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For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion

A Tool for Curriculum Integration and Assessment: Curriculum Maps

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To help Faculty make better curricular decisions, philosophical, programmatic, and pragmatic, Deans need to help Faculty understand the curriculum as a whole. Rather than seeing a theological curriculum as a series of topical courses, the mission of the seminary is best served when Faculty understand the academic curriculum as an integrated, goal-oriented, outcomes-focused, "program of study."

One helpful tool for communicating the curriculum as a "program of study" is the curriculum map. A curriculum map is a tool for assessing scope and coverage of elements in the explicit curriculum. A curriculum map can depict coverage of cognates, themes, methodology, topics, or other components that are considered important enough to be explicit parts of the student's learning experience. Maps can reveal strengths and emphases in the scope of the curriculum, and, can depict points and degrees of integration. These maps can also reveal gaps in coverage in the scope of the curriculum.

Here are examples of three kinds of curriculum maps: (1) degree program goals, (2) thematic concepts, and (3) methodology. The maps plot where, and to what extent, individual courses address explicit facets of study across the curriculum.

The degree goals program map: depicts the relative strengths where the degree program goals are addressed throughout the curriculum. This map helps identify the extent of coverage, integration, and gaps. This sample program goals curriculum map from Central Generic

Theological Seminary (a fictitious school) shows (1) the three major curriculum goals (right hand column) with supportive derivative goals, (2) a listing of the implicit courses in the three theological cognate areas that make up the course of study, and (3) a graphic plotting of the degree of relative correlation emphasis of each goal within individual courses. Seen as a whole, the map depicts (1) the coverage of the degree program goals across the curriculum, (2) potential "gaps" in the course of study, and (3) points of integration across the curriculum. Click to Download (1) Mapping Goals sample curriculum goals maps.

G O A L S   M A P   D O C U M E N T

The thematic concepts map: identifies themes, topics, and concepts related to the program of study. This sample curriculum map plots to what extent selected concepts are addressed in courses and across the curriculum. The map identifies forty six concepts in this school's M.Div. curriculum and plots their coverage across the course of study by a scale of relative strength (primary, secondary, moderate, minimal, incidental and "not addressed"). The graphic representation provides an interpretation of thematic coverage across the curriculum. Faculty can see topics that are well-covered, and those that are being neglected. Click to Download (2) Mapping Topics a sample curriculum thematic map.

T H E M E S   M A P   D O C U M E N T

CENTRAL GENERIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Curriculum Map: Concepts

Extent of coverage CODE: ■ 5 A primary emphasis ■ 4 A secondary emphasis ■ 3 A moderate emphasis ■ 2 Minimal coverage ■ 1 Incidental coverage □ Not addressed

The methodology map: identifies the common learning methodologies used throughout the curriculum. Balance in the use of learning modalities enriches the learning experience and accommodates cognitive styles, cognitive domains, skills, multiple intelligences, and individuated instruction. This sample methods map from Central Generic Theological Seminary identifies thirteen common graduate-level appropriate methods and their use as primary, secondary, and tertiary modes in singular courses. The map as a whole serves to depict the range of application of the methods, potential overuse of methods, as well as potential gaps in using a variety of methods and modes of learning. This type of map can encourage Faculty to understand the experiences of students across the curriculum and help them dialog about using more creative and varied teaching methods. Click to Download (3) Mapping Methods a sample curriculum methods map.

METHODOLOGY   MAP   DOCUMENT

Legend: ■ 1 = Primary   ■ 2 = Secondary   ■ 3 = Tertiary   □ Not used

Course	Lecture	Research	Writing	Reading	Collaboration	Interview	Reflection	Project	Practicum	Art	Journal	Discussion	Online	
B1070 Models of Biblical Interpretation														
B1060 Topics in Biblical Interpretation														
B1091 Biblical Interpretation in the Church I														
B1092 Biblical Interpretation in the Church II														
B1111 Intro Old Testament I & II														
B1116 Humor in the Bible														
B1121 Intro Biblical Hebrew I & II														
B1123 Hebrew Readings														
B1125 Sin														
B1135 Judges														
B1143 Jeremiah														
B1159 The Megilloth														
B1211 Intro New Testament I & II														
B1221 NT Greek I & II														
B1231 The Gospel of John														
B1232 Greek Readings in Acts														
B1233 Acts (Eng)														
B1237 Greek Readings in the Gospel of Mark														
B1279 Women and New Testament Narratives														
B1960 Christian Preaching about Jews and Judaism														
HT2111 Introduction to the Christian Tradition I & II														
HT2120 Creativity and Imagination: Women Leaders in Church														
HT2123 Classics of Christian Literature														
HT2125 Prayer in the Spirituality of the Ancient Church														
HT2140 Christianity and the Rise of Islam														
HT2141 Monastic Roots in the Radical Reformation														
HT2160 The Baptist Heritage														
HT2910 Introduction to Christian Mission														
HT2912 Mission Immersion Experience														
HT2920 Christian Response to Terrorism														
HT2923 Perspectives on Global Christian Movement														
HT2930 World Religions														
HT2931 African Traditional Religions														
M9110 The Ministry of Preaching														
M9117 Biblical Preaching for Today's Congregation														
M9124 Narrative Preaching														
M9209 Exploring Ministerial Identity														

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Maps as Educational Tools Involving Faculty in the creation of a curriculum map helps instructors understand the curriculum as a whole, and to see where and how individual courses "fit" in the course of study. To implement this faculty development activity, create a blank curriculum map (program goals, methods, topics or concepts, etc.) and distribute to the faculty with instructions like:

> " Study each map to familiarize yourself with the instrument. On each map use the code to plot the degree to which your course addresses the elements being assessed. Be as accurate as you can. Remember that not every course will be able to, or is expected to, address every element on any map. The curriculum map is intended to help analyze and asses the curriculum as a whole.
>
> "You may want to review your course syllabi to determine how overt each map element is identified (program goals, themes, and methodologies). If you plot something on the map because you "know in your head" that it fits, but you don't see it identified in the syllabus, consider updating the syllabus so that it communicates, and aligns, overtly the curricular elements you plot.
>
> "Once you have completed plotting your courses on the map pass it along to another professor in your discipline area. Consider working together with one or more colleague as you identity and plot the components on each map. Once all professors in your area complete the map please return it to the Dean."

Once you compile the input from faculty members, publish and review the maps as a Faculty.

Offer prompts for discussion such as:

- How well do the courses in our curriculum provide "coverage" of the various facets of the program of study?
- How effectively do our courses, taken together, interpret and address the curriculum goals?
- What areas and foci do we cover most in our curriculum?
- Are there "gaps" in our coverage of important curriculum goals, facets, or methods?

https://wabashcenter.wabash.edu/2013/11/a-tool-for-curriculum-integration-and-assessment-curriculum-maps/