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THE RHYTHM OF LEARNING: UNVEILING CURRICULUM DIMENSIONS IN TIME-COMPRESSED HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS

[1]Zhang Wei Jia and [2]Anderson Marie Thomas
[1,2]Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Curriculum Studies College and Graduate School of Education, Health, and Human Services Kent State University

Abstract: This study investigates the decision-making processes employed by higher education faculty in shaping the curriculum for time-compressed courses, lasting 5-6 weeks, in comparison to traditional term courses spanning 15-16 weeks. In the U.S. higher education system, both regular term and time-compressed classes must adhere to the seat-time requirements, necessitating 15 hours of contact for every academic credit hour. Time-compressed courses, often offered during summer sessions, have gained recognition as a legitimate alternative to the conventional 15-week semester-long format, impacting the academic landscape of institutions (Daniel, 2000; Kretovics, Crowe, and Hyun, 2005; Taylor, 1988).

The development and delivery of robust, academically sound time-compressed courses hold significance for the contemporary marketability of higher education institutions. These courses not only provide flexibility but also serve as a potential motivator for international students pursuing diverse academic endeavors during their degree-earning period. This, in turn, contributes to the global internationalization of higher education institutions, accommodating non-traditional and diverse student enrollments, thereby fostering institutional diversity (Hyun, 2005). Despite these implications, a notable gap exists in understanding how higher education faculty perceive and navigate the effectiveness of time-compressed courses in terms of curriculum development and delivery.

This research addresses this gap by posing critical questions: How do faculty members perceive time-compressed courses? What factors influence their curriculum decisions for these condensed formats, while ensuring an academic development level on par with regular-term courses? Prior studies in the U.S. have primarily focused on faculty and student expectations and perceptions of summer time-compressed courses, with limited attention given to the curriculum aspects of these courses. To fill this void, our study employs open-ended exploratory questions through an online survey to delve into the nuanced curriculum practices of higher education faculty in the context of time-compressed courses.

Keywords: Time-compressed courses, Higher education faculty, Curriculum decision-making, Academic development, Institutional diversity

INTRODUCTION

The current study explored the curriculum decision making processes of higher education faculty in the context of time-compressed (e.g., 5-6 weeks) courses as compared with regular term (15-16 weeks) courses. In the context of U.S. higher education, both regular term and time-compressed classes must meet the seat-time requirements of 15 h of contact for every hour of academic credit. Typically, most U.S. institutions of higher education offer time-

compressed classes during summer sessions; these courses provide an alternative to the traditional 15-week semester-long course and are viewed as academically legitimate on most campuses (Daniel, 2000; Kretovics, Crowe and Hyun, 2005; Taylor, 1988). The development and delivery of academically well-maintained, time-compressed courses are important or the marketability of contemporary institutions of higher education. The availability of time-compressed courses could motivate international students various academic pursuit during their degree-earning period, contributing to the internationalization of institutions of higher education in a global society as well as increasing non-traditional and diverse students enrollment that support institutional diversity (Hyun, 2005). How do higher education faculty members perceive time-compressed courses? How do they make curriculum decisions for time-compressed courses while fostering students' academic development at a level equal to that in the regular term? A paucity of research addresses how higher education faculty members perceive the effectiveness of time-compressed courses in terms of curriculum development and delivery. In the U.S., previous researchers of [summer] time-compressed course have generally explored faculty or student expectations and perceptions. Using open-ended explored questions via an on-line survey, the current researchers the curriculum practice of higher education faculty in the context of time-compressed (e.g., 5–6 weeks) courses as compared with regular term (15–16 weeks) courses.

