in such a way that

it allows learning to occur more quickly. This design is called accelerated learning (Meier, 2000). Accelerated learning strategies can cut the time frame of a course in half. This would allow nontraditional learners an opportunity to take more classes in a shorter time frame. Accelerated courses typically meet for a longer block of time, over a period of 6 - 8 weeks instead of the traditional 16 or 18-week semester. A degree program developed with an accelerated format would offer the opportunity of a degree within a time frame that is accessible for working individuals. A degree program developed with an accelerated format would allow many nontraditional students the opportunity to reach their goal of obtaining a degree. Currently, one college within the Wisconsin Technical College System, Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, Wisconsin, offers the Administrative Assistant program in this nontraditional format (WTCS On-line). This successful program is currently entering its fourth year.

Counselors and faculty at CVTC receive calls on a frequent basis from students who are looking for a way to finish the Administrative Assistant program while still working full time. CVTC data shows that many full-time employed students remain noncompleters in the Administrative Assistant program when they reach the final semesters (Rich, 2002). Those students dedicated and determined enough to finish have taken as long as five, eight, and ten years to coordinate their schedules with the current program format. An accelerated format would make the Administrative Assistant program more easily accessible and completeable for adults currently working full-time in an administrative profession.

Currently, CVTC does not have an accelerated Administrative Assistant program. Nevertheless, the Business Technology Department Advisory Committee of CVTC

supports the accelerated learning format and has recommended the development of an accelerated Administrative Assistant program (Business Technology Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, 2001). Even though one other CVTC program (Supervisory Management) is operating in an accelerated format, CVTC has no specific protocols regarding the development of programs using an accelerated format. The lack of a specific document that contains the protocol and steps involved in the creation of an accelerated program makes this type of program development difficult.

Statement of Problem

Chippewa Valley Technical College does not have written protocols and/or steps required for the development of successful accelerated associate degree programs; therefore, CVTC faculty and staff interested in developing accelerated programs have limited direction, guidance, and support in the development of a successful accelerated program.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to create accelerated program development steps and protocols that will be used when developing an accelerated Administrative Assistant associate degree programs at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Research Objectives

This research will address the following objectives:

1. Identify staff that should be involved in the development of accelerated degree programs.

2. Identify accelerated format program criteria.

3. Identify steps required in the development of an accelerated Administrative Assistant program.

4. Determine how to measure the success of an accelerated program.

Justification and Significance of Study

This study is important for the following reasons:

1. Data from this study will identify technical college staff that should be involved in accelerated program development.

2. Data from this study will provide the criteria required for the development of accelerated associate degree programs.

3. Data from this study will identify necessary steps in the development of an accelerated associate degree program.

4. Data from this study will identify assessment measures that can be implemented to determine the success of an accelerated program.

5. Data from this study will assist the Business Technology Department in developing a successful accelerated Administrative Assistant degree program.

6. Implementation of this study will provide another group of learners within the Chippewa Valley the opportunity to purse an Administrative Assistant associate degree within a reasonable time frame, while still allowing them to

work full time and spend time with family. This meets CVTC's mission to

serve a diverse group of individuals.

7. Other two-year degree programs within CVTC and Wisconsin may be able to

use this data in the development of accelerated degree programs.

8. Accelerated programs are different than traditional programs. This

information will be beneficial to anyone developing a program using

accelerated learning strategies.

Limitations of Study

Extraneous and unknown variables or conditions that could have affected the

results of this study included:

1. The researcher developed the survey instrument. The presence of the human

element may have created errors, misrepresentations, misstatements, or

omissions not intended by the researcher.

2. The survey results were limited to the opinions and answers revealed by the

respondents. Opinions and answers of respondents may have been influenced

by factors independent of this research and not disclosed to the researcher as

part of this study.

3. Survey results are based on open-ended questions. The researcher may have

unintentionally biased summarization and interpretation of study results

during analysis.

4. Respondent answers and opinions will vary based on level of knowledge and

experience related to accelerated learning.

5. This study will not include the implementation of the Administrative Assistant accelerated learning program plan.

Assumptions of Study

1. This study assumes that respondents will answer truthfully and honestly.

2. This study assumes that respondents have a basic level of knowledge regarding accelerated learning strategies.

Definitions of Terms

1. Accelerated learning: Combining adult learning theory and whole brain learning theory in the learning environment to achieve a faster learning rate (Learning, Training, and Performing Glossary, On-line).

2. Accelerated program: An occupation specific program for adults that utilizes advanced learning strategies. Taught by instructors with expertise in accelerated learning techniques (WTCS On-line).

3. Administrative Assistant Program: An associate degree program that prepares individuals in the software/hardware, administrative, and interpersonal skills needed to perform the duties of administrative support personnel. With additional education and/or work experience, there is opportunity for advancement into supervisory or managerial positions (WTCS On-line).

4. Associate degree: A two-year program that combines technical skills (except liberal arts) with general education, such as math, communications, and social sciences. Credits are more readily transferable in this program than in the diploma programs (WTCS On-line).

5. Credit(s): This is a numerical value the State Office assigns a course based on student effort using a clock-hour equivalency standard (WTCS On-line).

6. Instructional design: The philosophy, methodology, and approach used to deliver information. Some courseware aspects include question strategy, level of interaction, reinforcement, and branching complexity (WTCS On-line).

7. Nontraditional Student: Nontraditional students are defined as those adult college students over 25 years of age, who attend college on a part-time basis, or commute to school, or any combination of these characteristics (Allen, 1994).

8. Program: A state-approved group or cluster of courses leading to a technical diploma or associate degree. Programs are defined by a unique title and an approved curriculum (WTCS On-line).

9. Program core courses: Courses specific to a degree program.

10. Traditional Student: Traditional college students are those college students between the ages of 18 and 22 (Whisnant, et al., 1993).

Methodology

A qualitative research study will be conducted. The technique to be used in performing the research is surveying. Email will be used as the survey method and was selected because it provided respondents with adequate time in which to complete the survey and is inexpensive. A total of 36 subjects were identified. Subjects for this study came from two distinct groups. This first group of subjects in this research study were persons currently employed at CVTC who were involved in program development at CVTC. Twenty-two CVTC employees were identified as meeting these criteria. The second group of subjects was selected from the Wisconsin Technical College System. Fourteen additional participants were identified as knowledgeable in accelerated program development.

A review of literature is found in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 contains additional information and detail regarding the methodology used in this study. Results are detailed in Chapter 4. The final chapter, Chapter 5, contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to gather data that would be used in creating

accelerated program development protocols for Chippewa Valley Technical College. This

literature review presents data related to accelerated program development in regard to

program development and design, staffing issues, and student requirements. The main

source of documentation for this section of the study comes from the Wisconsin

Technical College System Program Development Guide (On-line).

Program Development Design

In reviewing program development and design, several categories of information

were identified. Identified categories of information addressed were: justification,

potential programs, marketing, contact hours, curriculum, program supervision and

coordination, and advising and orientation.

Justification. As indicated in the WTCS Course and Program Curriculum

Approval User Guide (On-line), before districts begin development of an accelerated

program, they should demonstrate that there is a need for the accelerated program format.

This need must be documented in advance of program offering.

The justification may consist of advisory committee minutes, surveys of

prospective students or employers, letters from employers showing support for the

program, or letters from prospective students indicating their desire to enroll in the

accelerated format. As indicated by K. Cullen, Deputy Division Administration for

WTCS Program and Economic Development, (personal communication, January 22, 1999) a brief summary of the documented need for the accelerated format must be shared with the appropriate state office consultant assigned to the specific program. Prior to offering accelerated programming in an associate degree program, colleges must also notify the deputy Division Administrator, Division of Program and Economic Development, of their intention (K. Cullen, personal communication, January 22, 1999; WTCS, On-line).

Potential Programs. The accelerated programming model may perform a valuable role in districts' continuing education efforts, but it is not meant to replace traditional associate degree programs. As indicated by the WTCS Board, only associate degree programs are appropriate for accelerated programming (WTCS, On-line). Technical colleges must evaluate specific programs and course content since the WTCS may restrict a technical college's accelerated program application. An accelerated program may also limit the effectiveness of an associate degree program or course. Course titles, numbers, and credit values will be the same for both traditional courses and accelerated courses when competencies are the same (WTCS, On-line). Although accelerated programs may run during the same time frame as the traditional program, accelerated programs require an identity separate from other programs offered in traditional formats. Potential programs should have the support of the whole department team and college administrators (K. Stockwell, personal communication, Fall 2001).

