

Improving grades, saving money

January 13 2011

In their paper, ‘Exploring the impacts of accelerated delivery on student learning, achievement and satisfaction’, published in *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, Stephen Wilkins, from the International Center of Higher Education Management, Dr. Susan Martin, from the Department of Education, along with Dr. Ian Walker, from the Department of Psychology, suggest that many high ability students could cope successfully on accelerated A-level programmes, particularly in ‘softer’ subjects such as Business Studies.

The study looked at the performance of 879 [students](#) over four years who had taken accelerated and non-accelerated programs in A-level Business Studies. It was found that students taking the one-year accelerated programme would achieve a higher grade than those on the non-accelerated program if they satisfied at least one of three conditions.

These were:

- They had previously studied the subject, (i.e., they had taken GCSE Business Studies),
- they had achieved an A or A grade in GCSE English,
- or if they had achieved an A* or A grade in GCSE Maths.

The researchers also found that the one-year A-level course could save money for schools.

Stephen Wilkins said: “We found that students on accelerated programs had higher attendance levels and they also completed more assessed

homework. The style of learning on accelerated programs is more geared to exam performance, and this suits many students. Students realise that they are under pressure and they respond by working harder.”

Allowing high ability students to take A-levels in one year instead of two, could allow some students to start higher [education](#) a year earlier or to take extra AS or A-level subjects.

Also, the reduced student-teacher contact hours can provide cost savings for schools and more efficient use of physical resources.

Stephen Wilkins added: “Our study had a relatively small sample and examined only one subject – Business Studies – so clearly further research is needed before schools introduce more accelerated programs.”

Provided by Bath University

Citation: Improving grades, saving money (2011, January 13) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-grades-money.html>

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