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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

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.

GOALS

MAP

DOCUMENT

CENTRAL GENERIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Curriculum Map: Program Goals

Course	I. Critical/assess			II. Compare/analyze basic ministerial skills						III. Integrate skills and apply in ministerial setting						KCVS Code Key: H High correlation/primary focus M Moderate correlation/secondary focus L Low correlation/tertiary/occasional focus (blank) Not addressed/absent or de-emphasized			
	1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E		3F	3G	3H
HT2010 Religious Authority																			
HT2016 Problem of Evil																			
HT2020 Critique of Christianity																			
HT2010 Introduction to Christian Mission																			
HT2010 Mission/Immersion Experience																			
HT2000 Christian Responses to Terrorism																			
HT2000 Perspectives on Global Christian Movements																			
HT2000 World Religions																			
HT2001 African Traditional Religions																			
MINISTRY STUDIES																			
MS110 The Ministry of Preaching																			
MS117 Biblical Preaching for Today's Congregation																			
MS124 Narrative Preaching																			
MS140 Preaching in a Postmodern World																			
MS204 Exploring Ministerial Identity																			
MS211 Intro to Christian Spirituality																			
MS216 Ministers as Spiritual Guides and Vocational Leaders																			
MS220 Longing for God: Classics in Christian Spirituality																			
MS222 Spiritual Autobiographies																			
MS224 Praying on Planet Earth																			
MS226 Wilderness Retreat																			
MS228 Sabbath Keeping																			
MS229 Celtic Spiritual Retreat																			
MS230 Changing Practices, Changing Work																			
MS271 Drama Production																			
MS210 Christian Ministry I & II																			
MS220 Christian Ministry (ministry) I & II																			
MS410 Basic Pastoral Care																			
MS412 Pastoral Care in Worship																			
MS413 Identity, Personal Development and Self-Care																			
MS420 Marriage and Family Counseling																			
MS421 Pastoral Care with Children and Youth																			
MS430 The Minister and Crisis Counseling																			
MS431 Pastoral Care of Difficult Relationships																			
MS440 Clinical Pastoral Care I & II																			
MS448 Pastoral Counseling Practicum																			
MS460 Ministering in Grief Loss and Difficult Death																			
MS484 Pastoral Care of Difficult Relationships																			

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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.

THEMES

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
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
BI133	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI134	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI135	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI136	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI137	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI138	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI139	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI142	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI143	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI144	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI145	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI146	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI147	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI148	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI149	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI150	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI151	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI152	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI153	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI154	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
BI155	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI162	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI168	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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BI171	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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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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BI178	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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
BI189	1	2	1	1	1			1				2	2
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://wabash.center/2013/11/a-tool-for-curriculum-integration-and-assessment-curriculum-maps/>