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# The Interim Session: An Innovation in College Education.

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**THE INTERIM SESSION:  
AN INNOVATION IN COLLEGE EDUCATION**

**A THESIS  
Education 599 & 599a**

**In Partial Fulfillment for the Masters Degree in  
Education (Guidance & Counseling) at  
Northern Michigan University,  
Marquette, Michigan 49855**

**By**

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**1969**

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**THE INTERIM SESSION:  
AN INNOVATION IN COLLEGE EDUCATION  
A THESIS  
APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**BY**

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## PREFACE

For centuries man has pondered the societies he has developed. Some of our oldest documents record man's effort to analyze and understand his social order. In this research men have sought truth from many sources and have used many methods, some highly successful, some less so.

This paper is an attempt to evaluate a comparatively new concept in college curriculum...the interim session. Data regarding this program is generally not available. However, the author has used the experience of two interim sessions at Bay de Noc Community College to evaluate the merits of such a program. All of the answers are not known ...only more observation and analysis will decide whether such a program will permanently be incorporated into more college curriculums in the future.

Credit must go to fellow faculty members and students who assisted me in surveys over a period of two years in gathering data as to the workability of an interim session. The work of my wife deserves more than casual mention. Her assistance in the preparation of numerous drafts and her constant encouragement aided me greatly throughout the writing of this paper.

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THE INTERIM SESSION:  
AN INNOVATION IN COLLEGE EDUCATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The three week period of study immediately following and between regular semesters or terms can provide unusual and challenging educational opportunities for each student enrolled in the program. Such opportunities can be closely structured, and the element of independent study will saturate experiences at all levels. The student is expected to devote a minimum of sixty hours per week to academic work during this session for a four hour course, or thirty hours for a two hour course. The interim session may be divided among formal sessions, tutorials with instructors, informal study groups with instructors and students, attendance at specified lectures, and/or totally individualized work in a library, field trip, and/or laboratory. Each student will take only one course and be responsible to one faculty member for academic accomplishment during the period.



Sound educational policy dictates exercise of the widest possible flexibility in the devising of unique educational experiences for the individual student. The instructors are charged with the responsibility for the general supervision of activities occurring in this part of the college program.

The three week interim session begins on the day of registration, and this constitutes one of the fifteen classroom days. There is flexibility on the part of the instructors as to how they assign material, and to the amount of outside reading required and work to be done by certain deadlines. The instructor attempts to work closely with the student to observe his progress, and acts as his counselor and advisor during the period.

Preparation for the daily sessions by the instructor has to be carefully done, so that all of the material is presented in the required time. A syllabus for a regular semester course can be used, and students must realize they are on an accelerated program. Mid-term grades for students doing unsatisfactory work are not required as in the regular semesters or terms.

The student taking a two hour course meets two hours per day, five days per week in classroom session. Students taking a four hour course meet for two hours in the forenoon and two hours in the afternoon five days per week. There may be some innovating on the part of the individual instruc-

tors as to how they arrange their hours and schedules for the three weeks. It appears that concentration of effort on one single course yields proportionately greater educational benefits.

The library facilities are available daily from eight o'clock until five during the interim session. Students are encouraged to use these facilities whenever possible. Laboratory facilities are available, however, no laboratory courses have been offered during the interim sessions.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Room for innovation at the community college level is great. The primary purpose is to make education (at the college level) available to all persons interested in and capable of benefiting from such an educational program.

(3, p. 10-11). Equally important goals are:

Terminal courses for students not going to four year colleges.

Transfer programs for students going to four year colleges.

Technical programs for the community, serving local needs for vocational and semi-professional education.

General education through evening and day classes.

Cooperation with civic groups, educational institutions, and other organizations in endeavors likely to advance education in the community.

To provide leadership resources that will stimulate cultural growth. (1, p. 15).

These schools generally adhere to an "open door" general admissions policy. Any person, regardless of educational background, may enroll. They do have to be selective in those whom they retain, graduate, or recommend for place-

ment. Other specific objectives are:

Responding to the specific education needs of the community it serves.

Drawing upon the total resources of the community in organizing educational programs.

Enrolling students on a full or part time basis.

Offering day and evening classes and programs of instructions on a year-round schedule. (1, p. 15)

The interim session is one of the many innovations that can be effective at the community college level. It had not been implemented in Michigan prior to Bay de Noc Community College's first session in January, 1968. Information regarding this program was generally not available, thus the innovating on the part of this school.