Marketing. Promotional efforts should clearly state the unique features of the accelerated program; and further, promotional efforts should invite prospective students to dialogue with the appropriate district personnel in order that all features of the accelerated program are thoroughly explained and understood (WTCS, On-line).

Contact Hours. As indicated in the WTCS Course and Program Curriculum Approval User Guide (On-line), instructors and students are required to have eight contact hours per credit. Contact hours are not to be reduced without the application of accelerated techniques. Student effort is expected to be a total of 54 hours per credit, whether in class, with a study group, performing individual study, or applying relevant concepts on the job.

Curriculum. Sequential, competency-based curriculum is a requirement of accelerated programming (WTCS, On-line). Competencies in the accelerated courses must meet or exceed equivalent competencies in comparable traditional programs. Individual course construction should build on the material covered in previous courses and relate to the students' prior knowledge and experience. Curriculum should also include advanced adult learning strategies.

Instructional materials such as program outcomes, competencies, performance standards, learning objectives, learning activities, and performance assessment activities should be developed using the Wisconsin Instructional Design System (WIDS) format and must be in place prior to the implementation of an accelerated associate degree program (WTCS, On-line).

Student cohort groups are an integral part of an accelerated program. As indicated in the WTCS Program Development Guide (WTCS, On-line), groups of students must

follow a prescribed curriculum through the entire associate degree program in which the content is at the same rigor as the traditional degree level. Fox Valley Technical College, in Appleton, Wisconsin, has an accelerated Administrative Assistant program that enrolls approximately 15 students per cohort group (K. Stockwell, personal communication, Fall 2001). These students work through the same courses as found in the traditional format except the courses are accelerated and in a set sequence.

Additionally, the use of smaller study/support groups is fundamental to the effectiveness of accelerated programming. Thus, study/support team and group activities should be included in the curricular design of an accelerated program (Walsh, 2001; WTCS, On-line). This can be accomplished through required regular out-of-class meetings of the study/support groups and an increase in the number and variety of academic activities outside of class. The use of small study/support teams and out-of-class small group activities assures that students meet the requirement of 54 hours of student effort for each associate degree credit.

Program Supervision and Coordination. Accelerated programming is recognized as requiring a specialized curriculum design that requires ongoing supervision (Walsh, 2001; WTCS, On-line). Special faculty and institutional preparation is also required for effective implementation of the accelerated instructional methodology. As indicated in the WTCS Program Planning and Development guide, measuring and assessing quality of learning in accelerated programming must be implemented. Measures employed shall be appropriate to the unique accelerated methodology. An evaluation of the program, in consultation with a program consultant, should take place after the after the first students graduate from the program.

In addition, coordination of operations, educational resources, instructional technology, and additional support service departments within the educational institution are also essential to the success of this nontraditional programming (K. Stockwell, personal communications, Fall 2001; WTCS, On-line). Coordinating operations involves the coordination of resources that are essential in the development, implementation, and management of a degree program. Departments that should be involved during all phases of programming include: program department; instructional design, curriculum, and assessment specialists; administration; general education; staff development; admissions; registrations; counseling; financial aide; records; marketing; student services; and facilities management.

Orientation and Advisement. A plan for student orientation and advising that is unique to the accelerated program must be in place. Student orientation and advising are of critical importance to students due to the many significant differences between the accelerated format and the traditional format. Regular discussion points with program or district counselors and advisors will help to eliminate problems later. A lead instructor and/or other competent advisor must be assigned to mentor each section of accelerated programming students. Kathy Stockwell (personal communications, Fall 2001) has developed a specific advisement program that includes a pre-acceptance interview and portfolio program. She states that the purpose of the pre-acceptance interview is to:

- give a prospective student detailed information regarding the accelerated program
- determine the level of student interest and commitment
- discuss admission and registration requirements

- answer any additional questions that a prospective student may have

- complete the Permit to Register form that indicates permission to enroll in program if a prospective student decides to enroll in the program

The WTCS Course and Program Curriculum Approval User Guide (On-line) and Ms. Stockwell (personal communications, Fall 2001) indicate the importance of an orientation meeting prior to program start. This orientation meeting should include:

- a college welcome and general information

- a discussion of attendance and grading policies

- a statement of commitment to the entire program and the benefits from a commitment to the degree program

- a discussion of the role of peer learning groups and study/support teams

- an advance standing policy

- expectations for outside reading and other activities

- a discussion of potential pressure on family, work, friends

- standards for written reports/assignments and oral presentations

- payment options

- a discussion of study strategies for accelerated course work

Staffing

Training. Faculty development and commitment to the concept of accelerated programming are vital to the program's success. Instructional staff must have acquired a minimum competence level in accelerated programming techniques and have further demonstrated their ability to successfully teach in an accelerated format. The WTCS Course and Program Curriculum Approval User Guide (On-line) indicates that successful

participation in a college-based, accelerated training program or at a recognized and approved training facility will be accepted as proof of instructor competence along with standard WTCS instructor certification. All instructional staff associated with the program should also be thoroughly trained in the WIDS system.

Time Allocation. Instructors must have time allocated for management facilitation duties. Management facilitation duties include time in which instructors will be available for contact with students for one-on-one discussions, email discussions, phone calls, and communicating via fax machine (WTCS, On-line). These additional hours will provide support for students in light of fewer class hours.

Determining Teacher Load. The application of alternative nontraditional models for staff compensation may represent a departure from past practice. Whether a class is taught in a traditional format or in an accelerated format, the basic job of the teacher remains the same. The same competencies need to be taught, but the method of teaching varies. The primary change that is visible to everyone in moving from traditional classroom teaching to teaching in an accelerated mode is the reduction of in-class time (Meier, 2000). To the uninformed observer, the immediate reaction to accelerated learning is that it only takes the instructor half the time; therefore, it's only half the work. In reality, additional time is required in the preparation of orientation, precourse materials, classroom materials and activities, and outside-of-class work (Walsh, 2001).

The following Wisconsin Technical Colleges have accelerated programs in which load is paid the same way regardless of format: Madison Area Technical College, Milwaukee Technical College, Lakeshore Technical College, Western Wisconsin Technical College, Indianhead Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College, Fox

Valley Technical College, and NorthEast Technical College. Waukesha County

Technical College pays their normal rate per hour for student/class contact which is about

½ of the current CVTC rate (Teachers Union, n.d.).

An accelerated course does not reduce the total amount of time an instructor

spends on the course, although it does shift where the time is spent (CVTC Teachers'

Union WEAC, NEA, n.d.; Meier, 2000). The WTCS Course and Program Curriculum

Approval User Guide (On-line) indicates that issues of staff compensation, scheduling,

and other items relating to accelerated programming may best be decided through

collective bargaining.

Students

Accelerated Program Requirements. Working adults are the primary target market

of an accelerated delivery format. Students must have a relevant work experience base

that is sufficient to enhance understanding of program content. Opportunities for practical

applications of the course content in a job setting are a significant part of the expectations

for each student; therefore, students enrolled in the accelerated program must be

employed and able to apply the course material to on-the-job situations (WTCS, On-line).

Fox Valley Technical College requires three years of office experience for students

entering their accelerated Administrative Assistant program (K. Stockwell, personal

communications, Fall 2001).

Accelerated programming can offer substantial advantages to the students, but it

also demands much of the students. Students are required to commit to the entire

associate degree program before beginning classes in the program (K. Stockwell,

personal communications, Fall 2001; WTCS, On-line). These advantages and demands

should be clearly explained to students and other interested parties in an interview/orientation session(s) to be held before students formally commit to the program. (K. Stockwell, personal communications, Fall 2001; WTCS, On-line). These factors justify the requirement of pre-acceptance interviews and the importance of careful student selection.

CVTC General Admission Requirements. CVTC Administrative Assistant program application for admission requirements (CVTC, On-line) are:

1. Submission of a completed Application for Admission form.

2. Payment of a $30 processing fee.

3. High school diploma/HSED or GED.

4. Completion of the Asset or Compass test *or* ACT with a composite score $\geq$ 18 *or* SAT $\geq$ to 400 *or* an Associate or Bachelor's Degree.

Summary

In reviewing the literature, it is evident that significant advance planning and preparation is required when developing accelerated courses and programs. Issues related to program development and design, staffing, and student requirements must be considered and adapted to individual educational institutions and programs. Program development and design includes factors such as justification for an accelerated program, potential accelerated programs, marketing, contact hours, curriculum, program supervision and coordination, and advisement and orientation. Staffing of accelerated programs is concerned with training, time allocation, and teacher load.

