

Vertical Alignment

What is it?

Vertical alignment is the process of creating a seamless flow of instruction from one grade level to the next. If you think of a child's entire education as one long process, then vertical alignment is necessary for the child to get the most out of that education. By



segregating education into grade levels without allowing the time for professional collaboration, we have decreased the efficiency of instruction. (In a way, we sometimes have the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing!) The process of aligning the curriculum vertically is designed to eliminate unnecessary review time and maximize instruction time on the elements that have been determined by everyone

in the process to be the most important. That means we have to look at the entire school career of a student as one system. Within that system, we need to line up what things are given priority and how much time is spent on each of the critical components. In this world of *No Child Left Behind* and high-stakes testing, vertical alignment becomes even more crucial as we struggle to do what's best for **all** of our students.

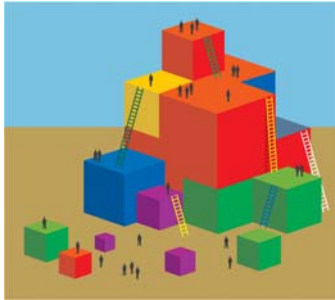
Why do I need it?

As a result of the adoption of academic content standards, most of us are very aware of what we should be teaching. And really, the standards themselves have allowed for the vertical alignment that should be present for every student's success. The problem lies in the interpretation of the standards at each grade level, and finding time for educators to meet and talk about these standards. Often, as individual teachers we're not aware how the standards at our grade level play out from beginning to end. We tend to think that we're the first and only ones teaching the content we're suppose to teach, and this may or may not be true – but shouldn't we know that in order to determine the best approach to instruction? After all, if you knew that a concept had already been taught in the previous grade level, you probably wouldn't approach it as if you were teaching a brand new skill. This training will teach you a process through which you can “connect the dots” and make instruction relevant for **all** students.



Tell me more about what I'll learn.

This session teaches a process that will help both teachers and administrators track the content standards across grade levels, to develop an understanding of what's being taught at each level and how it's being taught. It will provide a protocol to have cross-grade



level discussions about academic content for any staff at any time. We'll direct you through the process as you map out the content from grade level to grade level. We'll help you determine the level at which you are responsible for the content and what that means instructionally – and we'll talk about how to have those hard discussions about who will teach what, and at what level of mastery. Finally, we'll provide information about what to do instructionally, as

well as how to assess to make sure students have learned what they needed to know, ensuring a smooth transition from grade level to grade level.

You'll leave this seminar knowing . . .

- 1) the process for mapping out the content standards from grade level to grade level;
- 2) the level at which you should be teaching each of the content standards;
- 3) how to prioritize according to what the grade levels above you need for their success;
- 4) how to communicate to the grade levels below yours about what you need for your success;
- 5) how to plan instruction so the vertical alignment remains intact;
- 6) how to assess to ensure learning has taken place at each grade level.



In addition, we'll help you develop an Action Plan detailing how you will take the information learned in the session and apply it to your classroom, school, and/or district. This may be a plan for a school-wide effort at vertical alignment, or a way for you to implement this process without the advantage of a school or district-wide commitment.

Register for Vertical Alignment- <http://teacher2teacher.info/register.htm>