

# A Librarian's Perspective on Manually Tagging Curriculum for LCME Accreditation

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# What is Curriculum Tagging?

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Curriculum Tagging is the process of adding meta-data tags from a controlled vocabulary to individual course sessions from all four years of a medical school's curriculum.

The controlled tag vocabulary is heavily based on the LCME's *Functions and Structure of a Medical School*,<sup>1</sup> specifically Standards 6, 7, and 8; as well as the AAMC's *Curriculum Inventory Standardized Instructional and Assessment Methods and Resource Types*, 2016.<sup>2</sup> Schools can add additional tags as needed or desired.

# Why is Curriculum Tagging Needed?

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As part of the LCME requirements for accreditation, all medical schools are required to create and maintain a curriculum database with tagged course content.

The tagged curriculum sessions can also be used for curriculum mapping, analysis of instructional hours, and to identify curricular topics & themes by the faculty and the curriculum or assessment departments of the medical school.

# Why is a Librarian doing the Tagging?

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I had just finished my MLIS and part of my Capstone project included research on the creation and application of taxonomies. Due to this particular experience, I was asked to step in as an emergency tagger to complete the curriculum tagging for the 2014-15 academic year. I have been doing the curriculum tagging ever since.

# Curriculum Tagging by the Numbers

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- 7 categories of tags
- 192 tags in total
- ~ 1,136 M1 & M2 course sessions per academic year
- 5 – 20 minutes to tag each course session
- 4 hours per day for 6 months to tag all M1 & M2 course sessions for 1 academic year

# Curriculum Tagging Challenges

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## Taking over mid-project

- No definitions for tags in 3 of the tag categories were passed on; definitions for 4 categories available
- MeSH definitions: difficult to apply at the medical student level as they are written at a content expert level

## Modifying the tag taxonomies

- Suggested adding or modifying some tags in the curriculum tag categories for the next academic year
- The tag lists could not be changed; the tags could not be added, modified, or removed from the existing taxonomy

# Curriculum Tagging Challenges

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## Extremely limited feedback

- Never received any feedback on if the tags were being applied to the course sessions accurately
  - Was a tag erroneously defined and misapplied?
  - Were there too many tags? Or not enough tags?

## Manual tagging

- Manually tagging curriculum sessions requires an enormous amount of time
- There was only one person doing the tagging; no backups
- Course content needed for tagging was located on multiple platforms; access was an issue on several platforms

# Curriculum Tagging Successes

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## Gaining access to course content

- Successfully made the case to received 'auditing faculty' access to all instructional platforms and courses, as well as all course content and most course files

## The tagging platform layout

- Original layout required multiple clicks to reach the session tags and a click to "save" and apply the selected tags
- Worked with Knowledge Management to create a calendar-style layout where no "save" click was needed to apply the selected session tags

# Curriculum Tagging Successes

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## Word Frequency Analysis

- While looking for ways to speed up and improve the tagging process, word frequency analysis was suggested
- After some careful evaluating, MS PowerPoint Word Count & Frequency Statistics Software was the program selected
  - This program took PowerPoint slides from each course session and created a spreadsheet of all the words in the slide text by frequency
- A Stop-Word list was then applied to the spreadsheet and the results would show which words were most frequently repeated in that particular course session

# Curriculum Tagging in the Future

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- Knowledge Management and the Library had a meeting with the Head of the Curriculum Committee who was preparing to start on a curriculum re-refresh and wanted to review how curriculum tagging was being managed
- This was a very informative meeting that solved some of the challenges I had encountered with the curriculum tagging
- The Head of the Curriculum Committee decided that the curriculum tagging vocabulary lists do need to be revisited and also proposed some additional involvement and feedback from course faculty during the curriculum tagging process

# Questions? Contact Me!

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