Finally, student requirements for admission related to accelerated programs and general college admission requirements must be considered. This review of current

WTCS literature provided general program development information but no specific depth or detail. Therefore, it is necessary to obtain additional information about the development of successful accelerated associated degree programs.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study is a qualitative study to gather data that would be used to create

accelerated program development protocols at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

These protocols will be used by the Business Technology Department to develop an

accelerated Administrative Assistant associate degree program. The methods and

procedures used in this study are explained in this chapter under the headings of

(1) survey development (2) survey design, (3) pilot study, (4) sample selection,

(5) procedures followed, (6) data analysis procedures, and (7) limitations.

<u>Survey Development</u>

A review of current WTCS literature as detailed in Chapter 2 provided general

program development information with no specific depth or detail. Based on these facts,

the small number of survey subjects identified, and the research objectives listed in

Chapter 1, a qualitative survey method was selected. One of the benefits of a qualitative

study is that it will allow for information not anticipated by the researcher. Questions

were written by the researcher based on data the researcher wished to gather. Distribution

of the survey will be accomplished through the use of email because one major advantage

of email surveys is increased speed of return/response (Dillman, 2000).

Information and instrumentation of similar studies at CVTC does not exist;

therefore, reliability based on past surveys could not be assessed. Additional studies at a

later date may produce different participant responses based on acquisition of knowledge

or location of participants such as participants from educational institutions other than WTCS institutions.

It is assumed by the researcher that due to participant selection criteria and the number of participants, the reliability of this study will be moderate to high when applied specifically to accelerated learning. The validity of the study is moderate to high based on the relationship of study objectives to the survey questions, documentation presented in Chapter 2, and the use of pilot testing. A pilot study that emulates the proposed procedures is necessary to validate the survey (Dillman, 2000).

Survey Design

The survey instrument was created in September 2002 following published guidelines (Emory, 1991). The survey method chosen was an email survey that contained qualitative questions. Email surveys are most beneficial when conducting a short survey with small populations already stored in a computer and the researcher is seeking a turnaround time of a few days (Dillman, 2000).

The survey instrument created by the researcher was a questionnaire that contained open-ended questions and one that was designed to solicit the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of the participants based on their knowledge and experience. Using this unstructured format allows the participant complete freedom of response. This permits greater depth of response and may permit insight into the reasons for the response (Gay, 1987). The questionnaire was limited to eight questions in order to elicit a more in-depth response to each question and encourage subject participation. Survey questions one through three requested demographic information associated with the survey participant's job title, experience with accelerated learning, and responsibilities related to

program development. Question 4 seeks to identify department and/or staff that should be involved in the development of accelerated degree programs. Respondents were asked to share their concerns and issues related to accelerated programs in Questions 5 and 6. Question 7 requested specific steps that should be completed in accelerated program development. The last survey question asked for information related to assessments that should be used in determining the success of accelerated programs. The final survey instrument can be viewed in Appendix A. Table 1 illustrates how the specific research objectives were addressed in the survey instrument.

Table 1

Research Objectives Addressed in the Survey

Research Objective	Survey Item
1. Identify staff that should be involved in the development of accelerated programs.	4
2. Identify accelerated format program criteria.	5 and 6
3. Identify steps required in the development of an accelerated Administrative Assistant program.	7
4. Identify how to measure the success of an accelerated program.	8

Pilot Test

A pilot test of the survey instrument was conducted using two current CTVC employees; Grace Rich, Business Technology Department Chair; and Claudeen Oebser, Curriculum Development Specialist. Based on this feedback, the survey instrument was updated and was completed in October 2002.

The purpose of the pilot test was to determine if questions were clear and concise. Pilot testing provides an opportunity to determine whether questions elicit intended response and to identify questions that are not easily understood (Dillman, 2000). The instrument was emailed to these individuals on October 10, 2002. Pilot test feedback was incorporated into the final survey instrument.

Sample Selection

The researcher identified the population for this study as currently employed CVTC and WTCS employees. Survey participants were identified throughout September 2002 during discussions with Grace Rich, Claudeen Oebser, and Deb Walsh, Supervisory Management Accelerated Program Instructor and Program Coordinator at Western Wisconsin Technical College. To assist in selection of appropriate survey participants, the scope and purpose of this study was described.

CVTC employees were administrative staff members and general education and business education instructors who were actively involved in program development at CVTC. These specific individuals were identified with the assistance of two current CTVC employees: Grace Rich, Business Technology Department Chair; and Claudeen Oebser, Curriculum Development Specialist. Twenty-two CVTC individuals were identified as meeting the required population criteria. An additional 14 employees from

the other WTCS colleges who were actively involved in accelerated programs were identified by Deb Walsh, Supervisory Management Accelerated Program Instructor and Program Coordinator at Western Wisconsin Technical College. Due to the small population size of 36, no sampling was necessary as all subjects were asked to participate in the survey.

Procedures Followed

Using Dillman's (2000) guidelines, a cover letter was developed. The first paragraph provided a brief introduction and requested the respondent's help. The second paragraph described how survey participants were selected and outlined the specific purposes of the survey. The usefulness of the survey was described in the third paragraph. The fourth paragraph explained the voluntary nature of the survey and issues of confidentiality. Contact information was provided in the fifth paragraph. The final paragraph demonstrated appreciation for respondent's participation and indicated that survey results would be shared with those respondents that wished to receive a copy of the survey results. A copy of the survey cover letter is available in Appendix B.

The cover letter and attached survey instrument were emailed to the identified population on October 28, 2002. No email messages were returned with the message "undeliverable." Surveys were sent from the researcher's work computer which requires a user ID and password for log in. No one other than the researcher has access to this computer and login information.

Participants were asked in the cover letter to complete and return the attached survey within seven days. As a reminder, a follow up email letter (see Appendix C) and attached survey was sent to the entire population on November 2, 2002. The intended

message was to thank those individuals who had already returned their surveys and to request that those who had not returned their questionnaires do so promptly. Once again, participants were asked to help and thanked in advance for their participation. This was done to amplify the value of each subject's participation to the success of the study (Dillman, 2000).

Surveys were returned to the researcher through email and CVTC interoffice mail. Eighteen of 20 respondents returned the survey as an email attachment. One of these 18 respondents included their survey responses in the body of an email message instead of attaching the results as a separate document. To ensure confidentiality, these surveys were printed from a secure computer at the researcher's work place after work hours. Access to the computer to where the surveys were received is limited to the researcher through a user ID and password which is required during computer log in.

Two of the 20 respondents returned the survey through CVTC interoffice mail. These two surveys were returned separately, placed in a required CVTC interoffice mail envelope, contained no identifying information, and were delivered to the researcher's locked mailbox. Access to mailbox is limited to the researcher and CVTC mailroom staff.

Data Analysis Procedures

Good judgment and care is required during interpretation of qualitative survey data (Emory and Cooper, 1991); therefore, returned surveys were printed and also saved as individual documents in an electronic format. Those respondents requesting survey results where recorded so that survey results could be sent upon completion of the study. Responses where then compiled by survey question and once again stored electronically as a Word document. Next, the responses for each survey question were read. In the

analysis of qualitative data, it is imperative that each individual response be examined (Emory and Cooper, 1991). The content of each response was evaluated for meaning and its particular implications for the research questions at hand discovered. Responses were analyzed and organized using the following steps:

1. Categories or themes in response to each research question were identified.

2. Based on category/theme identification, major topics and issues were developed and identified.

3. Responses were sorted and assembled into groups based on identified categories/themes.

4. Frequency of responses related to a certain categories was tabulated.

Limitations

1. Additional subjects that should have been included in the survey may have been inadvertently omitted.

2. The open-nature of questions may have reduced a subject's motivation to communicate a complete response.

3. A respondent's lack of skill in working with email technology such as attachments may limit their ability to open, complete, and return the survey.

Chapter 4

Results

In order to create protocol that would be used in the development of accelerated programs, a population of staff involved in program development and knowledgeable in accelerated learning techniques was surveyed. As indicated in Chapter 3, a population 36 subjects was identified. Of this population, 22 subjects were CVTC individuals and 14 subjects were from the other WTCS colleges. The survey was sent to participants through the use of email.

Of the 36 surveys sent, a total of 20 surveys were returned for a response rate of 55.6 percent. The purpose of this chapter is to present participant survey responses. Information regarding job title, accelerated learning knowledge and experience, and program development responsibilities was gathered for demographics purposes. The remaining information presented in this chapter details participant responses to survey questions directly related to the purpose of this study.

