

Curriculum Mapping Model¹

The current Curriculum Mapping model is based on the work of Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs (1997). Udelhofen (2005) states "...the concept of curriculum mapping originated in the 1980s with the work of Fenwick English..." (xviii). Dr. Jacobs embraced and enhanced the earlier work by adding a variety of teacher-driven curriculum maps, horizontal and vertical alignments, cyclic reviews, and professional curricular dialogue. Jacobs (2004) states, "...curriculum maps have the potential to become the hub for making decisions about teaching and learning. Focusing the barrage of initiatives and demands on schools into a central database that can be accessed from anywhere through the Internet can provide relief ... Mapping becomes an integrating force to address not only curriculum issues, but also programmatic ones." (p.126).

Curriculum Mapping emphasizes the requisite that teachers and administrators focus on the balance between what really took place in individual classrooms with what was individually or collaboratively planned. This data is measured in real time: recorded by months or grading periods. Most types of curriculum maps are recorded monthly. Teachers record what has taken place, or is planned, individually at a school-site level (Diary Map, Projected Map); collaboratively planned curriculum at a school-site level (Consensus Map, oftentimes referred to as a Core Map, Master Map, or Benchmark Map); or collaboratively planned curriculum at a district level (Essential Map).

To gain insight into gaps, absences, and repetitions in a school or district's K-12 curriculum, it is critical to create quality maps. During the initial learning-to-map-phase the most commonly recorded data includes content, skills, assessments, resources, and their alignment to one another other and state (or other) standards. In subsequent and more advanced phases of mapping, additional data such as evaluation processes, attachments of best-practice lesson plans and activities, essential questions, and other curricular information is often included.

Curriculum maps are never considered "done." Curriculum Mapping does not perceive education as a static environment since learning, and learning about learning, is a continual process. As long as teachers have new students, new classes, and new school years, newly created and revised curriculum maps provide evidence of a school or district's ongoing curriculum.

Curriculum maps are never used for teacher evaluation or punitive damage. They are designed to provide authentic evidence of what has happened or is being planned within a school or a district. Encouraging individual and collaborative renewing and re-visiting of data (curriculum maps and other sources) through curricular dialogues is essential to mapping and becoming a thriving educational environment that continually improves student learning.

Curriculum Mapping Focuses

Curriculum Mapping focuses on three Cs: *Communication, Curricular Dialogue, and Coherency.*

¹ Curriculum Mapping (http://www.curriculummapping101.com/Curriculum_Mapping.html)

Communication -- 21st Century curriculum maps are most often developed and maintained using an Internet-based commercial mapping system. This technological venue provides teachers and administrators with easy access to both the planned and actual horizontal (same grade level and/or same discipline) and vertical (different grade levels and/or different disciplines) curricula for present and past school years. The commercial systems' search features allow teachers to gain instant information in regard to mapping data to aid in curricular dialogue. This means and level of communication is unprecedented. In the not-to-distant past data had to be printed out, copied, distributed, and an in-person meeting held to view and discuss the documents. Curriculum Mapping encourages innovation and thought about meeting differently and in new ways.

Curricular Dialogue -- Teachers take part in collegial relationships wherein they make data-based decisions about grade-level, cross-grade level, disciplinary, and cross-disciplinary curricula and instructional practices. Teachers become Teacher Leaders. Curriculum Mapping has two guiding principles: Jacobs (2004) states that teachers and administrators must consider "...the empty chair..." which represents all students in a given school or district, and "...all work must focus on Johnny, and all comments and questions are welcomed as long as they are in his best interest" (p.2). Second, if it is in the students' best interest to change, modify, stop, start, or maintain curriculum practices, programs, and/or other related issues, there must be data-based proof to do so (Jacobs, 2002). These two principles are logical, rational, and well-founded. One may consider them easy to implement, but oftentimes proves difficult in practice. Barth (2006) refers to the "...elephant in the classroom—the various forms of relationships among adults within the schoolhouse might be categorized in four ways: parallel play, adversarial relationships, congenial relationships, and collegial relationships" (p.10). Not surprising, the first three ways do not elicit vigorous curricular dialogue. Barth contends "...empowerment, recognition, satisfaction, and success in our work—all in scarce supply within our schools—will never stem from going it alone ... success comes only from being an active participant within a masterful group—a group of colleagues" (p.13). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to provide teachers with ample professional development to hone their skills in all facets of curriculum mapping and collegial, curricular dialogue. Allowing teachers time to build personal ownership in the mapping process empowers them, and subsequently, improves student learning.

