

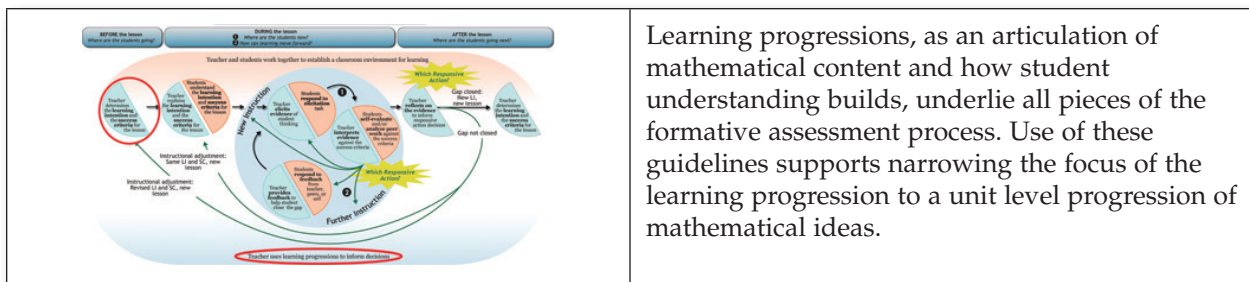
Planning Guideline

Building a Unit Progression

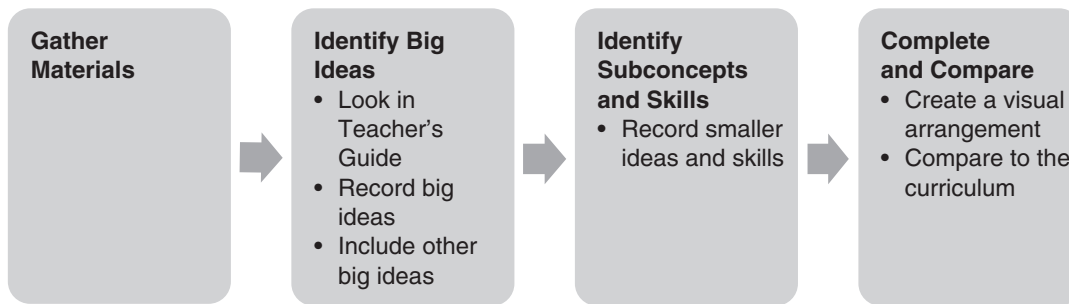
OVERVIEW

These guidelines use the learning progression idea to create a support for you as you begin planning a unit of study. You can follow-up with the “Using a Unit Progression to Write LI and SC” planning guidelines.

Where the Guideline Fits in the FA Cycle



Snapshot



STEPS INVOLVED IN THE GUIDELINE

1. Gather Materials

- Any accompanying teacher guide or materials, or other teacher resources for the unit, and any other additional resources that may help you determine concepts related to the topics of the unit
- Index cards (large Post-It notes may also work): about 4 to 6 of one color and about 20 to 30 of another color
- You may also use the Unit Progression Builder interactive, available at Resources.Corwin.com/CreightonMathFormativeAssessment.

Retrieved from the companion website for *Bringing Math Students Into the Formative Assessment Equation: Tools and Strategies for the Middle Grades* by Susan Janssen Creighton, Cheryl Rose Tobey, Eric Karnowski, and Emily R. Fagan. Copyright © 2015 by Corwin. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com

Identify Big Ideas

2. Look in Teacher's Guide and Other Related Resources

Start with finding information in the introductory material for the unit in the teacher's guide that you feel describes specific big ideas or overarching understandings for students that will be developed in this unit. Refer to additional resources as needed to clarify the mathematical ideas related to the unit.

3. Record big ideas

Choose one color of index cards for big ideas and write each big idea on one card.

Note that a big idea describes a specific understanding that will take time for students to develop. Big ideas may refer to relationships, comparisons, connections that can be made, mathematical justifications, the use of different models, or explaining concepts that underlie a collection of procedures.