Literature Review

Higher Education Curriculum: Definition, Influences, and Elements engaging in curriculum discussion, higher education faculty often fail to define curriculum, whichactually denotes much more than one's syllabus and lecture notes or the overall content to be taught and learned, not to mention various earlier inquiries into "what curriculum is" and "what curriculum does" (e.g., Dewey, 1938; Hyun, 2006; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman, 1995). "What curriculum does" in fact extends beyond preparing students for their vocations, yet U.S. higher education faculty commonly link the set of courses offered, the related time and credit framework based on the Carnegie credit unit, and the students' future careers (Stark and Lattuca, 1997). Within the context of U.S. higher education, Stark and Lattuca define higher education curriculum as an academic plan because its primary intention is to foster students' academic development. Higher education curriculum is somewhat different from PreK–12 curriculum, which tends to be more holistic and integrates social, emotional, moral, physical, aesthetic, and academic considerations; higher education curriculum tends to be more discipline and content specific. Thus, curriculum is viewed as a plan for students' academic development. According to Hyun (2006), curriculum work involves careful attention to the interactions among three primary considerations identified by Dewey (1938) – content, people, and context or the three S's (Subject, Self, and Social).

- Content/Subject matter (knowledge, typically disciplinary, or "what to know"; skills, or "how to do"; and dispositions, or "why to know and do"); People/Self (teachers, students, parents, administrators, etc.; who they are, why they do, what they do, what they know and believe, etc.); and
- Context/Social (where everything takes place and how all of these environmental elements physical, social, political, cultural, etc.—work relative to content and people) (e.g., Posner 1995; Henderson and Hawthorne, 2000). These three primary considerations – content, people, and context, or the three Ss (Subject, Self, and Social) - are the classic and general elements of curriculum. In contrast, Stark and Lattuca (1997) identified the elements of higher education curriculum as purpose, content, sequence, consideration of learners, instructional processes, evaluation, and adjustment. In the context of higher education, all of these elements are influenced by the three aspects that follow:

- External, emerges from society and its agents outside the college or university (e.g., the requirements for the program or degree accreditation set by the professional organizations of each discipline);
- Internal, stems from the characteristics of the institution and the views and demands of faculty and students (e.g., nature of instructors and students; faculty members' desi- re to offer certain courses in light of their scholarship; students' readiness for learning; students' interest in or need to take the courses); and
- Organizational, derives from central administrative offices/officers (e.g., semester system, block scheduling, use of classroom space, standardized credit hours) (Stark and Lattuca, 1997).

Based on Stark and Lattuca's categories of the elements and aspects of curriculum in higher education, we may conclude that most of the previous studies of timecompressed courses have focused on one of the following areas:

1. Consideration of learners (Schuetze and Slowey, 2002; Scott, 1995, 1996). Researchers paid attention to people, an internal influence.
2. Consideration of faculty and student expectations and perceptions (Barclay, 1990; Scott, 1996; Scyoc and Gleadon, 1993; Wayland et al., 2000). Researchers paid attention to context, an internal influence. 3. Consideration of students' reflective learning outcomes (Kreber, 1999; Sander et al., 2000; Scott, 1995; Wilcoxson, 1998). Researchers paid attention to content and context, internal influences.

Thus, previous researchers on teaching timecompressed courses dealt primarily with internal aspects of curriculum matters. None of the studies investigated how (or whether) organizational/structural aspects of curriculum might have influenced internal aspects. All of the previous studies were done in the context of summer time-compressed courses in institutions of higher education in the U.S.

Consideration of Learners: Paying Attention to People, an internal influence summer time-compressed courses on U.S. college and university campuses are increasingly viewed as more than an opportunity for academically illprepared students to make up course work. Nowadays, the summer session is regarded as an extension of the academic program that affords students several additional opportunities, including the following: to take courses they were unable to schedule during the academic year; to take additional courses beyond degree requirements; to take courses enabling graduation in less than the typical 4 years; and to take courses that will allow them to lighten their load during the academic year. Typically, the duration of summer session courses is shorter (2–12 weeks) and more intensive because of the abbreviated time between class meetings than in the traditional semester (15 weeks) course. Some institutions offer summer time-compressed courses as part of their regular course work (e.g., Hyun, 2002), attracting nontraditional students who have multiple responsibilities in their lives but are willing to take shorter compressed courses (Schuetze and Slowey, 2002). Thus, consideration of student needs, that is, internal needs or demands from students, has influenced timecompressed curriculum development and delivery in institutions of higher education. However, none of the previous researches did articulate or investigate the fact that the students' needs, the internal needs were conditioned by the institutions' organizational curriculum structural matter (i.e., regular semester 15-16 week long; summer time-compressed course 2–12 weeks long, most ranging 5–8 weeks long.).