One four year college that has experimented with "The January Term" is Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin. It may also be called the 4-1-4 plan of education. The philosophy of "The January Term" at that school is as follows:

The January Term is "liberal arts in action." Liberal education must make the student a more sensitive human being, alert to all that goes on about him, and capable of reacting reasonably to the crucial issues of the age in which he lives. The freshman-sophomore program focuses directly on representative issues of this day. The student participates directly in this common sharing--giving and receiving insights--thus living the liberal arts ideal. The upperclass years permit the student to follow his own educational interests during this period. Concentration of effort on one single course yields proportionately greater educational benefits. The obvious change of pace is valuable in its own right. (2, p. 47 and 61)

This philosophy would not be in conflict with the general goals and objectives of the Bay de Noc Community College

interim session.

Another school implementing the interim session in 1968-1969 academic year is Yankton College, Yankton, South Dakota. Their interim "is designed to present opportunities for independent study or research, special projects off-campus, and other innovative or creative activities the student and faculty may work out together. This interim session may also be used for exchange of students and faculty with other campuses in various educational projects."

(4) A union of community colleges committed to experimentation and innovation of this kind would give strength and support to one another.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

#### The 1968 Interim Session at Bay de Noc Community College

At the beginning of the 1967-68 school year, plans for the first interim session at Bay de Noc Community College (January 3 to 25, 1968) were instigated. An initial survey of the faculty was completed to find who would be available and willing to teach during this period. It was the joint feeling of the administration and faculty that such a program would include an opportunity for interested students to accelerate their programs; it would give an opportunity to make up failures that occurred during the fall semester; it would also give the student an opportunity to carry a reduced load in the fall or spring semester. The latter would perhaps give the freshman student a better chance of success in his first semester. It was also an opportunity for a new student (not before matriculated) to get started on an initial course. Another point of significance was that it would be an opportunity for faculty to earn extra income during the interim period, and for students

to seek part-time employment in the middle of the year to assist them with finances. Many students would be able to find full-time employment in the community during the interim session. Other goals gave both faculty and students an opportunity to travel during this period if they desired, and also the possibility of innovation with smaller classes and closer supervision.

Pre-registration for the interim session occurred from November 6 through November 17, 1967. (See Table I). Students were requested to see their faculty advisors during that time. Pre-registration for the spring semester of 1968 took place at the same time. A total of seven courses were tentatively offered for this session. More would be offered if requests were great enough and if instructors were available. However, it had to be kept in mind that not all courses were acceptable to the interim session. Laboratory courses and courses with a great amount of memorization are an example. A sufficient amount of students signed up in six of the seven courses to make it practical from a financial standpoint to offer the courses. The following courses were offered: (See Table II).

Although two of these classes were less than the accepted minimum of ten, it was felt that the number of students enrolled in the initial interim session was encouraging. Of the sixty-two students, only two withdrew during the interim; three took withdrawal passings; four received

S C H E D U L E    O F    C L A S S E S

BAY de NOC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

I N T E R I M    S E S S I O N

January 3, 1968 - January 25, 1968

<u>Course</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Instr.</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Credits</u>
En 101 Rhetoric & Composition	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	LD	101	4
Fa 205 World Literature	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	DC	102	4
SS 101 Sociology	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	RH	201	4
SS 113 Principles of Economics	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	PN	204	4
Ss 208 Marriage and the Family	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	LP	203	4
Te 102 Materials of Industry	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	LD	309	4
Bu 151 Introduction to Business	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	AP	306	4

FEEES WILL BE PAID JANUARY 3, 1968

11/3/67



I N T E R I M   S C H E D U L E

1968

<u>Course</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Students</u>
En 101 Rhetoric & Composition	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	13
Fa 205 World Literature	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	10
Ss 101 Sociology	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	8
Ss 113 Principles of Economics	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	15
Te 102 Materials of Industry	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	5
Bu 151 Introduction to Business	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	<u>11</u>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b>				<b>62</b>

incompletes...all of which have been made up since the session ended. Grades received were as follows: A - 13; B - 21; C - 13; D - 7; F - 0. The respective instructors were asked to give evaluation reports of their particular courses and students' achievement. All were positive reports and each felt that this type of program could be worked in well on a continuing basis at Bay de Noc Community College. Most of the instructors felt inadequate time was a problem, but they were in agreement that this could be overcome in most instances.

