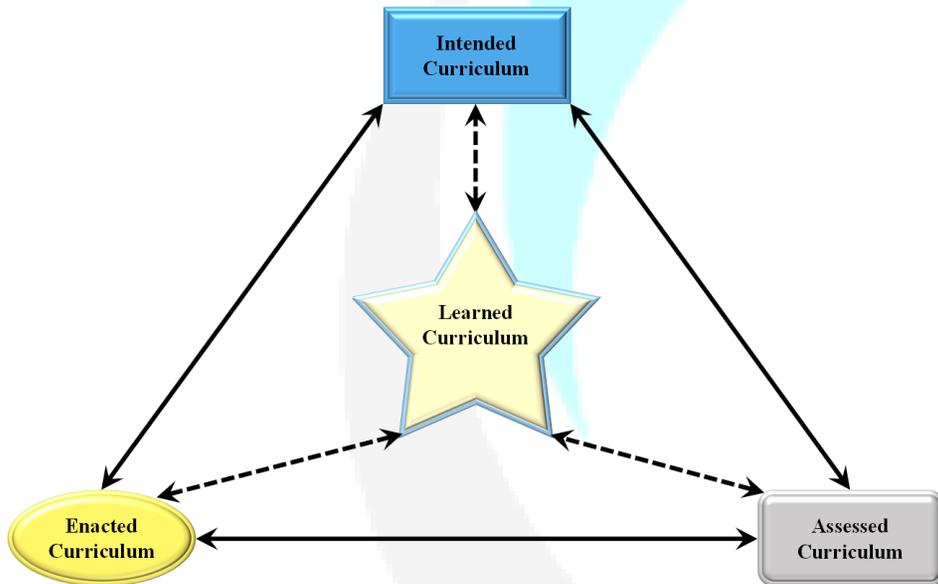


Iowa Core – Key Curriculum Alignment Concepts/Terms

Curriculum	Curriculum can be divided into four categories: intended, enacted, assessed, and learned curricula (Porter, 2006)
Intended curriculum	The knowledge and skill targets for the enacted curriculum, often captured in content standards or other similar documents
Enacted curriculum	The knowledge and skills actually delivered during instruction in the classroom and other learning settings, and how it is taught
Assessed curriculum	The knowledge and skills that are assessed to determine achievement.
Learned curriculum	The knowledge and skills students actually acquire



Alignment

The extent to which and how well curricular categories and the elements within them (e.g., content standards, instructional content, and assessment practices) work together to guide instruction and, ultimately, facilitate and enhance **student learning** (e.g., Webb, 1997).

Directionality	The direction in which alignment is examined can be broken down into two approaches (Niebling et al., 2008).
Horizontal Alignment	Degree of match, typically across two curricular categories (e.g., instructional content with state or national standards) within a single level (e.g., same grade comparisons).
Vertical Alignment	Degree of match within one curricular category (e.g., district benchmark assessments) across multiple levels (e.g., across grade levels).

Dimensions	There are many approaches to examining alignment (e.g., Surveys of Enacted Curriculum, Webb methods), each of which examine different aspects of alignment relationships. In general, these different aspects can be summarized along three dimensions, regardless of the methods used (Niebling & Kurz, in press).
Topical/Conceptual Knowledge	Subjects, information, and ideas that students are supposed to learn.
Cognitive Complexity/Demand	What students are expected to do with the topical/conceptual knowledge (e.g., Bloom's Taxonomy, Webb's Depth of Knowledge).
Emphasis	The extent to which topical/conceptual knowledge with accompanying complexity/demand are addressed by the intended, enacted, or assessed curriculum.

Level of Analysis	When engaging in an examination of alignment in either direction, along any dimension(s), the specificity with which alignment is considered can vary along a continuum of less to more specific. This is referred to by Porter (2002) as "grain size."
Coarse-Grained	Categorical, global or general examinations that take the approach of "it's in there somewhere."
Fine-Grained	Specific, targeted examinations that tend to focus on sub-skills within larger categories that take the approach of looking for one-to-one correspondence between curricular categories (Niebling & Kurz, in press).