Faculty and Student Expectations and Perceptions: Paying Attention to Context, Internal Influence. High faculty expectations for students' academic development (discussed as academic rigor by Crowe et al., 2005) and the maintenance of standards may not necessarily match the expectations of students enrolled. The literature indicates that many students choose to enroll in summer time-compressed sessions for academic reasons but bring

with them expectations that such classes will require less study time and that course standards may be lower than those in the regular academic year (Wayland et al., 2000). In contrast Scott (1995) found that students enrolled in summer time-compressed courses had very explicit expectations of the workload and faculty members. Those expectations include the following:

1. Students in compressed courses prefer depth over breadth.
2. Students expect a closer relationship with the faculty member.
3. Students anticipate smaller classes.
4. Students want instructors to modify the assignments.
5. Students believe that compressed courses are more relaxed.

In addition, Scott noted that most students believe the instructor is the most essential ingredient to a good learning experience, especially in intensive courses (1996). Several researchers found (Kreber, 1999; Sander et al., 2000; Scott, 1995; Wilcoxson, 1998) that students tend to attribute high-quality learning to specific faculty attributes regardless of the course timeframe. According to Scott (1995) students believe that compressed courses (a) often create a more continuous learning experience than semester-length classes; (b) produce a much more concentrated and focused learning experience; (c) allow students to devote more time and energy to classes that might otherwise get lost in the shuffle during the regular semester; (d) produce a more collegial classroom experience and foster more classroom interactions and in-depth discussions; and (e) enhance the student–
faculty relationship. Kretovics et al. (2005) study of higher education faculty's perceptions of summer time-compressed courses revealed similar characteristics but from the point of view of faculty members. Time-compressed courses have long been criticized by faculty because they necessitate sacrificing breadth of knowledge and result in a reduction of academic rigor in line with the amount and depth of content covered, and yet the literature on learning outcomes clearly indicates that students participating in time-compressed courses learn as much or more than students taking the same course during the traditional semester (Daniel, 2000; Scott, 1995; Scyoc and Gleadon, 1993; Wayland et al., 2000). Thus, influenced by internal aspects of curriculum construction (faculty and student expectations and perceptions), previous researchers have paid attention to learner behaviors and relationship building in timecompressed teaching and learning context. Furthermore, previous researchers indicated positive aspects of teaching and learning experiences in time-compressed curriculum delivery that motivate students' high academic development. Daniel (2000) suggested that faculty may need to modify their curriculum and instructional approaches when preparing for time-compressed courses because of learners' different demands and expectations. Several others have suggested that faculty employ a variety of teaching methods (Kreber, 1999; Phillips, 1999) and attend to a variety of approaches to learning in order to maintain high-level academic performance, regardless of the timeframe of the course (Hativa and Birenbaum, 2000).

Consideration of Students' Reflective Learning Outcomes: Paying Attention to Content and Context, Internal Influence. Barclay (1990) cited hesitation among faculty in scheduling regular graduate courses during shortened periods of time, such as summer sessions. Clearly, faculty are concerned about the time spent on activities outside the classroom (Wayland et al., 2000), and they question whether or not the intensive and timecompressed format allows students sufficient time to process the materials reflectively, assuming that reflective learning requires a lengthy engagement with the content materials (Scott, 1995). If we consider the work of Scott (1995) and

Kretovics et al. (2005) noted earlier, the discussion on reflective learning outcomes in time-compressed curriculum may not be fully consistent with Barclay's study.

Rational and Purpose of the Study

An abundance of literature on teaching strategies in higher education underlies curriculum practice; however, insufficient research has specifically investigated timecompressed courses from all aspects (internal, external, and organizational) of higher education curriculum. Previous researchers, to date, have paid only attention to certain internal aspects of the curriculum matters, particularly demands, perceptions, and expectation of students and faculty in time-compressed course delivery. Investigation into the curriculum for time-compressed courses in higher education must also include the external and organizational influences identified by the faculty as they deal with internal curriculum elements.