It was a general feeling of the interim faculty that the students were probably more highly motivated, as most of them had to put in a tremendous amount of time on one course during the three week period. Probably one of the real advantages of the interim session is that the instructor is able to work closely with each individual student, and that there is a closer involvement between the student and the instructor.

Of particular importance in this report was the fact that the program was very nearly self-sustaining, and with a few more students, the program would be able to maintain itself financially.

The revenue (tuition and fees, reimbursement from the state, and vocational technical funds) amounted to \$4,875. Expenditures for faculty salaries were \$4,978.00, thus the program had a net cost of \$103.00.

One of the goals that could be achieved during the interim session was that of exchanging students with other colleges in the United States who may be experimenting with an interim session at the same time, and who are at the junior or community college level.

Another goal is that this gives a student an opportunity to take courses, not necessarily required for a degree, during a period of time when he is not carrying a full sixteen hour load. These could be courses of interest to the student, but there is also the possibility that special off-campus projects, such as field study programs and other innovative activities, might be worked out between the student and the individual instructor.

Another advantage of the interim session, aside from the instructional part already discussed, is the fact that it gives some of the students who are having financial difficulties in staying in school an opportunity to work during the five week period between semesters or terms to earn their tuition, books and fees for the coming semester. This point has been stated a number of times by students and would appear to have merit. There does not appear to be any conflict or hardship on students by starting school late in August in order to finish the first semester by the Christmas break. In fact, most students prefer to finish the first semester by the Christmas break, as they do not have to worry about finals over the long holiday.

One other goal that could be accomplished in the interim session would be to offer a wider variety of courses and to give the student a definite voice in the type of courses that would be offered.

In conclusion, it would appear that the interim session at Bay de Noc Community College in January of 1968 accomplished the desired goals and was a positive step forward in the development of the College Curriculum.

### The 1969 Interim Session at Bay de Noc Community College

Preparations for the 1969 interim session were started at the beginning of the 1968-69 school year. The administration and faculty determined that a survey would be circulated among the students to determine which courses they were interested in. This survey was completed early in November, and eighty-eight students indicated an interest in taking a course for the three week session. (See Table III). It must be pointed out that this was only a survey, and that no student was positively committing himself at that time. On December 2, 1968 an interim schedule was published, and made available to all students. (See Table IV). It was also published in the local paper, and generally made available to the public. This schedule stated that actual registration would take place on January 2, 1969...the first day of class for the period.

A particular course that was being publicized during this period (November and December) was a three week travel tour of Holland, France, and England. This was to be a two hour credit course in English 290...Contemporary European Culture. This course, arranged with the cooperation of the local travel bureau, was to run from January 1-21, 1969, and thus there would not be a conflict with the beginning of the

## TABLE III

STUDENT SURVEY  
INTERIM SESSION - 1969  
January 2 through January 24

Dear Students:

Please indicate below the class you wish to enroll in for the 1969 interim session. All classes will receive a full four (4) semester hours unless otherwise indicated. All classes will meet 9-11 and 1-3, Monday through Friday unless otherwise indicated. You may select one four credit course or two two credit courses.

DIVISION OF ARTS AND LETTERS:

- \_\_\_\_\_ En 101--Rhetoric and  
Composition
- \_\_\_\_\_ En 102b--Oral Communi-  
cations (2 semester hrs.  
1-3, M-F)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fa 100--Introduction  
to Art

DIVISION OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ma 102--Trigonometry (2  
semester hrs., 9-11,M-F)

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ss 101--Sociology
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ss 201--Psychology

DIVISION OF BUSINESS:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Bu 108--Typing II
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bu 109--Typing III
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bu 119--Office Machines  
(2 semester hrs, 9-11  
Monday through Friday
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bu 192--Business Communications  
(2 semester hrs, 1-3, M-F)

Note: If you would like to enroll in a course not listed above, please indicated it in this space.

---

Please sign below and return to your instructor.

---

BAY DE NOC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ESCANABA, MICHIGAN 49829

PROPOSED INTERIM SCHEDULE 1969

January 2 through 24th

Registration will take place in the STUDENT PERSONNEL OFFICE from 8:00 A.M. through 4:00 P.M., January 2. Be prepared to pay all fees!

