Research Brief
Curriculum Mapping

Question: What is curriculum mapping?

Summary of Findings:

Getting through the choppy seas of curriculum reform and high stakes testing, as well as meeting predetermined standards and adequate yearly progress, is often difficult for a teacher, let alone a school or district, to ascertain what specific content should be taught and what is actually being taught. Teachers often do not know what has been taught in previous courses and have little opportunity to share that information with each other. In the 1970s and 1980s Dr. Fenwick English introduced curriculum mapping, where maps were designed by a third party. In the mid-1990s, Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs introduced methodology to help teachers directly navigate those murky waters of the process of curriculum mapping. It is a "…procedure for collecting data about the operational curriculum" (Jacobs, 2004, p. 1).

Hayes Jacobs stated that, " Education is a business-the growth business" (Jacobs, 2004, p. v). At the heart of curriculum mapping is doing what is in the best interests of the students so that they are provided opportunities to meet the challenges of the world in which they will be living and working. It also allows for a changing curriculum, provides an overview of the curriculum for all stakeholders and encourages regular reflection on what is to be taught and what was taught. There are three key questions that educators should take into consideration when determining what curriculum should be taught and what is actually being taught.

- "Who is doing what?
- How does our work align with our goals?
- Are we operating efficiently and effectively?" (Jacobs, 2004, p. v).

Where curriculum mapping has been successful, the following components were present:

- administration, district and/or school, were in total support of the process. They provided the resources; material; technology; time for reflection, analysis and dialogue with other staff; and staff

development
- this process was not an add-on to the teachers' workloads
- traditional curriculum committees were dissolved and curriculum was designed with input from those teaching a specific content, then the committee was disbanded
- mapping was on-going and part of the school's/district's culture
- maps were revised regularly, based on the needs of the students
- timeframes for implementation, assessment and revision were realistic
- curriculum was aligned with standards
- all teachers had training in and access to mapping technology in order to review what had been taught, add their own information and revise as appropriate
- all teachers were involved in the mapping process
- teachers used texts to support the curriculum, not as the curriculum

There are three stages in the mapping process: 1) research and development; 2) actual mapping process; and 3) on-going assessment, evaluation and revision.

1. Research and development
   This is conducted prior to the actual mapping process. Committee members should include leadership staff, teachers and technology personnel. This group should:
   - be familiar with the mapping process
   - research books, articles and other schools/districts that are using or have used the mapping process
   - examine student demographic information
   - determine available mapping technology, including availability for all teachers and the type of teacher training that will need to be done
   - explore successful previous staff development programs and apply what worked to the training of staff
   - establish time frames for implementation of the mapping process
   - meet with and educate faculty about mapping and present implementation time frames
2. Actual mapping process
   - Each teacher completes a map based on the skills, processes and content that were actually taught. It is recorded technologically

usually following the school calendar.
- A first read through of the maps is done individually by the teachers. They should read for "…repetitions, gaps, assessments, matches with standards, potential areas for integration, and timeliness" (Jacobs, 1997, p. 11).
- Small group review sessions made up of teachers who do not work together. Teachers share their findings from their individual readings and determine areas for attention.
- The entire faculty then reviews the findings from the small group review sessions. This is where discussing, editing, revising and developing curriculum take place. Determine what can immediately be changed and what needs more time, research and development.

3. On-going assessment, evaluation and revision.
- This should be on going, continuously reflecting the actual curriculum being taught, current methodologies, materials, assessments and standards being met.
- It should be revised as appropriate and necessary

Online Resources:

- An information retrieval system for curriculum mapping
Information on technology for curriculum management, using mapping is presented in this article.
http://www.tcnj.edu/~hopewell/Wolz_ResearchPaper.pdf

- A process for curriculum mapping
This article provides a simplistic description of the mapping process.
http://www.ncrel.org/info/notes/spring03/process.htm

- Assessment primer: Curriculum mapping
A brief description of planning backwards and delivering curriculum forward are provided in this piece.
http://web.uconn.edu/assessment/mapping1.htm

- A study of effective practices in Virginia

Schools that were considered to be "effective" were studied. One description was about schools that used curriculum mapping.
http://www.clihome.com/Docs/CM/VirginiaFullReport.pdf