Research Questions

Two main research questions were examined in this study:

1. How does higher education faculty identify similarities and differences in the curriculum of timecompressed courses and regular semester courses?
2. How do faculty respond to internal, external, and organizational influences as they plan and deliver curriculum for time-compressed courses?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Context

To explore higher education faculty members' perceptions of teaching time-compressed courses that influence their curriculum decision-making, we developed an openended Web-based essay survey for faculty members at a large doctoral-extensive university in a Midwestern state in the United States. The web-based essay survey used the CTL Silhouette system, which is an online tool for authoring, taking, and analyzing surveys. This software is hosted by the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology at Washington State University.

The essay survey contained three main questions:

1. What is your main curriculum concern in teaching summer time-compressed courses?
2. How would you describe differences that you perceive between summer/time-compressed teaching and regular-session teaching?
3. How would you describe any curriculum similarities that you perceive between summer/timecompressed teaching and regular-session teaching?

The intent of the authors in using these open questions was to explore what particular curriculum aspects and elements dominate the faculty's curriculum decisionmaking processes for time-compressed courses without leading the idea. Demographic data were also collected through this web-based survey to establish background information about the faculty who responded to the survey. The essay survey took almost 2 months to conduct. Descriptive data were collected, and the contents were analyzed qualitatively. For our purposes we defined a compressed course as one in which the number of contact hours during the regular semester equals that of the same course during the regular semester, but the length of time from the first session to the last session is shorter. For example, the length of each individual class meeting may be longer than those of a regular semester session; and the interval between each class meeting may be shorter. The researchers were three faculty members within a college of education at the same university where data were collected. One faculty member was from the

academic disciplines of curriculum studies and higher education administration; one was from higher education administration; and one was from teacher education.

Participants and Data Collection

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject at the institution, participants were recruited through the Faculty Professional Development Center (FPDC) on the campus of the institution. The faculty surveyed was all members of the FPDC listserv and were initially contacted via this listserv. This was a non-probability sample with an intended theoretical population of the overall faculty population of this institution. A letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the study was emailed via the FPDC listserv. A hyperlink to the web site containing the survey was provided in the letter of introduction, and participants were asked to complete the survey within 2 weeks from the date the message was sent. No additional follow-up was conducted. A total of 569 faculty members were asked to respond to the survey; 151 faculty members completed and returned it. Of the completed surveys data for 147 were usable, resulting in a response rate of 26.5%.

The survey yielded demographic data about each respondent as presented in Table 1. 92% of the respondents were full-time faculty; 67% were tenured or tenure track; 46% were assistant professors; 47% were full or associate professors, and 67% held a doctoral degree. Regarding teaching experience, 33% had fewer than 7 years of full-time teaching experience; 58% had fewer than 7 years experience teaching summer or compressed courses; 10% were teaching a course they had not previously taught in a regular session; 12% indicated they were teaching both graduate and undergraduate students; and 68% were teaching only undergraduate students. Finally, regarding the length of term for summer or compressed courses, 77% indicated they had previously taught courses of 5–6 weeks in length; 38% had taught 7–9 week courses; and 40% had previously taught courses less than 4 weeks in length.

Data Analysis

Once the data were received through the Web-based tool, they were compiled in a systematic fashion: Every line of the written descriptive essay was labeled with a number to identify and locate the original data easily. Using open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Straus and

Table 1. Participant demographics.

Gender	Faculty Status	Faculty Rank	Years of experience teaching summer/ time- compressed courses	Length of session in which participants taught summer/time-compressed courses	Answers to the survey questions refer to
Male: 65 Female: 82	Tenured: 71 Tenure track: 28 Nontenure track:	Instructor: 24 Assistant professor: 66 Associate professor: 41	1–3 yrs: 50 4–6 yrs: 33 7–12 yrs: 30 13 more yrs: 31	Less than 2 weeks: 6 2–4 weeks: 53 5–6 weeks: 114 7–9 weeks: 57 10–12 weeks: 23	Primarily graduate students: 28 Primarily undergraduate students: 97 Both: 18

	48	Full professor: 14			

Table 2. Open Coding Results: Frequency of Emerging Themes Based on Curriculum Elements.

