Transcript – What is a Learning Progression?

Before we begin, take a few minutes and open your learning portfolio to page one to write down what you know about learning progressions, what you would like to know, and any questions you may have. Keep this list available, as we will refer back to it throughout this lesson.

Before we discuss how to use learning progressions in the classroom, let's learn more about them.

In this lesson, you will learn to distinguish between learning progressions and other learning-related concepts, such as standards, identify the elements that comprise a learning progression, examine examples of other learning progressions, and identify the importance of understanding and using them in your classroom.

As students learn, the amount and complexity of their knowledge and skill in any domain starts small and over time becomes much larger. That amount of growth varies with experiences and instruction but also seems to reflect factors associated with maturation, differences in ability, disposition, and interest. According to the National Research Council, learning progressions are descriptions of the successively more sophisticated ways of thinking about an idea as a student learns. A progression happens over a broad span of time and while there is a path typically followed, all students do not follow the same path in the same way.

This graphic of a hexagonal route represents a possible learning progression.

As you look at this graphic, what do you notice? Write down your thoughts on page two of your learning portfolio.

Transcript – Visualizing Learning Progressions

This hexagonal diagram is representative of a learning progression to show how four different topics are connected. Please note that no black edge exists between certain concepts which means there is a connection between those concepts. A black edge means that no connection exists. For example, a student would hypothetically have to master concept 1.2 before being able to understand concept 1.3 or 2.1. Both mastery of concept 3.1 and all of level 2 is required before moving on to concept 4.1. However, a student does not have to master level 2 before moving on to level 3.

This shows the development of sophistication of thinking, but it also shows an interaction and integration of knowledge.

Concepts can be clustered for one topic. Within level 1, the same relationship exists. Since there is no edge between 1.1 and 1.2, there is a connection between these concepts.