Job Titles

The first survey question inquired about the job title of respondents. After an analysis of responses, job titles were grouped into the following three categories: administrative and leadership, administrative/instructor, and instructor. The administrative and leadership category included the job titles: Vice President of Education, Campus Administrator, Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Curriculum Specialist, Dean of Technology & Development, Staff Development Team Leader, and

Admissions/Financial Aid Manager. The second position category,

administrative/instructor included those respondents that indicated they have a

department chair or team leader title in addition to the title of instructor. The final

category, instructor, includes those respondents that indicated a title of instructor only.

Table 2, shown below, is a summary of respondents' job title based on job title category.

Table 2

Job Titles

Position Category/Theme	Number	Percent
Administrative and leadership	8	40
Administrative/instructor	7	35
Instructor	5	25
Total	20	100

Accelerated Learning Experience

The second survey question asked participants for information regarding their

experience related to accelerated learning. An analysis of responses indicated the

following categories or themes:

- little-to-no experience with accelerated learning

- use accelerated techniques in non-accelerated courses

- teach accelerated classes

- participated in accelerated training

- teach other teachers accelerated techniques

- supervise instructors that teach accelerated courses

- development of an accelerated program

Responses varied greatly from no experience to development of accelerated programs. Two responses or 10 percent indicated little-to-no experience within the job title category of administration and leadership. Two respondents or 10 percent indicated that they have not taught an accelerated course but are using accelerated and brain-based techniques when teaching their traditional courses. Although 55 percent or 11 respondents indicated they teach accelerated courses, the amount of time spent teaching accelerated courses varied from two to twelve years.

Ten of twenty or 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they had participated in some type of training activity. These activities included in-service sessions; graduate-level courses in brain-based and accelerated learning; and training programs facilitated by Howard Gardner, David Meier, or Paul Scheele, experts in brain-based and accelerated learning. Teach other teachers accelerated techniques was the response of five respondents or 25 percent. Four respondents indicated that they supervise instructors that teach accelerated courses. Two respondents indicated in-depth experience in the development of accelerated programs. Both of these respondents' job titles were in the administrative/instructor category.

Table 3, shown on the next page, summarizes respondent's accelerated learning experience. Some respondents indicated more than one answer alternative for this question; therefore total percent of responses exceeds 100 percent.

Table 3

Accelerated Learning Experience

Accelerated Learning Experience Category/Theme	Number	Percent
Teach accelerated classes	11	55
Participated in some type of accelerated training	10	50
Teach other teachers accelerated techniques	5	25
Supervise instructors that teach accelerated courses	4	20
Little-to-no experience with accelerated learning	2	10
Use accelerated techniques in non-accelerated courses	2	10
Development of an accelerated program	2	10

Program Development Responsibilities

Participants were asked to specify their responsibilities related to program development in the third survey question. An analysis of the data revealed development connected to the categories of program/curriculum, marketing/retention, and admission/financial aid. Fourteen of the twenty respondents or 70 percent indicated they had responsibilities related to program/curriculum development. These responsibilities included:

- "development of new programs and curriculum including DACUMs, PBI training, local and state approval for new programs, and articulation with colleges and universities"

- "scheduling of program courses"

- "review, evaluation, and modification of existing programs and curriculum"

- "supervision, compliance, and quality assessment of programs"

- ▪ "researching trends in a specific program area and the dissemination of that information to other members of the program department, administrative, and leadership staff"

- ▪ "development and ongoing communication with advisory committees"

Four respondents or 20 percent indicated "marketing of programs" and "student recruitment" along with ongoing retention strategies as program development responsibilities. Three responded (15 percent) they were responsible for representing the program within the college or the state level through committee and cabinet level participation or as a liaison. These responsibilities where done in an effort to coordinate communication between a program department and the College. One respondent or 5 percent listed "the development, evaluation, and modification of admission and financial aid processes and requirements".

Table 4, as shown below, indicates program development responsibilities of respondents grouped by category. More than one response by a single participant is the reason that the percents do not equal 100 percent.

Table 4

Program Development Responsibilities

Category/Theme of Program Development Responsibilities	Number	Percent
Program/curriculum development	14	70
Marketing/recruitment/retention	4	20
Program representation/liaison	3	15
Admission/financial aid procedures	1	5

Departments and/or Staff Involved in the Development of Accelerated Programs

The fourth survey question asked participants what departments and/or staff should be involved in the development of accelerated degree programs. An analysis of responses indicated six categories or themes of department or staff that should be involved in program development. These categories or themes include: program department; instructional design, curriculum, and assessment specialists; administration; general education department; support services; and the advisory committee along with employers and business/industrial content experts.

A total of 18 of 20 respondents or 90 percent indicated the specific program staff or departments that should be involved in the development of accelerated programs. Program department staff included program director/dean, program chair/team leader, and program faculty. One respondent wrote, "Any department with a course in the program should be involved as you need to make sure all courses can be taught in this format. All staff in the department in which the program is housed should have input." Another respondent wrote, "Primarily the faculty in the department with assistance or review by curriculum development specialists if they are familiar with accelerated learning."

Ten responded (50 percent) that specialists in instructional design, curriculum, and assessment should be involved. "All curriculum folks should be involved in the process of developing accelerated programs so that they know and understand the goals, objectives, outcomes and methods of instruction needed to assure that the accelerated processes meet the expectations of our students," wrote a respondent.

A total of nine respondents or 45 percent stated that Administration should be included, specifically executive cabinet and campus deans. Seven respondents or 35 percent indicated that the general education department should be included. One respondent wrote, "General education and occupational support courses need to be part of the total package for the accelerated associate degree if you want to have a true accelerated program with less seat time." Additionally, another respondent wrote,

> When we first started the process, there was very little to no interest in other departments (especially general education). So we accelerated what we could control and evolved our certificates to cover those classes. As the years have gone by, there has developed more interest, so there is movement (although slowly) in getting other classes (especially general education) accelerated. It would be great in the future if all impacted departments would be able to work together.

Support services were identified by six respondents or 30 percent as needed in the development process. Specific support services indicated were: admissions, counseling, financial aide, registration, records, marketing, student services, staff development, scheduling, cashier's office, bookstore, and the cafeteria. One respondent wrote, "I believe some of these areas, like the bookstore, cashier's office, and cafeteria, need to be included in the later stages of development as a communication tool to make the actual implementation of the program a success. These areas may not need to be included during the earlier stages of development." Two respondents or 10 percent indicated a need to include in the development process an advisory committee along with employers and business/industrial content experts.

A summary of departments/staff that should be included in the development

process is given in Table 5 as shown below. The percents do not equal 100 percent

because participants offered multiple responses.

Table 5

Departments and/or Staff Involved in the Development of Accelerated Programs

Department or Staff by Category/Theme	Number	Percent
Program Department	18	90
Instructional Design, Curriculum and Assessment Specialists	10	50
Administration	9	45
General Education Department	7	35
Support Services	6	30
Advisory committee along with employers and business/industrial content experts	2	10

Concerns or Issues

Participants were asked in survey questions five and six to specify their concerns

or issues regarding accelerated associate degree programs. An analysis of the data

revealed concerns and issues related to program structure and content, infrastructure

support, teacher training, quality of instruction and consistency of staff, program

admission requirements and student responsibilities, and teacher time.

Program Structure and Content. Eighteen respondents of the twenty respondents

or 90 percent indicated some type of concern or issue related to accelerated program

content and structure. Of the eighteen respondents, four stated that some programs are

better suited for an accelerated format than others and that there is a need to ensure that

the structure of the program and courses are truly accelerated. One respondent expressed

the need for distinction between an accelerated program and an accelerated course. The respondent wrote,

> First, we should draw a distinction between accelerated programs and accelerated courses. Accelerated courses provide flexibility for students and allow for planned learning outside of the traditional classroom. Student management of time becomes more critical and faculty creative becomes a challenge. Accelerating a program becomes a bigger challenge. By definition this could mean an associate degree in less than two years, or it could mean an associate degree program made up of accelerated courses. I would avoid the former and promote the latter.

Three additional responses were made regarding the tailoring of credits/requirements to the needs of a unique audience and the ease of migrating accelerated students into processes such as registration and advisement.