Question 1. What is your main curriculum concern with teaching time-compressed courses?							
Themes	**consideration of learners**	**pedagogical matters**	**goals and objectives of the course**	**assignment-related matters**	**content-related matters**	**time-related matters**	**institutional matters**
Frequency	52*	11	5	10	32	50*	18
Question 2. H ow would you des cribe any curricul um differences tha t you perceive be tween time-compre ssed session te aching and regular-sessi on teaching?							
Themes	**consideration of learners**	**pedagogical matters**	**goals and objectives of the course**	**assignment-related matters**	**content-related matters**	**timerelated matters**	**institutional matters**
Frequency	72*	49*	2	10	28	45*	8
Question 3. H ow would you des cribe any curricul um similarities that you perceive bet ween time-compres sed session te aching ands regular sessio n teaching?							
Themes	**consideration of learners**	**pedagogical matters**	**goals and objectives of the course**	**assignment-related matters**	**content-related matters**	**time-related matters**	**institutional matters**
Frequency	27	22	13	21	49*	0	5
Total frequency of each theme	151*	82*	20	41	109*	95*	31

* indicates relatively high frequency of incidents that led to the final patterns correlated with other categories.

Note: In this study, pedagogy (or pedagogical matters) is defined as teaching approaches and decisions that influence teaching style Corbin, 1990), the researchers analyzed essay contents each incident in collaboration with the other two. Table 2 to detect patterns. Open coding entails the process of presents the open coding with frequency of the emerging breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, themes based on the category of curriculum elements. and categorizing data. The researchers used this coding To acquire a deeper understanding of the emerging system as the first procedure for the data analysis simply themes in light of higher

education curriculum decisionto explore the participants' essays. As a result of the making, the second stage of analysis axial coding took initial open coding, several themes emerged: (a) place. Axial coding is a set of procedures whereby data consideration of learners/students, (b) pedagogical are put back together based on the research focus in this matters, (c) goals and objectives of the course, (d) case to see how the faculty members perceived teaching assignment-related matters, (e) content-related matters, in a time-compressed course with regard to aspects of (f) time issues, and (g) institutional matters. To practice a higher education curriculum (internal, external, and high level of reliability in the qualitative data coding, each organizational). The same data coding analysis proceresearcher first finished individual coding, then compared, dures used in the open coding were repeated to maintain contrasted, and negotiated the decision of the coding of reliability in data analysis: Individual researchers'

Table 3. Axial Coding Results: Emerging Themes Based on Both Categories of Curriculum Elements and Aspects

Question 1. What is your main curriculum concern with teaching time-compressed session courses?								
Internal	**Themes**	**consideration of learners***	**pedagogical matters**	**goals and objectives of the course**	**assignmentrelated matters**	**contentrelated matters**	**time-related matters***	**Others**
	Incident example	"Students need to understand that the nature of compressed class requires a focused approach and that they must schedule out of class time accordingly" (Source: Q1-9).	"I need a different pedagogical approach. This is sometimes in conflict with overall course goals" (source: Q112).	"Helping students attain the same goals as in the regular courses" (source: Q111).	"Writing assignments are weak or not possible" (Source: Q110).	"The amount of material that should be covered in the short time" (Source: Q1-51)	"Lack of time between classes" (Source: Q158)	"The amount of grading!" (Source: Q1-104).
External	**None**							

Organizational aspects	Incident example	"If you try to teach it like you would in a 15-week semester, it is impossible for the students to keep up. . . mainly because they are taking 2 courses each summer term. Maybe they should be limited to taking only one course per summer session" (Source: Q1-28).	"Inadequate enrolment for the upper level courses" (Source: Q173).	"Since courses need to be consistent regardless of when they are offered, then the workload for the summer session is much more intensive than the regular longterm ones" (Source: Q1-45)			"These [summer] courses are offered out of sequence. . . . There is less time, equal program expectations" (Source: Q168).	"A more uniform policy. . . . might lessen some of these problems" (Source: Q1-36) see also Q3-84
	Frequency	**52***	**11**	**5**	**10**	**32**	**50***	**18**
Question 2. How would you describe any c urriculum differenc es that you per ceive between ti me-compressed session teaching and regular s ession teaching ?								
Internal	**Themes**	**consideration of learners***	**pedagogical matters***	**goals and objectives of the course**	**assign-ment-related matters**	**contentrelated matters**	**time-related matters***	**Others**

