Classworks Learning Progression

What is a learning progression?

Learning progressions are a continuous pathway along which students move incrementally through increasing competence. Every incremental stage builds on the previous one as students acquire new levels of expertise along each successive step in the progression.

Dr. Karin Hess, an internationally recognized educational researcher, describes learning progressions as "research-based, descriptive continuums of how students develop and demonstrate deeper, broader, and more sophisticated understanding over time. A learning progression can visually and verbally articulate a hypothesis about how learning will typically move toward increased understanding for most students."

How are they designed?

A learning progression starts with the content standards then breaks them into discrete teachable skills. These skills are then laid out in the most teachable order.

For example, learning progressions recognize that the prerequisites for a specific skill may be in a different domain entirely.

> **Example -- Grade 3 Math**
>
> *Learn to multiply in number and operations.*
> This impacts what you are able to do in the domain of geometry. You can think about area once you learn to multiply.

How was The Classworks Learning Progression created?

The Classworks Learning Progression determines the order students progress through the Classworks skill units. Below is an overview of the architecture of The Classworks Learning Progression for Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.

Reading/Language Arts

- At primary grades it builds with the hierarchy of reading skills, beginning with phonemic awareness and moving forward to advanced comprehension. This order places units that focus on phonics and decoding/word study skills before units that require students to decode and comprehend connected text.

- In all grade levels, the progression was ordered to ensure a balance between the types of student interactions expected with each unit. Units have been placed on the progression so that students alternate between instruction that utilizes a single passage, two connected passages, and more complex units that include direct instruction, application activities, and formative assessments.

- Paired-Passage units have been placed to ensure that students will have already experienced both passages separately before they are tasked with comparing, contrasting, or otherwise analyzing how the passages are related.

Math

- In Kindergarten, the progression begins with concepts that are concrete such as counting objects and 1:1 correspondence.

- Units are ordered to build upon prior knowledge and provide a review of prerequisite concepts.

- Units are based on mathematical domains and these domains are ordered at each grade-level to ensure exposure to basic operations before the successful application of those operations is necessary to complete successive units, i.e. units on addition are placed before perimeter units and multiplication units are placed before area units.

- In all grade-levels, the progression was ordered to ensure a balance between the types of student interactions expected with each unit. Units have been placed on the progression so that students alternate between instruction that provides short lessons followed by problems that progress in Depth of Knowledge needed and more complex units that include direct instruction, application activities, and formative assessments.

- Skills in domains that are heavily weighted on high stakes assessments have been placed near the midpoint of each grade-level to allow for student interaction and completion prior to administration of high stakes assessments i.e. comparing and understanding the connections between fractions, percents, and decimals is heavily weighted on 6th-grade assessments.

How are learning progressions used?

Educators use learning progressions to plan or modify instruction to make sure students are getting the right instruction and content at the right time. If an educator knows she needs to teach a specific skill, she can use the learning progression to look backward and see what prerequisites are needed for that skill. She may also seek out other skills that can be taught alongside her selected skill for more efficient and interconnected teaching, avoiding the repetitious learning that can occur when individual skills are taught in isolation.

Look for learning progressions that you can interact with. You should be able to look forward and backward within the learning progression to understand how skills can develop.

Additional reading

https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/11/11/learning-progressions-maps-to-personalized-teaching.html

http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr07/vol64/num07/The-Lowdown-on-Learning-Progressions.aspx