<u>Course</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Instructor</u>
En 101 Rhetoric & Composition	M-T-W-Th-F	101	4	Howard
En 102b Oral Communications	M-T-W-Th-F	105	2	Dougherty
Fa 100 Introduction to Art	M-T-W-Th-F	301	4	Powers
Ma 100 Introduction to Modern Math	M-T-W-Th-F	201	4	Barr
Ma 102 Trigonometry	M-T-W-Th-F	204	2	Leinberger
Ss 101 Sociology	M-T-W-Th-F	203	4	Horton
Ss 201 Introduction to Psychology	M-T-W-Th-F	102	4	Youngs

second semester to start on January 24, 1969. There was much interest in the course; however, the cost of such a trip was prohibitive to many of the students. By early December, 1968, there were fourteen students who had signed up for the course, paid their tuition of \$14.00, and travel fees...\$240.00.

On January 2, 1969 a total of fifty-eight additional students registered for seven courses as follows: (See Table V).

From the standpoint of academic achievement, the seventy-two students (on campus and the European tour) performed higher than expected. The grades given were as follows: A - 22; B - 29; C - 12; D - 4; F - 3; Audit - 2. It has to be kept in mind that these were supposedly average students, although some had not performed well in past semester. Also, several were making up work in an attempt to raise their academic point averages, and on the basis of their work several were allowed to remain in school for the spring semester. Most of the students were in agreement that a great amount of work was expected of them over the three week period.

The instructors were not as encouraging in their praise of the program as the previous year. This was due in large part to absenteeism because of inclement weather and the flu. One of the instructors did comment that she had an unusual group of students, and she was high in her praise of the



I N T E R I M   S C H E D U L E

1969

	<u>Course</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Students</u>
En	101 Rhetoric & Composition	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	7
Fa	100 Introduction to Art	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	11
Ma	100 Introduction to Modern Math	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	4
Ss	201 Introduction to Psychology	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	12
Ss	101 Introduction to Sociology	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	4	4
En	102b Oral Communications	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	2	14
Ma	102 Trigonometry	M-T-W-Th-F	9-11 & 1-3	2	6
En	290 Contemporary European Culture (Travel Course) 3 weeks Three week travel tour of Holland, France, & England.			2	14
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:</b>					72

program.

The Contemporary European Culture travel tour was a great success. They were a highly motivated group, and generally above average students. Instruction before, during and after the trip was thorough. This trip proved that a travel course during this session could be successful.

The cost of operating the interim program was \$3,250.00 for salaries. The revenue amounted to \$5,028.00, so there was revenue received over expenditures of \$1,778.00, thus the 1969 interim session was self-supporting.

## CHAPTER IV

### EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

A sample was completed of one class offered during the January, 1969 interim session. This was a group of twelve students taking Introductory Psychology. The group was composed of four second year students, and eight second semester freshmen. (See Table VI). It should be noted that this was an average group of students. Two had Cumulative Point Averages of under 2.0 (C average) prior to the course. Seven fell in the 2.0 to 3.0 (C to B average), and three had over 3.0 (B to A average) prior to taking the Psychology 201 course. Seven improved their point average, one remained the same, and four dropped their overall average.

A point of interest is the American College Testing (ACT) scores of the respective students. It will be noted that only four of the twelve students ranked above the 50th percentile when they took the ACT as high school seniors or at the beginning of their first semester in College. Only two of the four who ranked in the 50th percentile or better improved their Cumulative Point Average. Overall, the

PSYCHOLOGY 201 - 1969 INTERIM SESSION

YEAR	CUMULATIVE POINT AVERAGE BEFORE INTERIM SESSION	GRADE RECEIVED FOR COURSE	CUMULATIVE POINT AVERAGE AFTER INTERIM SESSION	ACT PERCENTILE*				
				50	75	90	95	
1. Fresh	1.53	D	1.85	06	15	16	10	07
2. Soph	2.33	C+	2.29	20	30	03	34	13
3. Fresh	3.11	D	2.70	20	42	36	79	47
4. Fresh	3.75	B+	3.60	84	89	84	85	92
5. Fresh	3.75	A-	3.80	63	89	84	79	87
6. Fresh	2.75	B-	2.80	31	11	74	45	40
7. Soph	2.68	B-	2.70	54	23	18	09	21
8. Fresh	1.33	D+	1.67	25	42	84	34	47
9. Soph	2.19	A	2.39	13	85	38	73	53
10. Fresh	2.07	C	2.10	47	50	57	47	50
11. Fresh	2.50	B	2.50	46	48	03	45	22
12. Soph	2.20	B-	2.27	12	29	22	50	26

\* ACT (American College Testing College Board Percentiles)

TABLE VI

previous lower achievers tended to perform better in this particular situation. Further follow-up studies will need to be done in future interim sessions to see if this trend continues. There is the possibility that the previous low achievers perform better in small groups with a greater amount of instructor guidance than they do in larger classes during the regular semesters.