	Incident example	"I find that the students are more focused in summer compressed classes" (Source Q2-22).	"Because class meeting in the summer are typically longer in duration, I have to think even more about planning for varied class activities" (Source: Q255).	"Curricular expecta-tions are the same, but the retention seems to be less" (Source: Q2-69).	"Extensive assign-ments are more difficult to complete" (Source: Q289).	"Because I try hard not to reduce course content, I often feel as though I am on a treadmill that is set at an uncomfortably quick speed" (Source: Q2-102).	"The students have less time to digest material, which puts some students at a disadvan-tage" (Source: Q2-113).	"More transition students, i.e., students home for the summer. Fewer weak students in class" (source: Q2-97).
External	**None**							

Table 3. contd.

Organizational	Incident example	"The large time blocks for class meetings and taking fewer courses helps students to focus on the material." (Source: Q2-9).	"Smaller class sizes facilitate group work and discussions better" (Source: Q216).			"The student retention of information is better as there is less competing with courses" (Source: Q2-8).	"For English classes, particularly composition, a longer time frame is needed for students to evolve" (Source: Q2111).	"Often smaller and sometimes more diverse student demographics than their regular semester" (Source: Q2-48).

	Frequency	72*	49*	2	10	28	45*	8
Question 3. How would you describe any curriculum similarities that you perceive between time-compressed session teaching ands regular session teaching?								
Internal	**Themes**	**consideration of learners**	**pedagogical matters**	**goals and objectives of the course**	**assignmentrelated matters**	**contentrelated matters***	**time-related matters**	**Others**
	Incident example	"Students are students" (Source: Q3-9).	" Tests are the same" (Source: Q386).	"The learning goals are the same" (Source: Q3-1)	"I try to keep the assignments, etc. the same" (Source: Q310).	"The overall content is virtually the same" (Source: Q3-22).		"I teach the same content since students receive the same credit" (Source: Q3-93).
External	Incident example					"I retain the same standards regardless of issues." (Source: Q3-29).		
Organizational	Incident example	"because of the elective requirement" (Source: Q359).		"Courses goals are the same. They cost the same and the		"I teach the same content since students receive the same credit." (Source: Q3-93).		4 incidents "The number of class hours is the same" (Source: Q3-25).

				academic record indicates the same" (Source: Q3-17).				
	Frequency	27	23	13	21	49*	0	5
Total frequency of each theme		151*	82	20	41	109*	95*	31

Table 4. Selective Coding results: selected core categories to relate to other categories for validating those relations.

	Concern
Internal aspects of learner, content, and time-related matters	Lack of time between the classes (e.g., Q1-58) The amount of materials that should be covered (e.g., Q1-51) Students need to. . . (e.g., Q1-9)
	Interaction
Organizational aspects	Maybe students should be limited to taking only one course per summer session. (e.g., Q1-28) Summer/time-compressed courses are offered out of sequence. (e.g., Q1-68) A more uniform policy needed (e.g., Q1-36)
	Differences
Internal aspects of learner, time, and pedagogical matters	Students are more focused. (e.g. Q2-22) Students have less time to digest materials. (e.g., Q2-113) I have to think even more about planning for varied class activities. (e.g., Q255)
	Interaction
Organizational aspects	The large time blocks for class meetings and taking fewer courses help students to focus on the material. (Q2-9) Often smaller and more diverse in students demographics than regular semester (e.g., Q2-48)
	Similarities

Internal aspects of learner, content coverage, pedagogy, assignmentrelated matters	Content is virtually the same (e.g., Q3-22) Students are students (e.g., Q3-9) Tests are the same (e.g., Q3-86) Try to keep the same assignments (e.g., Q3-10)
External expects	Need to retain the same standards regardless of issues related to scheduling (e.g., Q3-29)
	Interaction
Organizational aspects	Because of elective requirement (Q3-59) They cost the same and the academic record indicates the same (e.g., Q3-17) The number of class hours is the same (e.g., Q3-25)

Axial coding was followed by comparing, contrasting, and negotiating among all three researchers during the second stage of axial coding. Table 3 presents axial coding with frequency of the relationship between the emerging themes and the category of curriculum aspects.

