

Criteria for *Fiber Maine-ia* Alignment

When aligning programs to the *Maine Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction*, and the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, it is important to note that alignment focuses on what **students** are expected to know and be able to do at each grade span. How students are to demonstrate their knowledge and skills is very important. Several factors influence the alignment process.

1. **FOCUS:** The alignment is student centered, not teacher centered. Programs that provide a great deal of teacher content and direction but little information about what students are expected to *know* or *be able to do*, are difficult to align because standards are directly tied to **student expectations** not teacher expectations.
2. **COGNITIVE DEMAND:** The level of cognitive demand of the lesson learning objective must match the level of cognitive demand of the performance indicator/descriptor at that grade span. For example:
If the learning objective asks the student to **list** healthy behaviors and the Standard's Performance Indicator/Descriptor requires the student **explain** the relationship of healthy behaviors and personal health, there would not be an alignment. The Standard's Performance Indicator/Descriptor requires a higher level of cognitive demand than the lesson provides. The teacher could, certainly, modify the lesson to meet the level of cognitive demand required, but as the lesson is written, there would be no alignment.
3. **GRADE LEVEL:** Lessons designed for a particular grade level must be aligned with the Standards for the grade span in which that grade falls. Alignment may not be made with Standards from other grade spans.
4. **SPECIFICITY:** Standards/Performance Indicators/Descriptors are written in language that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge. For Example: The student will *list, restate, describe, demonstrate, analyze, predict, and estimate* are terms that are both specific and measurable. When programs/lessons use the broader terms such as *think about, know, and understand*, alignment becomes problematic because of the lack of specificity in the language and, therefore, in expectations.
5. **DEGREE:** Standards are often multi-part (e.g., Science, grade span 3-5, B1: *Students plan, conduct, analyze data from, and communicate results of investigations, including fair tests*). The lesson may meet only some of the specifics of the standard to which it is aligned, therefore, teachers should address the other components of the standard through additional learning opportunities.

Of course, teachers may change/increase the alignment of a lesson through the instructional choices he/she makes.