# Course and Curriculum Alignment

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**Program Assessment**

**Program assessment** is an on-going process designed to monitor and improve student learning. Faculty:
- develop explicit statements of what students should learn (SLOs).
- ➢ **verify that the program is designed to foster this learning (alignment).**
- develop an assessment plan
- implement the plan: collect assessment evidence
- assess the evidence and reach a conclusion
- use these findings to improve student learning (close the loop).

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**Learning Outcomes: How Students Can Demonstrate Their Learning to Us**

- Students can collaborate with others to produce a common product or solution.
- Students can analyze and interpret data collected in biological experiments.
- Students can use arithmetic, algebraic, and geometric methods to solve problems.
- Students can locate appropriate sources by searching electronic databases.
- Students follow professional ethical standards when providing nursing care to patients.
- Students can describe major concepts, theories, and classic research studies in Psychology.
- Students can audit financial records.

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**Curriculum Organization: The Cohesive Curriculum**

- Coherence: Not just a collection of unrelated courses
- Synthesizing Experiences: Opportunities to consolidate learning
- Ongoing Practice of Learned Skills: Skills deteriorate without practice
- Systematically Created Opportunities to Develop Increasing Sophistication and Apply What Is Learned

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## Curriculum Map 1

| Course | Outcome 1 | Outcome 2 | Outcome 3 | Outcome 4 | Outcome 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | I, D | | | | I |
| 101 | | I | | | D |
| 102 | D | | D | | D |
| 103 | | | | | D |
| 200 | D | | D | | |
| 229 | | | | | D |
| 230 | | | D, M | | M |
| 280 | | | | | |
| 290 | M | | D, M | | M |

I = Introduced, D = Developed & Practiced with Feedback, M = Demonstrated at the Mastery Level Appropriate for Graduation

Entries on the map indicate that there are course learning outcomes that align with relevant program learning outcomes consistent with the map and that faculty can provide artifacts (e.g., exams, papers, projects) that could be used to assess the relevant program learning outcomes. Once faculty agree on the curriculum map, courses should be taught in ways that align with the map, regardless of instructor.

## The Curriculum Map

- Focuses faculty on curriculum cohesion
- Guides course planning
- Allows faculty to identify potential sources of embedded assessment evidence
- Allows faculty to identify where they might close the loop

## Let's analyze some curriculum map patterns.

## Curriculum Map 2

| Course | Outcome 1 | Outcome 2 | Outcome 3 | Outcome 4 | Outcome 5 | Outcome 6 |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 100 | I, D, M | | | | | |
| 101 | I, D, M | | | | | |
| 102 | | I, D, M | | | | |
| 103 | | | I, D, M | | | |
| 203 | | | I, D, M | | | |
| 230A | | | | I, D | | |
| 230B | | | | D, M | | |
| 280 | | | | | I, D, M | |
| 290 | | | | | | I, D, M |

## Curriculum Map 3

| Course | Outcome 1 | Outcome 2 | Outcome 3 | Outcome 4 | Outcome 5 |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 100 | I | I | I | I | I |
| 101 | D | D | D | D | D |
| 102 | D | D | D | D | D |
| 103 | D | D | D | D | D |
| 200 | D | D | D | D | D |
| 229 | D | D | D | D | D |
| 230 | D | D | D | D | D |
| 280 | D | D | D | D | D |
| 290 | M | M | M | M | M |

## GE Curriculum Map

| GE Requirement | Outcome 1 | Outcome 2 | Outcome 3 | Outcome 4 | Outcome 5 |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | I, D | | | | I |
| 2 | | I | | | |
| 3 | D | | I | | D |
| 4 | | | | I, D, M | |
| 5 | | | D | | D |
| 6 | | | | | D |
| 7 | | | | | |
| GE Capstone | | | M | | D, M |
| Majors | D, M | | D, M | | D, M |

**Think about a program that you contribute to. Does it have:**
- Coherence: Not a collection of unrelated courses?
- Synthesizing Experiences: Systematic opportunities for students to consolidate learning?
- Ongoing Practice of Learned Skills: To avoid learning deterioration ?
- Systematically Created Opportunities to Develop Increasing Sophistication and Apply What Is Learned?