These are possible examples:

- *There is a relationship between properties of sides and properties of angles in four-sided shapes.*
- *Multiplication of fractions can be represented using an area model.*
- *A table, a graph, and an equation can each represent the relationship between changing quantities.*

These are NOT examples:

- *Make a factor tree for a composite number*
- *(While valuable, this is something students *do* rather than a big idea they need to understand.)*
- *Decimal division* (Not very specific; need to describe what it is about decimal division that is important to understand in the unit.)
- *Understand rates and ratios.* (This is very broad in scope; not specific about what it is about rates and ratios that is to be understood.)

4. Include other big ideas

Repeat Steps 1 and 2 with any other teacher support material related to that unit that you feel is relevant. This might include the lessons of the unit, other material from the same curriculum series, or supplemental resources that are not part of that curriculum series.

Identify Subconcepts and Skills

5. Record smaller ideas and skills

Using your other color of index cards or Post-It notes, record the smaller concepts and skills that contribute to each big idea—pieces of the big idea that can be addressed in one or two lessons (note that a lesson here can be more than one class period). Use one card for each idea or skill. You may find it helpful to look at actual lessons for this step.

Complete and Compare

6. Create a visual arrangement

Using both your big idea cards and your lesson-level cards, create a visual arrangement that shows how you think these ideas, concepts, and skills would ideally develop across the unit. Do this based on your own thinking about what makes sense, not what is actually done in your curriculum materials. You'll compare the two in the next step.

7. Compare to the curriculum

Now compare your progression of ideas, concepts, and skills to what is done in your curriculum materials, looking for similarities and differences. Use those similarities or differences to help you think about what would best serve your own students and to make choices about what the unit progression should look like.

■ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Don't my curriculum materials already do this for me?

Most teacher resources for a curriculum will present information about the scope and sequence of topics—what topics appear in which units or chapters—and some will provide information about whether that material is introduced, practiced, or mastered. Some teacher materials may even include some information about the mathematics in a particular unit or chapter. However, this information focuses on what the materials do, not what your students may need or may experience. A unit progression is different because it provides a description of how you expect your students' learning of the material to progress over the course of the unit; it is *your* image of how they will best be able to put the ideas together.

2. What's the advantage to me of creating this unit progression? What do I gain from it as a teacher?

The process of creating a unit progression for yourself gives you a clearer sense of what key ideas need to take the lead in particular unit and to clearly know what you are building toward over the course of a unit. A unit progression helps you to:

- identify key conceptual landmarks over the course of a unit;
- think about what came before and will come after your unit and how your unit fits within that conceptual flow;
- be clear about where to focus your efforts when many other instructional needs vie for attention during a unit; and
- develop individual lesson-level learning intentions and success criteria—knowing the progression of the unit can help you more effectively target the right bite-size LI and SC for a lesson.

It's analogous to planning a long car trip in which you have a clear sense of your intended destination as well as some key landmarks to look for on the way, *versus* having no clear sense

of your specific destination nor any sense of what to look for to know if you've strayed off track. Having this navigational knowledge enables you to make smart decisions along the way about what route to take if you encounter detours or roadblocks.

3. What do I do if my progression looks pretty different from the way my materials present the information?

If you have the freedom to make instructional choices about how and when you address the material in a unit, make adjustments to the order of lessons in a unit or determine the amount of emphasis that certain lessons get. If there are significant differences between your unit progression and your materials, you may want to look for more information in your teacher materials about how the unit is organized or why the authors have shaped the unit in a particular way.

Even if you don't have this freedom, understanding where the unit differs from your own progression will help you tackle difficulties your students have. Be prepared to bring in additional matter to help them or de-emphasize topics that will make more sense later—and bring them up again at that later time.

4. What are some examples of unit progressions that I can review to get a sense of what a final product looks like?

There are several examples included in the Examples of Unit Progressions resource. Please note that these are examples not exemplars and each was designed by a teacher group to support the ideas within the group's specific curricula unit.