## CHAPTER V

### OBSERVATION AND CONCLUSION

Generally a student must be quite highly motivated to wish to attempt a course during the interim session. The motivation may not necessarily be because they rank high on college-bound tests. It may be an attempt to improve themselves so that they can remain in college, or in many instances they may wish to accelerate their college program. It is of interest that at Bay de Noc Community College many of the same students that enroll in the interim session also enroll in the summer sessions, thus they are finishing in one and one-half years rather than the customary two years.

Close guidance and counseling may be necessary, as there is not enough time for general evaluating as is done during a fifteen or sixteen week semester. If the classes are small--not over twenty students as a maximum--general guidance can be done on a regular basis with the students who may be having some difficulties with the course they are taking. There is then opportunity for the instructor to review the individual student's records to see the deficiencies, and to be able to work with them on that basis.

BAY DE NOC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Evaluation Sheet

Do you feel that you have been able to adequately cover the assigned material in your text? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Would you take this course if you had it to do over again? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Was the content of the presentation of such a nature that you enjoyed the course? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Were the films educational and interesting? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Would you have liked more lectures? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Would you have liked more outside reading? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Would you have liked more group (research) work? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Would you have liked more tests? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Would you have liked more field trips? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

What could have been done to improve the course as far as you are concerned? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tutorial help may be of significance in some instances.

Generally the lecture-laboratory type of course should not be offered during the interim session. There is too little time for laboratory experiments. However, further evaluation in this area might indicate limited course offerings in the future.

There should be constant evaluation of the entire interim session and the course offerings both by the students and the instructors. (See Table VII). The students were greatly in favor of the interim session in 1969. Of those polled, 58 were in favor of continuing the program and courses offered, and 8 were opposed. There is a possibility that further evaluations in future years may not show as positive reactions as indicated here.

In a more recent survey (May, 1969) students were asked their preferences regarding the timing of semesters. There were 329 questionnaires completed, and the results were as follows: (Table VIII)

We invite you to answer these quick questions to advise of your preferences regarding the timing of semesters next year. If you have replied at another final exam this is not necessary to repeat. Thank you.

R.L. Rinehart, President

The fall semester must begin in late August to be completed by Christmas. Would you prefer to begin after Labor Day and carry the semester into January?

54 Yes                      266 No

Are your summer work possibilities seriously handi-



capped by starting before Labor Day?

43 Yes                      275 No

If an appropriate course for you is scheduled in an Interim (January 3 week) period next year, would you probably enroll?

111 Yes                      119 No

99 Will not be at Bay de Noc next year.

Do you prefer to have a longer Easter spring holiday and have the spring semester end May 30 instead of this year's schedule?

75 Yes                      245 No

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

This clearly points out that students at Bay de Noc Community College are in favor of starting the fall semester a week before Labor Day and completing it by the Christmas Holiday. A substantial number (111) stated they would probably enroll in the interim session if the appropriate course were offered. Of equal interest is the students' preference in a short Easter Holiday, and finishing the second semester shortly after the middle of May.

Instructors generally are in favor of continuing the program. Time is the only real issue, and this has to be worked out on an individual basis by the instructor. Field study courses for credit should be encouraged in future offerings. Exchange of students between schools for a like period of time is a possibility in future interim sessions.

From the administrative standpoint the program can be

self-supporting (tuition plus state funds on an equated basis.) However, the value to the student is of far more value than any deficit the school might have to absorb to support the program.

There was considerable interest in the program among the students, and at the community level. Two of the courses had a high percentage of students not previously matriculated, or who were only part-time students. It is reasonable to believe that a program of this nature can be successful on a continuing basis, and there is a possibility of initiating the interim period between the end of the summer term and the beginning of the fall semester. The program will only be as successful as the interest shown on the part of the administration, teaching faculty, and students.

The objective of encouraging flexibility on the part of the student is an important part of acquiring an education, and of instituting a suitable academic climate. A reasonable balance is a healthy approach to modern education.

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