Curriculum Mapping 101

Curriculum mapping is a both process and a tool that can help us:

- Review our curriculum for content and purpose
- Determine if courses and instruction align with the student learning outcomes (SLOs) for our programs
- Ensure coherence among courses in a program (not just that we have a collection of courses, but that we are sure they “fit” together the way we want them to)
- Scaffold student learning as they progress through our programs
- Ensure meaningful, cohesive learning experiences for our students
- Design assessment projects to make sure our students are learning what we intend them to learn in our programs

General Guidelines

- Identify courses where specific program outcomes are likely to be achieved.
- Identify courses that include an assignment or activity that might be used as an embedded assessment for a program-level outcome.
- Identify courses in which the course learning outcomes are not related to any program learning outcomes.
- Identify gaps in the curriculum or areas where there is not alignment.
- Suggest questions about the need for sequencing courses within the curriculum or modifying any existing sequences of courses.
- Continually update and analyze the curriculum map – and include as many faculty as you can in doing so.
Depending on the program’s structure and how a curriculum map is constructed, mapping can help us answer the following questions:

- Are all program outcomes addressed by the curriculum?
- Do all of the courses address at least one outcome? If not, is this important?
- What do your electives, individually and collectively, contribute to the achievement of your student learning outcomes?
- Do all students, regardless of their path through the program, experience a coherent progression and coverage of all outcomes?
- Do some outcomes get more coverage than others?
- Are all outcomes first introduced and then reinforced?
- Are students expected to show high levels of learning too early?
- Where are students asked to demonstrate that they have met the program outcomes? (For most departments, demonstration of all the program outcomes will not happen in a single course.)
- At what point(s) in the curriculum do students receive feedback about their learning of the program outcomes?

Not all courses that teach to a particular outcome require students to demonstrate their learning of that outcome. For this reason, it cannot be assumed that direct evidence of student learning of a program outcome can be found in any course that teaches to that outcome. Discussion with teaching faculty can help identify where the direct evidence can be found, and this, ultimately, is how mapping helps us with program learning assessment: it teaches us where to look while giving us interesting information about our curriculum in the process.

Questions to Consider

- Do you have clarity and agreement on where outcomes are introduced, reinforced, assessed in the program courses?
- Do pre-reqs make sense as you consider your program’s map?
- Does the course sequence (if there is one) make sense as you consider your map?
• For the courses you teach, do the assignments within the course reinforce the outcomes the course supports?

• Do syllabi reflect how courses contribute to program learning outcomes?

Some Resources and Examples

University of Hawaii, Manoa – Curriculum Mapping Overview
  http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm

University of West Florida – Center for University Teaching, Learning & Assessment
  http://uwf.edu/cutla/writingslo.cfm

University of Connecticut – Assessment Primer
  http://assessment.uconn.edu/primer/mapping1.html


Miller, Judith E. “Assessment Matters 2: Curriculum Maps.”