Program Reviews: Demystifying Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Mapping

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Overview

- Curriculum development process
- **Shared vision**
  - Reflecting on our ideal graduate
- **Shared language**
  - Program learning outcomes
- **Shared process**
  - Curriculum mapping
- **Shared influence**
  - Leadership and ownership
- Importance in program review
Curriculum development process

- Four integrated phases
  - Design and development
  - Implementation
  - Formative assessment
  - Program review and accreditation

Diagram:
- Design
- Implement
- Assess
- Review
- Program Learning Outcomes
Program review requirements

- Key sections of the self study:
  - 1.2 Program Goals
  - 1.3 Assessment of the Program
  - 5.1 Learning Outcomes
A note about terminology

What we want for our students and program

- Aims
- Goals
- Objectives

What students should be able to do by the end of the program

- Competencies
- Degree-Level Expectations
- Graduate attributes
- Outcomes
Goals and outcomes

Program goal

- The overall goal of the CUT program is for participants to be self-aware, critically-reflective teachers who have gained both theoretical knowledge and skills that contribute to success in an academic career.

Program outcomes

- Adopt a reflective approach to teaching through collecting feedback and continually modifying instructional approaches.
- Develop and implement active-learning teaching methods.
Shared vision

- Describe an **ideal graduate** of your program.
  - What do they know? What skills do they possess? What do they value?
- What **distinguishes** your program from other programs?
  - Why should a potential student pick this discipline for their degree? Why at Waterloo?
- Imagine you meet an alum 20 years after their graduation. What do you hope they would say they **learned from the program and still value** 20 years after graduation?
Shared language

- Program learning outcomes
- Reflect what *all* students *should* be able to do by the end of the program
  - Cognitive: knowledge and intellectual skills
  - Psychomotor
    - Affective: values, beliefs and attitude
- Incorporate the disciplinary context of the program
- Align to the program vision and aspirations
- Help to set assessment criteria across the curriculum
Sample outcome

- Apply principles (concepts) of conflict analysis and transformation at community, institutional and systemic levels

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies

- Goal is for each outcome to be:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
Critiquing the outcomes

- Design
  - e.g. Must reflect abilities and attributes of all students

- Function
  - e.g. Sufficiently distinguish program from similar programs (e.g., B Math in CS vs B CS)

- Discipline
  - e.g., Integrate the language of the discipline

Shared process

- Curriculum mapping
  - Visual representation of curriculum
  - Can help to identify gaps/redundancies
  - How, when and where are students developing attributes?
  - Show progression toward various points in a degree
Map more than just course work

- Need to capture how other work contributes to fulfilling program outcomes
  - Thesis/dissertation
  - Comprehensive exams
  - Teaching assistantships
  - Supervising/research mentoring
  - Co-op and WatPD
  - Key co-curricular experiences
  - Milestones (e.g., Academic Integrity)
Degree level expectations

- Developed by Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents
- Same requirements for all programs in Ontario at that degree level
  - General
  - Honours
  - Master
  - PhD
Most program reviews include two maps to show alignment among:

- Degree-level expectations
- Program outcomes
- Degree requirements
Shared influence

- Leadership (Diamond, 2008)
  - Support from Chair
  - Resources
  - Freedom to try something new

- Ownership
  - Focus on a faculty-driven process (Wolf, 2007)
Importance in program review

- Program outcomes are central to all aspects of curriculum
- Visioning and outcomes helps us look critically at our program
- Supports integrated, aligned assessment strategy
  - Includes both formative and summative elements
- Shared process among all department members
- On-going assessment conversations reinforce vision, encourage shared practice
References