Of these eighteen responses, six specifically expressed concerns related to program and course competencies. Several questions raised were:

- "Are the competencies and outcome consistent with traditional programs?"
- "Does an accelerated program maintain the integrity of the traditional course and program outcomes?"
- "How should competencies and outcomes be completed and assessed?"

Two responses, also written in question form, raised concerns connected to student assessment.

- "What should student assessment in relation to performance standards, learning objectives and performance tasks look like?"

- ▪ "What method of assessment is most accurate, specifically the role of testing vs. demonstration type assessments; extent of teamwork expected (every session? Every class? Periodically through program?))."

A concern that general education courses need to be part of the total package for the accelerated associate degree were expressed by two of these eighteen respondents.

Two respondents indicated a concern regarding the structure of the program in relation to a cohort group sequence or an at-will sequence. One respondent wrote, "In applying accelerated learning within an associate degree program, one of the first issues is whether it will be a cohort based system or will students sign up for individual classes at will. This then leads to the issue of the sequence in which courses are taken - is it important or not?"

Infrastructure Support. Analysis of responses identified a category/theme of concern related to infrastructure support. Seventeen of the twenty respondents or 85 percent indicated a concern or issue related to this theme. Fifteen of these seventeen respondents expressed the need for active and participative administrative support. This support would include, but not be limited to, dollars for instruction; program coordination; and ongoing program development; supplies and dedicated classrooms; and continuous training. One respondent wrote, "The design and delivery of accelerated learning requires a supporting infrastructure that spans the entire organization."

Four of these seventeen respondents commented that there needs to be a willingness to move past traditional barriers and institutional constraints. A supportive and active marketing effort that will get the information to the right audience, generating interest in the program, was noted by three of the fifteen respondents. Two responses

indicated that program staff support of the accelerated version of the program is crucial, even from those program staff members who won't be teaching accelerated courses. One respondent expressed the following issue, "One of the biggest concerns is staff buy-in. You need to make sure all program staff support the accelerated version of the program, even those who won't be teaching in it." Another respondent wrote, "Is your student count increased by the addition of the accelerated degree program, or are you only transferring students over from one delivery mode to the next? If you're just transferring students over, then why go through the time and expense."

Finally, one respondent indicated the need for support services to have a thorough understanding of the accelerated program in an effort to provide quality service to students within an accelerated program.

Teacher Training. Sixteen of the twenty respondents or 80 percent expressed concern regarding teacher training. One respondent wrote, "Training and development of faculty – how will continuous faculty development be supported?" The following remark of this respondent summarizes the comments of many.

Instructors must be trained in accelerated teaching and learning techniques. Many who do not understand accelerated teaching think it is just compressed learning. They try to cram a traditional learning model of instruction into an accelerated format. The students suffer, especially those who have never been learning in an accelerated environment.

Finally, respondents also expressed the need for continuous faculty development and that only trained instructors are allowed to teach accelerated courses.

Quality of Instruction and Consistency of Staff. Analysis of responses identified a third category of concern related to the quality of instruction and consistency of the teaching staff. Ten of the twenty respondents or 50 percent indicated a concern or issue in this category. Five of these ten respondents commented on the quality of instruction. Concerns expressed related to quality of instruction included:

- "ensuring accelerated does not mean just reducing contact time to speed up the educational process"

- "maintaining quality instruction in the use of accelerated methods"

- "using only trained and committed instructors"

- "maintaining instructor and student standards to ensure that accelerated does not become less quality, but means actually what it is – better learning"

The remaining five respondents in this category expressed concern related to the consistency of staff that teaches accelerated courses. One respondent wrote, "In an accelerated program, it is critical that all teachers who teach a course, agree to use the set curriculum and follow rules of accelerated program." Another respondent commented, "Instructors need to commit to using all of the accelerated learning elements and not just pick and chose what they want." This respondent wrote, "My larger concern is that some instructors will reduce the amount of home-play required so that they do not have to read and react to it." And finally a respondent wrote, "How will it be ensured that accelerated methods are being implemented vs. just a reduction in contact time?"

Program Admission and Student Responsibilities. Eight of the twenty respondents or 40 percent indicated some type of concern or issue related to program admission and student responsibilities. Three of these eight respondents indicated concerns and issues

regarding program admission requirements, specifically the need to admit students that met a standard and/or maturity level. One respondent wrote,

> We need to maintain standards of students to ensure that accelerated does not become less quality, but means actually what it is – better learning. This is directly related to the characteristics and capabilities of the students. Should an admission requirement be in place that requires that students have a required amount of full-time work experience in the field in which they want to study?

Another respondent commented, "If a program traditionally attracts very young (inexperienced in content) students, I believe the elements of accelerated learning are very beneficial, but the compressed time is a less suitable format for their learning."

An additional issue expressed by one respondent related to program admission procedures and the ease of migrating accelerated students into and through traditional registration and advisement processes.

Four of these eight respondents expressed concerns related to the importance of communicating the responsibilities of students in accelerated programs. These respondents indicated that this communication must spell out student responsibilities before a commitment to the program has been made and classes begin and that students must have an understanding of accelerated learning. One respondent noted the issue of communicating the amount of out-of-class work that is required of an accelerated program. This respondent wrote,

> The other impact is that because of the condensed time period in which the class is offered, at least in our area, there is a larger amount of home-play

material that needs to be read and reacted to. I believe the home-play is critical to make sure that the students are ready for the class and are doing the out-of-class opportunities. In total I don't think the work is tremendously more than what I would require over a 16 week class – but when it is condensed to 6 or 8 weeks, it certainly seems like a lot of work.

Teacher Time. Teacher time was the fourth issue or concern expressed by five of the twenty respondents or 25 percent. All five responses raised the concern of teacher time and the issue of load. A respondent wrote, "One of the challenges that I see is that accelerated learning causes more work for the instructors. It takes a lot more time to prepare for the classes." This sentiment was similarly expressed by this respondent, "Instructors need coordination time to set up an accelerated program. To maintain the standards of such a program is an ongoing process." Another commented, "Structuring the pay basis to accommodate the different kind of workload involved and creating an accelerated program is a concern."

A summary of respondent concerns is illustrated in Table 6 as shown on the next page. Again, more than one response by a single participant is the reason that the percents do not equal 100 percent.

Table 6

<u>Concerns</u>

Category/Theme of Concern	Number	Percent
Program structure and content	18	90
Infrastructure Support	17	85
Teacher training	16	80
Quality of instruction and consistency of staff	10	50
Program admission and student responsibilities	8	40
Teacher time	5	25

<u>Accelerated Program Development Criteria</u>

The sixth question asked participants to list criteria that should be present when developing an accelerated program. Data was analyzed and responses were placed in one of the following categories or themes: program structure and content, infrastructure support, teacher training, quality of instruction and consistency of staff, program admission requirements and student responsibilities, and teacher time.

<u>Program Structure and Content</u>. Specific criteria related to program structure and content included:

- "Documentation of program need and a listing of accelerated program benefits including, but not limited to, a sufficient employer and student market."

- "Demonstration that accelerated delivery is a good method of delivery for specific program."

- "Identification of audience/cohort group and number of students per group."

- "Established courses in place before program start and a sequenced course cycle which includes length (in weeks) of each course."

- "The use of WIDS to define program and course competencies as well as learning activities."

- "Demonstration of consistent program outcomes, course outcomes, integrated core abilities, learning objectives, and competency assessments."

- "Demonstration that programs outcomes, competencies, performance standards, learning objectives, and performance tasks that comply with professional external standards and DACUM defined requirements."

- "Commitment to business/industrial collaboration."

- "The use of competency-based assessment."

- "Limited objective testing that will not exceed a total of 2 hours of class time, may be part of homework assignments (open-book), and represents a small part of grading system."

- "Test grades do not exceed 30 percent of total course assessment."

- "Establishment of curriculum guidelines and standards that need to be followed by instructors with corresponding evaluation tools or controls in place that monitor those standards are being followed."

- "Continuous and consistent monitoring of program and course to ensure standards, employer satisfaction, and students goals are met."

- "Evaluation measures allow a comparison of accelerated delivery with other modes of delivery for the same program."

Infrastructure Support. Criteria related to infrastructure support are as follows:

- "Establishment of a dedicated classroom for accelerated delivery that has been designed with accelerated needs in mind."

- "Demonstrated support from department faculty, support services staff, and administration including Dean and VIP of Instruction."

- "Development of recruitment and marketing materials for the program with the support and assistance of marketing department."

- "Demonstration that accelerated program will not negatively affect a current traditional program format."

- "Establishment of a communication system that promotes acceptance of program and to ensure that areas are on the same page."

