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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

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

Course	Lecture	Research	Writing	Reading	Collaboration	Interview	Reflection	Project	Practicum	Art	Journal	Discussion	Online
CO000	1	1	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI000	1	1	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI001	1	1	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI002	1	1	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI110	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI111	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI112	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI113	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI114	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI115	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI116	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI117	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI118	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI119	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI120	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI121	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI122	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI123	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI124	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI125	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI126	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI127	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI128	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI129	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI130	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI131	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI132	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI146	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI154	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI155	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI158	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI160	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI162	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI163	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI164	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI165	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI166	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI167	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI168	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI172	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI173	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI174	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI176	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI179	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI180	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI182	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI183	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI184	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI185	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI186	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI187	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI188	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI190	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI191	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI192	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI193	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI194	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI195	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI196	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI197	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI198	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI199	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI200	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2

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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 assess 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 identify 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/>