

Rethinking How To Teach Energy: Laying the Foundations in Elementary School

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Responding to a need for a coherent pedagogical approach to teaching energy and matter, this exploratory project developed a grade 3-5 learning progression that provides a strong base for understanding energy in middle school. Project researchers identified core concepts that develop across multiple grades and structure the learning progression; they interviewed children to identify precursors to the core concepts, as well obstacles to learning them; and they worked with teachers to conduct “teaching interviews” in urban school settings to explore key learning experiences that would allow students’ understanding of core ideas to progress.