- "Program budget provides adequate line items for start-up and ongoing accelerated program needs."

- "Upfront commitment from administration/management to have 1/3 to ½ of an individual instructor's ongoing load dedicated to the coordination and management of the accelerated program."

Teacher Training. Specific criteria related to teacher time included:

- "Mandated initial and ongoing training in principles of accelerated training for all developers and instructors involved in accelerated programs and courses. The focus of training should be on curriculum development including such items as active learning techniques, teamwork, and assessment issues."

- "Require interested staff to demonstrate that they have already enhanced a regular classroom with accelerated methods before teaching accelerated courses."

- "Require first time instructors to observe a class taught by an instructor who is a veteran in accelerated principles and techniques."

Quality of instruction and Consistency of Staff. Specific criteria related to the quality of instruction and consistency of staff included:

- "Hire only instructors who really want to teach in this format."

- "Agreement of all teachers to use set accelerated curriculum for each course."

- "Demonstration of commitment from faculty that will be teaching accelerated courses."

- "Commitment of the instructors involved to do the work required."

Program Admission and Student Responsibilities. Specific criteria related to program admission and student responsibilities included:

- "Identification of admission requirement related to adults with experience or no experience such as a minimum full time work experience requirement of 2 years for admission - verified by letter from employer(s)."

- "Mandatory attendance at an information/interview session (to help decide if they want to apply) as part of admission process. Purpose of session is to provide information regarding program so that student can make an informed decision regarding enrollment in program."

- "Mandatory attendance at an orientation session two weeks before first class starts."

- "Students provided with instruction in accelerated learning."

- A minimum attendance requirement for each course. One respondent wrote, 'We use criteria that states that a student can miss no more than 4 hours of total class time per 24 hour course total.'

- "All students must obtain syllabus and books and complete homework prior to first night of each class."

- "Establishment of a process to communicate with the students in the accelerated program."

- "Written standards that student needs to follow with corresponding evaluation tools or controls set up to monitor that standards are being followed."

Teacher Time. Specific criteria related to teacher time included:

- "Documentation of instructor involvement with students and additional prep needed for accelerated classes to justify load assigned."

- "College approved financial plan that builds in load time for work requirements of accelerated courses such as contact time; out-of-class time; and release time for curriculum refinement, continuing education, and communication/meetings with other accelerated teachers."

Steps in Program Development

Question seven asked participants to list specific steps that should be completed when developing an accelerated associate program. An analysis of responses indicated the following program development stages: pre-program, development, implementation, and evaluation. Respondent steps where analyzed, sorted, and compiled accordingly.

Pre-program.

1. "Research and visit similar existing programs in other part of the state or country. Visit colleges who are successfully delivering accelerated programs and those that have experience difficulties. Seek out not only those best practices of experienced organizations, but fixes-that-failed stories and other

pitfall-avoiding information. There's a lot of junk out there claiming to be accelerated learning…"

2. "Conduct a frank culture diagnosis of the institution and its customers. The purpose of this is to determine if they are ready for accelerated learning. It may be beneficial to consider the use of cross-functional focus groups to explore both the up and down sides of accelerated learning (its requirements and anticipated results)."

3. "Conduct a program needs assessment to provide data that identifies population to be served and supports for the need of an accelerated program delivery and identifies the benefits of such a program. This can be accomplished by surveying employers to document support for degree in program area and potential learners to document interest in degree in program area. An additional outcome of this survey would be to ensure that everyone involved knows why a course or program should be accelerated. The needs assessment should provide evidence that an accelerated format would be better for the students or employers, if it isn't we should rethink why we would be doing it." The needs assessment survey also gathers data to demonstrate that accelerated delivery is a good method of delivery for specific program.

4. "Identify population to be served and number of participants of cohort group."

5. "Write a brief proposal that includes program outcomes and a tentative timeline. Allow sufficient lead time in developing programs to iron out the details."

6. Develop a tentative budget. "Tentative budget must provide adequate line items for start-up and ongoing accelerated program needs." Items to consider include staffing needs, supplies, equipment, and facilities.

7. Mandate that all developers and instructors interested in accelerated programs and courses complete initial training in principles of accelerated training. Focus of training should be on curriculum development including such items as active learning techniques, teamwork, and assessment issues.

8. "Hire only instructors who want to teach in this format."

9. Obtain department faculty support. "Faculty support would most likely involve keeping the traditional program and run it along side of the accelerated program for those faculty and students who are not comfortable with accelerated learning. Also demonstration that accelerated program will not negatively affect a current traditional program format. The general education and support courses must be accelerated also, which means you need a multi discipline buy-in."

10. Obtain support from support services staff.

11. Obtain administrative support and commitment. This support is not limited to but should include:

   ▪ budget approval.

   ▪ development release time

   ▪ an "upfront commitment to have 1/3 to ½ of an individual instructor's ongoing load dedicated to the coordination and management of the accelerated program"

- ▪ "built-in load time for work requirements of accelerated courses such as contact time, out-of-class time, release time for curriculum refinement, continuing education, and communication/meetings with other accelerated teachers"

12. Obtain state approval.

Development.

1. "Complete a program DACUM if none currently exists or is outdated. This will ensure that external standards are identified, and program outcomes and indirect performance indicators are defined and established."

2. Develop program and course competencies and outcomes with integrated core abilities. "Use a DACUM or focus group process to identify and validate program outcomes and related competencies to be taught." One respondent indicated that outcomes and competencies should be organized into units of instruction/courses. Use WIDS during this portion of the development process to assist in the development of curriculum but to also comply with professional external standards and DACUM defined requirements.

3. Develop learning objectives, learning activities, and teaching strategies that support program and course competencies. These must be developed using accelerated techniques and principles. Once again, use WIDS during this portion of the development process to assist in the consistency of curriculum development but to also comply with professional external standards and DACUM defined requirements. "During this portion of development we must ensure that we incorporate objectives, activities and teaching strategies that

meet the needs of multiple intelligences and not just the visual and mathematical learners. It is also important to incorporate business/industrial collaboration during this stage of the development process."

4. "Develop assessments that truly assess program and course competencies of the program. Assessment tasks must comply with professional external standards and DACUM defined requirements. Design assessment techniques that are competency-based assessment. Alternative assessment options available should also be available. Limiting objective testing to not exceed a total of two hours of class time, consider objective testing as part of homework assignments (open-book), and ensure that objective testing represents a small part of grading system. Test grades should not exceed 30 percent of total course assessment."

5. Pilot program. "The program could be piloted with a few specific courses designed in accelerated format."

6. Develop a course sequence. "This course sequence should include length (in weeks) of each course and a scheduled class time that would meet needs of the students. Determine courses to be offered to review and critique for possible duplication of competencies."

7. Develop developer/instructor guidelines and standards and create evaluation tools or controls to monitor that guidelines and standards are being followed. Guidelines might include items such as:

   ▪ "Hiring only instructors that have been trained in accelerated learning techniques and principles."

- "Hiring instructors that have already enhanced a regular classroom setting with accelerated methods."

- "Requiring first time instructors to observe a class taught by an instructor who is a veteran in accelerated principles and techniques."

- "Obtaining agreement of teachers to use set accelerated curriculum for each course and to do the work required of accelerated program/course."

- "Requiring that all developers and instructors involved in accelerated programs and courses complete ongoing training in principles of accelerated training."

8. Identify specific facility, equipment, and supply needs. "This should include a classroom dedicated to and designed for the accelerated program."

9. Establish a communication system that continues to encourage the acceptance and promotion of program along with keeping everyone abreast of the status of the program development. One respondent stated, "Listen well and appreciate the concerns and needs of all parties involved." Another respondent noted, "Involve enrollment management staff and take nothing for granted, no assumptions." Communication will ensure that areas are on the same page.

10. Develop recruitment and marketing materials for the program. "This should be done with the support and assistance of the marketing department."

11. Develop admission requirements to include "work experience with employer validation."

12. Develop a mandatory information/interview session as part of admission process. The purpose of this session would be to:

- "explain expectations of accelerated vs. traditional classes"

- "provide information regarding program so that student can make an informed decision regarding enrollment in program"

- "determine if prospective student has the ability to be successful in an accelerated program format by comparing the preparedness of learner coming into an accelerated vs. traditional program format"

13. Develop a mandatory orientation session. Orientation should reiterate to enrolled students the expectations of accelerated program along with the differences between accelerated vs. traditional classes. This mandatory orientation session should also provide training for the students in accelerated learning to allow students to learn how to learn using accelerated learning strategies. "Attendance policies should also be discussed."

