# Preface

*Mapping is a verb. It is active.*

—Heidi Hayes Jacobs

Given the educational pressures of the 21st century, many learning organizations are turning to curriculum mapping to better serve students' ongoing curriculum and instructional needs. Simply stated, *curriculum mapping* is a calendar-based process involving a teacher-designed curriculum, collaborative inquiry, and data-driven decision making. Reasons to begin mapping are logical and to the point. Ensuring successful implementation and sustainability is not as straightforward. Curriculum mapping involves a complex process; it is not a quick-fix model. If a learning organization is dysfunctional, curriculum mapping will not be its saving grace.

Using data-based decision making and keeping students' best interests in mind are at the heart of curriculum mapping, which is symbolized by Jacobs's (2004b) concept of the *empty chair*:

> We begin the workshop or meeting by placing an empty chair in clear view of all participants. We envision the first name of an actual child who attends the school. . . . All work that day must focus on Johnny, and all comments and questions are welcomed as long as they are in his best interest. We may disagree about what is in his best interest, but we do not lose the student as our perspective. (p. 2)

Curriculum mapping is not a spectator sport. It demands teachers' ongoing preparation and active participation. There must also be continual support from administrators who have a clear understanding and insight into the intricacies of the mapping process. While there are no absolutes regarding planning and implementation steps, the information, scenarios, and map samples shared throughout this book are intended to provide the necessary clarity to put curriculum mapping into action.

## A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

*A Guide to Curriculum Mapping* specifically focuses on the basics regarding various aspects of Jacobs's model that need to be addressed before implementation.

Administrators and teachers involved in the planning process, as well as teachers joining in the process upon implementation, will find this book beneficial. The information I share is based on Jacobs's ongoing work (1989, 1997, 2004b, 2006a) and my personal curriculum mapping consulting and training experiences. The applications I suggest are recommendations, not edicts.

Personal interpretation plays a role in a reader's understanding. I recommend that you do not read this book in isolation. Form a book study group, correspond with colleagues via e-mail, or meet with a fellow associate in your school or office. Each chapter concludes with review questions designed to ignite collegial conversation regarding key points.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENTS

While each chapter has a specific focus, you will soon discover a connectedness between the shared information. The chapters build to a crescendo that asks the reader to contemplate critical components that affect a learning organization's planning and implementation.

### Chapters

**Chapter 1** includes the 10 Tenets of Curriculum Mapping and provides thoughtful insight regarding how a learning organization may need to think, act, and meet differently to ensure teacher-designed curriculum and decision-making processes.

**Chapter 2** defines the four types of curriculum maps and presents an overview of the key purpose for each type of map. A sample month of each map type is included to aid visual clarification.

**Chapter 3** points out three critical considerations that need to be addressed before starting a mapping initiative. Mapping asks teachers to be the leaders in designing the curriculum, keeping record of the curriculum, and making ongoing data-driven decisions regarding the designed and recorded curriculum. If teachers are not used to performing such roles, a learning organization must consider how to change the current culture and climate to match what is necessary for curriculum mapping to reach sustainability.

**Chapter 4** is an extensive resource for writing quality maps. It addresses in detail the wording, format, and intra-alignment norms for the most common initial map elements: content, skills, assessments, resources, and standards.

**Chapter 5** provides reflection points before asking teachers to design Diary Maps or Projected Maps. Reading this chapter, along with Chapter 6, reveals that the decision-making process regarding where to begin is a multifaceted deliberation.

**Chapter 6** informs readers of the purposes for creating Consensus Maps and Essential Maps. It emphasizes specific points regarding the process for designing shared-agreement, collaborative maps.

**Chapter 7** offers insight into the use of Jacobs's Seven-Step Review Model (1997) to formally address problems and concerns relating to curriculum and

learning environments. Common review focuses, such as identifying gaps and finding repetitions, are addressed.

**Chapter 8** supports the reality that curriculum maps are never considered finished. Refining existing maps' data concerning student learning and instruction is the natural next step once teachers are comfortable with mapping the initial elements. Strategies, modifications, activities, and essential questions are among the refining elements presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 9** includes two collaborative procedures: breaking apart standards and determining power standards that support the process of designing Consensus Maps and Essential Maps. Incorporating either procedure may influence the designing of planned learning expectations and outcomes.

**Chapter 10** addresses the selection of a Web-based mapping system. Since most learning organizations choose to purchase a subscription to a mapping system, this chapter includes an extensive list of questions to ask prospective companies to aid in the decision-making process.

**Chapter 11** concentrates on five critical components that affect successful implementation and sustainability: vision, skills, resources, incentives, and action plans. If any one component is not firmly in place, a learning organization's mapping initiative may waver or ultimately fail. I recommend reading *all* preceding chapters before reading this one because the considerations shared in this chapter are built upon information shared in the previous chapters.

**Chapter 12** brings this book to a close by providing perspectives from practitioners who have personally experienced implementing a curriculum-mapping initiative. Their candor is a testament to their willingness to put into action what is shared throughout *A Guide to Curriculum Mapping.*

## Glossary of Terms

This section provides a quick reference for common terms associated with curriculum mapping.

## Sample Curriculum Map Months

Various chapters contain sample curriculum map *months.* Providing sample months versus entire school-year maps is intentional because, given the total number of pages permitted, it was not feasible to provide school-year long maps. Be assured that when reading a map month the visual and contextual representation provides the same key points as if reading an entire school year of months.

Curriculum maps are *live* and *interactive* when viewed in a Web-based mapping system. The sample map months in this book are static and therefore will not be able to convey the full scope of the interconnected map database you can experience when viewing maps within a mapping system.

Finally, each sample map month is visually displayed in a Microsoft Word table. Since each commercial mapping system has a slightly different configuration, using a table can generically convey the information appropriately without needing to be concerned with specifics regarding each mapping system.