- Creating a timely curriculum: A conversation with Heidi Hayes Jacobs
  Reasons for curriculum mapping are described by Heidi Hayes Jacobs in this article.
  http://www.e-lcds.org/oncampus/documents/jacobs.pdf

- Curriculum designers
  Information about Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs as well as resources for curriculum mapping.
  http://www.curriculumdesigners.com/aboutjacobs.htm

- Curriculum mapping
  This is a brief explanation of mapping along with live links to other sites.
  http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Curriculum%20Mapping/Index.htm

- Curriculum mapping and instructional supervision
  An explanation of curriculum mapping and how it can be used to support a strong instructional program is given.
  http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3696/is_199609/ai_n8734147

- Curriculum mapping as a tool for continuous improvement
  A brief overview of the purpose of a continuous improvement map is given in this piece.
  http://www.ncrel.org/info/notes/spring03/tool.htm

- Curriculum mapping as professional development
  Issues to keep in mind when developing maps are presented in this article.
  http://intercom.noeca.esu.k12.oh.us/downloads/CurriculumMappingProf.pdf

- Curriculum mapping cohort
  A description of how a district in Tennessee set up their professional development program for the mapping process is given in the article.
  http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/tpd/cmfaqanswer.htm

- Curriculum mapping for rigor and relevance
  This is the home page with ample resources for mapping.
  http://www.edteck.com/wpa/

- Curriculum mapping website
  This is the home page for a mapping website.
  http://currmap.ncrel.org/default.htm

- Curriculum mapping: What is it?
  A very brief article about the steps in the mapping process along with live links to maps are found in this piece.
  http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/virtualwkshp/virtualwkshp004.shtml

- Improving student performance with curriculum mapping
  A brief overview of the purpose as well as the steps in mapping are provided in this article.
  http://www.measuredprogress.org/Resources/Newsletter/Summer2005/Feature1.html

- Next steps: Further discussion
  A brief description of the steps to be taken after the initial map is done is given in this piece.
  http://www.ncrel.org/info/notes/spring03/discuss.htm

- Resources
  "This issue contains several resources for understanding and implementing curriculum mapping. These include a Sample Curriculum Map, a guide to Conducting a Curriculum Mapping Session, and instructions for a "fishbone" group process."
  http://www.ncrel.org/info/notes/spring03/resource.htm

- Road map to success: A curriculum mapping primer
  An overview of the mapping process is provided in this article.
  http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml/print/35

- Sample curriculum maps from curriculum designers
  Samples of different maps are provided at this site. Examples of maps for high school include: Staff development map, world language, economics, US history, Asian language, and Spanish.
  http://www.curriculumdesigners.com/resourcesmapsamples.htm

- Sample curriculum maps from Kentucky
  Live links to maps in different content areas from elementary to high school are provided.
  http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Curriculum+Documents+and+Resources/Teaching+Tools/Curriculum+Maps/default.htm

Books
- Keys to curriculum mapping
  "*Keys to Curriculum Mapping* is packed with templates, flowcharts, tips, and troubleshooting techniques for curriculum mapping. Includes processes for:
  Finding time for curriculum mapping
  Sharing information with colleagues within the curriculum mapping Framework
  Adapting curriculum mapping to support other school-based programs
  Utilizing curriculum mapping to implement No Child Left Behind initiatives"

http://www.corwinpress.com/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book226930

- Jacobs, H. H. (2004). Getting results with curriculum mapping. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.
  This book reviews the steps in curriculum mapping and includes experiences from different levels and types of schools. Staff development and curriculum map examples are included. This is a link to purchase this book.
  http://www.campusi.com/author_Heidi_Hayes_Jacobs.htm

- Jacobs, H. H. (1997). Mapping the big picture. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.
  This book provides the initial outline along with extensive descriptions of the mapping process. This is a link to purchase the book.
  http://www.campusi.com/author_Heidi_Hayes_Jacobs.htm

Mapping software
- A list and description of different curriculum mapping software with active links are provided.
  http://www.curriculumdesigners.com/resourcesmapsoftware.htm

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http://www.educationpartnerships.org/