14. Develop a process for continuous communication with students in the accelerated program(s).

15. Develop assessment procedures and methods that will measure the success of both the development process (i.e. pilot projects) and the participants/graduates.

Implementation.

1. Market program and recruit prospective students.

2. Conduct mandatory information/interview sessions with prospective students.

3. Evaluate potential learners.

4. Admit students.

5. Conduct mandatory orientation session two weeks before first class starts.

6. Provide students with instruction in accelerated learning.

7. Distribute syllabus, books, and first week's assignments prior to first night of each class.

8. Conduct accelerated courses.

9. Communicate continuously with the students in the accelerated program(s).

10. Continue ongoing developer and instructor training in principles of accelerated training learning.

11. Document instructor involvement with students and additional prep needed for accelerated classes to assist in justification of load.

Evaluation.

1. Continuous monitoring of program and course competencies for consistency, student attainment, and employer satisfaction.

2. Continuous monitoring of student learning and progress.

3. Comparison of evaluation measures of accelerated delivery with other modes of delivery for the same program.

4. Review of student needs.

5. Evaluation of faculty, staff, and administration commitment and support.

6. Determine that standards are being followed.

Assessment of Successful Programs

The last survey question asked participants to identify how to measure the success of an accelerated associate degree program. An analysis of responses indicated the following themes related to the assessment of successful programs: student/teacher/employer feedback, program evaluation, and student success. Responses where analyzed and sorted accordingly.

Student/Teacher/Employer Feedback. All twenty respondents or 100 percent indicated that feedback from students, teachers, and employer was essential in assessing the success of an accelerated program. Feedback should take the form of student and teacher course evaluations, student satisfaction surveys, graduate exit interviews, employer evaluations, and post-graduate evaluations.

Feedback should assess the quality of student learning, relevancy of competencies in relation to job duties performed, overall satisfaction of students and employers, level of student participation, the instructors ability to teach using multiple methods, career advancement of individuals in cohort group, and a comparison of students between accelerated and traditional delivery methods.

Program Evaluation. Seventeen of twenty respondents or 85 percent indicated that program evaluation, through means other than feedback and student success, must also be assessed when evaluating the success of an accelerated program. Program evaluation could be measured through:

- "word-of-mouth recruitment"

- "enrollment rate"

- "retention rate"

- "the ability to teach using accelerated and multiple-intelligence methods"

- "annual program evaluation criteria used for traditional programs"

- "attainment of local and state program standards"

- visits/evaluations by other institutions experienced in AL programs

- "financial solvency"

- "number of successive accelerated program cohort groups"

- "comparison of student success measurements relative to baseline data from traditional delivery modes"

- "number of students in traditional and accelerated program delivery formats"

- "FTE's"

Student Success. Fifteen of twenty respondents or 75 percent indicated that student success is a necessary component in assessing the success of an accelerated program. Student success could be measured through:

- "academic achievement (i.e. grade point average)"

- "personal student goal achievement"

- "graduation rate"

- "placement rate"

A summary of responses related to assessment of programs, sorted by category, is illustrated in Table 7, shown on the next page. Again, more than one response by a single participant is the reason that the percents do not equal 100 percent.

Table 7

<u>Assessment of Successful Programs</u>

Assessment Category/Theme	Number	Percent
Student/teacher/employer feedback	20	100
Program evaluation	17	85
Student success	15	75

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter is a summary of the entire study. Conclusions based on the findings will be discussed. Finally, recommendations related to this study will be presented.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to create accelerated program development steps and protocols that would be used when developing an accelerated Administrative Assistant associate degree program at Chippewa Valley Technical College. The purpose of the survey was to gather the concerns and issues, criteria, steps, and assessment protocol of a successful accelerated.

Two groups were identified and surveyed. First, currently employed CVTC staff who were involved in program development at CVTC were identified. Second, additional participants were selected from the WTCS based on the criteria of knowledgeable in accelerated program development.

Because this was a qualitative survey, data was analyzed through a process of identifying categories or themes of responses. Responses were then sorted based on category. Data were analyzed and presented according to sequence of the survey instrument.

<u>Conclusions</u>

Chippewa Valley Technical College does not have written protocol required for the development of successful accelerated associate degree programs; therefore, CVTC staff interested in developing accelerated programs have limited direction, guidance, and support in the development of a successful accelerated program. Accelerated program development protocols need to be developed to assist CVTC in the development of accelerated programs. In an effort to gather data related to program development, four research objectives were addressed by this study. Each objective will be restated and conclusions made for each.

Research Objective Number One: Identify staff that should be involved in the development of accelerated degree programs:

This study identified specific departments or staff, that should be involved in the development of accelerated degree programs. A listing of department or staff categories, ranked by number of responses, was presented in Table 5.

The results of the study identified the need to include staff from program departments; instructional design, curriculum, and assessment specialists; administrators; general education instructors; support services staff; and the advisory committee along with employers and business/industrial content experts. Program development requires the input of individuals from a board range of areas and requires a supporting infrastructure that spans the entire organization.

Due to the number of individuals involved in program development it would be easy for an individual that is unfamiliar with program develop to inadvertently miss individuals that should be involved in the program development process.

Research Objective Number Two: Identify accelerated format program criteria: This study also identified specific criteria related to the development of accelerated degree programs.

Criteria categories or themes identified in this study were: program structure and content, program admission requirements and student responsibilities, quality of instruction and consistency of staff, teacher time, teacher training, and infrastructure support. A detailed listing of criteria for each category was presented and can be found on pages 42 through 46.

The number and complexity of criteria required in the development of accelerated program is immense. It interesting to note that much of the survey data is supported by information presented in the literature review. Although much respondent data was given, very little quantifiable criteria were presented. Information indicated that standards, guidelines and criteria must be met but few specific standards, guidelines, and criteria where presented with values by which the standard, guideline or criteria would be measured. These quantifiable measures would be most beneficial when developing accelerated program protocol.

Also, questions still remain regarding some of the criteria due to the fact that the researcher was uncertain of the respondents' message and meaning. One respondent wrote, "Following business practices in getting students enrolled." This researcher is uncertain as to whether the respondent was referring to general business practices or business practices related to a specific educational institution. If the respondent was

referring to general business practices it is unclear what specific practices relate to student enrollment.

Another respondent wrote, ". . . the 'cut-and-paste' mentality of some educators can be seduced by an effective sales pitch for a given product, program, or theory." This researcher is uncertain of the message the respondent was trying to convey.

Research Objective Number Three: Identify steps required in the development of an accelerated Administrative Assistant program.

Specific stages related to the development of accelerated degree programs were identified as pre-program, development, implementation, and evaluation. A detailed listing of steps for each stage was presented beginning on page 46.

The number steps were surprising, especially the large number of steps involved during the pre-program development stage. Literature and survey responses support the fact that the majority of work load related to accelerated programs is completed before the program is implemented. According to the literature review, "To the uninformed observer, the immediate reaction to accelerated learning is that it only takes the instructor half the time; therefore, it's only half the work. In reality, additional time is required in the preparation of orientation, pre-course materials, classroom materials and activities, and outside-of-class work" (Walsh, 2001).

Even after review of the literature and an analysis of survey responses, questions still remain regarding several of the steps listed. One respondent indicated "a frank 'culture diagnosis' of the institution and its customers… are they 'ready' for accelerated learning." It is unclear to this researcher what the respondent meant by "culture diagnosis". Additionally, one respondent wrote about the need to "document all external

standards and indirect performance indicators." Another respondent wrote, "Identify written standards that need to be followed for instructors and students to follow. Have an evaluation tool or controls set up to monitor that standards are being followed." The researcher was unclear as to what was being inferred to regarding external standards, indirect performance indicators, and the evaluation tools or controls that would be used to monitor program. The researcher's confusion may be related to lack of knowledge or the way the terminology was used by the respondent. This data may also have appeared unclear due to the fact that specific quantifiable standards were not provided by the respondents or during the literature review.

Research Objective Number Four: Identify administrative, leadership, and/or management staff expectations of a successful accelerated program:

This study also identified specific administrative, leadership, and/or management staff expectations of a successful accelerated program. The following assessment themes were identified as needed in determining the success of an accelerated program: student/teacher/employer feedback, student success, and program evaluation. Table 7 summarizes number of responses per criteria theme.