Finally, selective coding was performed. This is the process of selecting the core categories, systematically relating them to other categories, validating those relations, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development for grounded theory building. Using selective coding techniques, the researchers identified the themes emerging from the three questions and compared and contrasted them to categorize them in light of the characteristics of faculty curriculum decision making. During the selective coding stage, the three researchers revisited and reviewed the final axial coding of each question to relate categories with the three curriculum elements and validate those relations through negotiation and collective agreement. Table 4 presents the final stage of selective coding. Based on the selective coding, the characteristics of higher education faculty members' curriculum decision-making processes in timecompressed course teaching are presented and discussed in the section of Findings and Discussion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding 1: Faculty concerns are rooted in organizational aspects

Faculty concerns mainly relate to internal issues of the learner, content, and time (Table 4). Even though the actual instructional hours are the same as in the regular 15-week course, most feel uneasy about the amount of material to be covered ("The amount of material that should be covered in the short time," Q1-51) during the time-compressed course teaching. What then is the actual concern that directly ties to the matter? Most of the concerns are anchored in the lack of time between each class meeting ("Lack of time between the classes," Q158). In this particular matter, most of the faculty directly relates their expectations to the students' learner behaviors: "Students need to understand that the nature of compressed class requires a focused approach and that they must schedule out of class time accordingly" (Q1-9). However, as the faculty articulated their expectations of students' learning behaviors, they brought another layer of concern similar to Stark and Lattuca's organizational aspect: Administrative policy should limit the number of courses students can take in a well-sequenced curriculum. "If you try to teach it like you would in a 15–week semester, it is impossible for the students to keep up... mainly because they are taking 2 courses each summer term. Maybe they should be limited to take only one course per summer session" (Q1-28). "These [summer] courses are offered out of sequences... There is less time, equal program expectations." (Q1-68). "Since courses need to be consistent regardless of when they are offered, then

the [students'] workload for the summer session is much more intensive than [regular term]" (Q1-45). "A more uniform policy and fewer deals by individual faculty might lessen some of these problems" (Q1-36).

Thus, most faculty concerns were rooted in the institution's organizational aspects.

Finding 2: Differences between regular term and time-compressed courses may influence pedagogical approaches and enhance diversity of the student body

As the faculty compared and contrasted teaching in regular term and time-compressed courses, they focused primarily on the internal curriculum aspects of learner, time, and pedagogy (Table 4). Even though most of the students in the summer time-compressed courses were the same ones they had taught during the regular term, on one hand, the faculty believe "the students are more focused in summer compressed classes" (Q2-22)' paralleling Scott's (1995) finding that students in timecompressed summer courses feel that they are much more focused because of additional continuous learning experiences occurring daily instead of weekly as in the regular term. This particular finding is very important for higher education institutions' administrators and faculty members to consider as they advocate more learnercentered approaches: Various formats for course offering accommodate students' focused learning. On the other hand, because of the limited time between classes, "students have less time to digest material which puts some students at a disadvantage" (Q2-113). Thus, the tendency for faculty to seek out innovative teaching styles or instructional approaches for teaching timecompressed courses supports Kreber's (1999) and Phillips' (1999) earlier suggestion in their study: One respondent noted: Because class meetings in the summer are typically longer in duration, I have to think even more about planning for varied class activities" (Q255). In their self-reflective analyses some faculty members indicated their consideration of organizational aspects in their decision-making for curriculum enactment: (a) "The large time blocks for class meetings and taking fewer courses helps students to focus on the material" (Q2-9); (b)"Smaller class size facilitates group work and discussions better" (Source: Q2-16). This response parallels student perceptions reported in Scott's (1995) study; and (c) time-compressed course sessions may attract more diverse and nontraditional students; one respondent noted "often smaller and sometimes more diverse in student demographics (age and educational experience, especially) than their regular semester" (Q248), which Schuetze and Slowey (2002) regarded as a critical matter in implicit curriculum practice in contemporary higher education (Musil et al., 1999).