**Articulating Learning Outcomes:**

**Knowledge**          **Skills**          **Attitudes/Values/Predispositions**

**Learning Outcomes:**
**Learning outcomes can vary in depth of required understanding,**
**and they may require different pedagogical approaches.**

1. Students can list major events in American history.
2. Students can describe major events and trends in American history.
3. Students can apply their knowledge of American history to examine contemporary American issues.

**Alignment of Pedagogy with Outcomes**

| Outcome | Pedagogy |
|---|---|
| Students can list major events in American history. | |
| Students can describe major events and trends in American history. | |
| Students can apply their knowledge of American history to examine contemporary American issues. | |

## Learning Outcomes at Different Levels

- **Course Level (CLOs)**: Students who complete this course can calculate and interpret a variety of descriptive and inferential statistics.
- **Program Level (PLOs)**: Students who complete the Psychology program can use statistical tools to analyze and interpret data from psychological studies.
- **School or College Level**. Students who graduate in business can apply quantitative methods to business-related problems.
- **Institutional Level (ILOs)**: Graduates from our campus can apply quantitative reasoning to real-world problems.

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1. If ILOs are really institution-wide, every student should have systematic learning opportunities to master them, regardless of which course choices they make.
2. If School or College LOs are real, every student in that School or College should have systematic learning opportunities to master them.
3. PLOs should align with relevant School or College LOs and ILOs.
4. CLOs should align with PLOs consistent with the curriculum map.
5. Courses should be designed to align with CLOs.

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**Does your campus have ILOs? If yes, does your program have corresponding PLOs?**

**Does you School or College have LOs? If yes, does your program align with them?**

**Do CLOs in your program align with PLOs consistent with your curriculum map?**

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### Engagement

- Students who are engaged in their learning are more likely to persist and be successful.
- We want students to develop deep and lasting learning, not shallow and short-term learning.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Faculty Instructional Role:
  - Design learning environments that engage students in their learning
  - Share interests and enthusiasm with students
  - Provide students formative feedback on their progress; grade student work
  - Mentor student development in and out of the classroom
  - Assess class sessions, courses, and programs to improve their effectiveness
- Faculty Need a Repertoire of Teaching Strategies that Allow Them to Help Different Types of Students and to Help Students Develop Different Types of Learning Outcomes, such as:
  - Active learning
  - Collaborative and cooperative learning

- o  Community-service learning
- o  Homework and laboratory assignments
- o  Internships and other fieldwork experiences
- o  Lectures and discussion
- o  Online learning
- o  Problem-based learning

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## Practice Course: Developmental Psychology

**Course Description**
This course covers changes in cognition, personality, and motor skills from birth to early adulthood.

**Course Learning Outcomes**
Students who complete this course can:
1. Describe changes in cognition, personality, and motor skills from birth to early adulthood.
2. Use developmental theories to explain these changes.
3. Apply what they learn to parenting, education, and public policy issues related to children and families

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**Course Plan: Align Teaching, Learning, Grading, and Assessment**

| Learning Outcome | What Students Do to Master the Learning Outcome | Evidence Concerning How Well Learning Was Achieved |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Describe changes in cognition, personality, and motor skills from birth to early adulthood. | | |
| 2. Use developmental theories to explain these changes. | | |
| 3. Apply what they learn to parenting, education, and public policy issues related to children and families | | |

**Think about a course you regularly teach. Is it designed to engage students in mastering each CLO? Do you systematically grade/assess each CLO?**

**References**

Allen, M. J. (2004). *Assessing academic programs in higher education*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

Allen, M. J. (2006). *Assessing general education programs in higher education*. Bolton, MA: Anker.