The data gathered during this study clearly indicates the importance of assessment in evaluating the success of an accelerated program. Data gathered as part of the literature review also supports the importance of assessment in evaluating program success. Once again no specific quantifiable measures where provided by respondents in relation to assessment.

<u>Recommendations</u>

> <u>For CVTC's Administrative Assistant Accelerated Program.</u>

1. Develop a list of specific staff and departments within CVTC that should be contacted throughout the program development process. Information presented in the literature review indicated the importance of coordinating college operations and resources in the development, implementation, and management of an accelerated degree program. In order to coordinate operations and resources, key departments and college staff must be identified (K. Stockwell, personal communications, Fall 2001). The depth of departments and staff that should be involved in accelerated program development was also confirmed by survey results.

2. Initiate efforts toward the development of an accelerated program development committee at CVTC. This committee should include the participation of those individuals identified through the completion of the preceding recommendation. The purpose of this committee would be to work toward the creation of accelerated program development protocol at CVTC. The literature review supports the purpose of this committee. As indicated by Kathy Stockwell (personal communications, Fall 2001) and the WTCS (On-line), "The coordination of operations, educational resources, instructional technology, and additional support service departments within the educational institution is essential to the success of this nontraditional programming." The variety of information presented in each section of the literature review provides additional support for the need to include operations, educational

resources, instructional technology, and additional support service

departments in program development protocol. Survey results provide a more

detailed list of items to include in accelerated program development that

would aid this accelerated program development committee in creating

accelerated program development protocol.

3. Clarify and define the criteria and steps as identified in this study. Specify

quantifiable measures for applicable criteria and steps in conjunction with

CVTC and WTCS set standards. As presented in the literature review,

"Accelerated programming is recognized as requiring a specialized curriculum

design that requires ongoing supervision" (Walsh, 2001; WTCS, On-line).

Special faculty and institutional preparation is also required for effective

implementation of the accelerated instructional methodology. As indicated in

the WTCS Program Planning and Development guide, measuring and

assessing quality of learning in accelerated programming must be

implemented. Measures employed shall be appropriate to the unique

accelerated methodology. Although general statements where presented in the

literature review in relation to criteria and steps, no specific quantifiable

criteria or steps were found. Survey results confirm this. Having quantifiable

criteria and steps will aid in the development, implementation, evaluation, and

overall success of accelerated programs.

For Accelerated Learning Programs at other Technical Colleges.

1. Develop a list of specific staff and departments within each individual WTCS
    institution that should be contacted throughout the program development
    process. Information presented in the literature review indicated the
    importance of coordinating college operations and resources in the
    development, implementation, and management of an accelerated degree
    program. In order to coordinate operations and resources, key departments and
    college staff must be identified (K. Stockwell, personal communications, Fall
    2001). The depth of departments and staff that should be involved in
    accelerated program development was also confirmed by survey results.

2. Initiate efforts toward the development of an accelerated program
    development committee at other WTCS institutions. Each institution-specific
    committee should include the participation of those individuals identified
    through the completion of the recommendation given above. The purpose of
    each committee would be to work toward the creation of accelerated program
    development protocol at the respective WTCS institution. The literature
    review supports the purpose of this committee. As indicated by Kathy
    Stockwell (personal communications, Fall 2001) and the WTCS (On-line),
    "The coordination of operations, educational resources, instructional
    technology, and additional support service departments within the educational
    institution is essential to the success of this nontraditional programming." The
    variety of information presented in each section of the literature review
    provides additional support for the need to include operations, educational

resources, instructional technology, and additional support service departments in program development protocol. Survey results provide a more detailed list of items to include in accelerated program development that would aid each accelerated program development committee in creating accelerated program development protocol specific to each WTCS institution.

3. Clarify and define the criteria and steps as identified in this study. Specify quantifiable measures for applicable criteria and steps in conjunction with CVTC and WTCS set standards. As presented in the literature review, "Accelerated programming is recognized as requiring a specialized curriculum design that requires ongoing supervision" (Walsh, 2001; WTCS, On-line). Special faculty and institutional preparation is also required for effective implementation of the accelerated instructional methodology. As indicated in the WTCS Program Planning and Development guide, measuring and assessing quality of learning in accelerated programming must be implemented. Measures employed shall be appropriate to the unique accelerated methodology. Although general statements where identified in relation to criteria and steps, no specific quantifiable criteria or steps were found. Survey results confirm this. Having quantifiable criteria and steps will aid in the development, implementation, evaluation, and overall success of acceleration program development.

Related to This Study.

1. Conduct a follow-up survey to gather more information regarding the meaning of specific responses in an effort to clarify survey responses for those questions related to program criteria and steps.

2. Replicate the survey using a different methodology such as personal interviews or a focus group. Of the two options listed, his researcher would most support the use of a focus group. This focus group should consist of a mix of staff from all areas of the college.

3. Conduct a follow up study with program graduates to determine the success of accelerated programs.

4. Develop a WTCS accelerated program group in order to share information and work toward statewide guidelines and standards related to accelerated program development.

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APPENDIX A

Accelerated Program Development Survey

I understand that by returning the questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that only minimal identifiers are necessary and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

Note: Questions or concerns about your participation in this survey should be addressed first to the researcher, Dawn Matott, or to the research advisor (Juli Taylor, taylorju@uwstout.edu or 715-232-1443) and second to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751 or 715-232-1126.

Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. Only the primary researcher or her designee will have access to the confidential raw data.

Thank you for your participation and help with this important research.

1. What is your current job title?

2. What is your experience with accelerated learning?

3. What are your responsibilities related to program development?

4. What departments and/or staff should be involved in the development of accelerated degree programs?

5. Based on your knowledge of program development and accelerated learning, what concerns or issues do you feel should be addressed regarding accelerated associate degree programs?

6. What criteria should be present when developing an accelerated program that will address the items you listed in Number 5?

7. Based on your knowledge and experience, what specific steps should be completed when developing an accelerated associate program?

8. How would you measure the success of an accelerated associate degree program?

APPENDIX B

EMAIL SURVEY COVER LETTER

Hello

I am an instructor in the Business Technology Department at Chippewa Valley Technical College. In an effort to develop curriculum that meets the needs of a diverse population, I am asking for your participation in completing the attached survey (a Word 2000 document) related to accelerated learning.

I am contacting WTCS employees who have been involved with accelerated learning courses and programs. I am also contacting Chippewa Valley Technical College employees who are currently involved in general and Business Technology program development at CVTC. The purpose of the survey is to determine
1) staff members and/or departments that should be involved in accelerated program development.
2) specific concerns related to the development of accelerated program formats.
3) accelerated program criteria.
4) suggested steps toward development of accelerated programs.
5) ways to measure the success of accelerated programs.

Results from this survey will be used to create a protocol for accelerated program development. This protocol will be used by the Business Technology Department at CVTC in the creation of an accelerated Administrative Assistant associate degree program. The information gathered is critical to support the development of this and future accelerated programs.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary. Please complete and return the survey no later than Monday, November 4. Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual's name can be identified. Please note on your reply if you would like a summary of the results when they become available.

The University of Wisconsin-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this study or your participation, contact me at dmatott@cvtc.edu or 715-858-1848. Juli Taylor, my research advisor, is also available for consultation at taylorju@uwstout.edu or 715-232-1443. If you have any questions regarding your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751 or 715-232-1126.

Your participation is critical to the success of accelerated program development. Thank you very much for your support and participation in this project. As a small token of appreciation, I would be happy to send you the results of this survey. Please indicate on the survey if you would like a copy of the survey findings.

Sincerely

Dawn Matott, Instructor
Business Technology Department
Chippewa Valley Technical College
620 W. Clairemont Avenue
Eau Claire, WI 54701

(SEE APPENDIX A FOR ATTACHMENT)

APPENDIX C

REMINDER EMAIL MESSAGE

This note is a reminder that you have been asked to complete a survey regarding the development of accelerated programs. Another survey is attached (a Word document) with this message in case your original survey was misplaced.

In an effort to provide you with an ample amount of time to complete the survey, I have extended the deadline to Thursday, November 7. If you have already returned the survey, please disregard this notice.

Please contact me at dmatott@cvtc.edu or 715-858-1848 if you would like further information regarding this study.

Your participation is critical to the success of accelerated program development. Thank you very much for your support and participation in this project.

Dawn Matott, Instructor
Business Technology Department
Chippewa Valley Technical College
620 W. Clairemont Avenue
Eau Claire, WI 54701

(SEE APPENDIX A FOR ATTACHMENT)