Finding 3: Organizational aspects compel faculty to implement similar curricula in both time-compressed courses and regular term courses

As illustrated in Table 4, the faculty identified similarities in teaching regular-term and time-compressed courses, articulating the external, internal, and organizational aspects affecting their curriculum decision-making (Table 4). According to the faculty survey, only two incidents indicated the external aspect of "need to retain the same standards [articulated from the professional organization in the discipline] regardless of issues related to scheduling" (Q3-29). The limited number of incidents may indicate that consideration of external aspects in curriculum decision-making among the faculty may not be significant. If most of the faculties refer to the disciplinespecific standards as content coverage, then the external aspects are pervasive; however, the current data collected for this study did not have a capacity to identify the matter clearly. More specific survey questions are needed in the future to capture the faculty curriculum decision-making in the matter of content coverage and maintenance of standards. Most of the faculty respondents indicated that because of the organizational aspects of elective requirements ("Because of elective requirement," Q3-59), the same cost and the same academic credit

record ("They cost the same and the academic record indicates the same," Q317), and the same number of instruction hours ("The number of class hours is the same," Q3-25), they try to keep same content ("Content is virtually the same," Q322), same teaching style, same test, same assessment, and same assignments ("Teaching style and test are the same," Q3-86; "Try to keep the same assignments," Q3-10).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

What have we learned from this study that may enhance curriculum development and delivery in time-compressed courses in institutions of higher education in the U.S.?

Faculty curriculum decision-making for summer timecompressed courses is driven primarily by the internal aspect of curriculum involving students' learning in the limited time between class meetings. The most significant difference between regular term and time-compressed courses as articulated by faculty entails decision-making related to teaching approaches for the extended sessions for each class meeting. They cited several organizational matters that require consideration as follows:

A policy limiting the number of time-compressed courses students can take per session is needed.

1. The large time block with limited course taking needs to be positively considered.
2. Time-compressed courses tend to attract smaller numbers of students, which supports effective learning and teaching.
3. The abbreviated length of time-compressed course offerings may offer an opportunity for institutions to attract additional students of diverse backgrounds, a critical matter in the implicit curriculum of contemporary institutions of higher education, which can be more influential than explicit curriculum experienced by students.

The faculty's full engagement with the organizational aspect in their curriculum decision-making for timecompressed courses clearly appeared in their responses to the similarities between the two different time formats. Most of the faculty indicated that because of the organizational aspects of elective requirements, the same cost, the same amount of academic credit, and the same number of instruction hours, they try to maintain the same content, tests, assessments, and assignments; therefore, few faculty members indicated reducing content and assignments. Based on the study, we share several implications for higher education. If possible and appropriate within the organizational context of the institution, we suggest:

Implementing a policy limiting the number of course students can take in each summer term;

- Investigating the incorporation of timecompressed courses into the regular term, similar to block scheduling;
- Structuring classes around longer blocks of time in the regular semester with limits on the number such courses that can be taken within a semester;
- Using time-compressed courses to attract

students of diverse backgrounds;

- Encouraging faculty to engage in self-study on the effectiveness of their methods and approaches in time-compressed courses;
- Encouraging faculty to consider implementing any adjustments they made in assessments or pedagogical approaches for time-compressed courses during the regular semester as well;
- Recognizing that because of the shortened time period between class sessions, some courses should not be taught in a compressed-time format.

We hope that this study will serve as a point of departure for a new understanding of time-compressed courses in terms of organizational aspects and in response to the ever-changing needs of students in higher education. As the leaders of contemporary institutions of higher education face the needs of diverse students in a rapidly changing global society, they must assess both the format and quality of their curricula to meet those needs. They may consider providing diverse formats, including distance learning, accelerated curriculum, and time-compressed courses. As most institutions move toward internationalization in order to be more marketable in the global society, considering diverse formats for courses and curriculum delivery is a critical matter. Academically well-maintained, time-compressed course development and delivery is an important element in the marketability of the contemporary institution of higher education.

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