Coherency -- A combination of 21st Century communication plus curricular dialogue eventually equals curricular coherency. Many teachers are currently engaged in what Dr. Jacobs (2001) refers to as "...treadmill teaching." Running breathless on grade-level or content-area treadmills trying desperately to get everything they believe needs to be taught, taught. If teachers took the time to slow down their treadmills and personally document and evaluate both the planned, and most importantly, actual learning, they may well discover that they are perpetuating a potentially incoherent curriculum. Curriculum Mapping is designed to ask teachers to record, reflect on, study, and revise their individual and corporate work. This cyclic endeavor eventually leads a school or district to developing and maintaining an aligned curriculum that makes sense to all—and most importantly—to students!

The Curriculum Mapping Journey

Based on current educational demands, success is based on measurable, improved student learning. Curriculum Mapping addresses this concern, but goes much deeper. It travels to the heart of our profession: caring about the journey a child takes upon entering as a Kindergartener, exiting as a high-school graduate, and enrolling in a higher-education learning environment ... To be successful for a lifetime: Prek-16+.

Be advised: Curriculum Mapping is not a quick fix. Curriculum Mapping has a learning curve to it. For a time, your teachers will be students. They must be afforded the cognitive processing time needed to learn something new, and be well-supported throughout the process. Some will learn faster than others; some will need more support; and still others may refuse to learn. Just as curriculum's root meaning is: a path taken in small steps, it is important to allow teachers to likewise take small steps.

Learn as much as you can about Curriculum Mapping by continuously reading, attending conferences and networking to aid in developing your school or district's strategic plans, realistic action plans, and short-term goals. Please use my website to help gain insight into the world of Curriculum Mapping and support your present or future work. If you would like to [e-mail](#) me or call me to discuss questions or wonderments, please feel free to do so at any time.

Happy Mapping!

References:

- Barth, R.S. (2006). Improving relationships within the schoolhouse. *Educational Leadership*, 63(6). 9-13.
- Jacobs, H.H. (1997). *Mapping the big picture: integrating curriculum and assessment K-12*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
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- Udelofen, S. (2005). *Keys to curriculum mapping: strategies and tools to make it work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Web Resources

Kentucky Department of Education, *Sample Curriculum Maps*

<http://www.kde.state.ky.us/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Curriculum+Documents+and+Resources/Teaching+Tools/Curriculum+Maps/>

Hale, Janet; *A Guide to Curriculum Mapping*,

http://books.google.com/books?id=Ws6BtbijoYC&pg=PA188&lpg=PA188&dq=curriculum+mapping+%2B+school+counseling&source=bl&ots=TxOJQ8vRqA&sig=1QFvT5Qxrj7pOvrEuH20rW7YDI&hl=en&ei=RSNSSu71IsOYIAfDysyUDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5

Spotsylvania Va K-12; *Curriculum Map*; <http://www.spotsylvania.k12.va.us/cmmaps/>

http://www.spotsylvania.k12.va.us/tms/guidance/counseling_curriculum.pdf

West Virginia Department of Education, *The Role of the School Counselor*

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/counselors/links/counselors/role.html> Search under "Counselor" then LINKing from dropdown menu in left hand column.

Lancaster High School Curriculum Map,

<http://www.lancasterschools.org/869601020125651/lib/869601020125651/LHS%20Curriculum%20Map.pdf>

Heartland Area Education Agency, *School Counselor Performance Evaluation*,

<http://www.aea11.k12.ia.us/prodev/counseling/crosswalk/AEA-11.pdf>

Rockledge Elementary Curriculum Map,

<http://74.125.93.132/search?q=cache:w6U53i5BzngJ:pwcs.rockledge.schoolfusion.us/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/494237/File/COUNSELING%2520Map%2520Pacing%2520K-5%25202008>

Partners in Learning, *What Are Curricular Maps?*

<http://performancepyramid.muohio.edu/pyramid/curriculum-mapping/What-are-Curriculum-Maps-.html>