



Guidelines for Using Bridges in a Second/Third Grade Blended Classroom

Bridges is designed to meet the needs of a very wide range of learners at each grade level. Concepts are taught in the context of problem solving, instruction is multi-modal, students are grouped flexibly, and assessment is ongoing. As a result, Bridges can be used quite effectively with mixed age groups. Nevertheless, in this context it can be challenging to ensure that state and district expectations are adequately met for each grade level. There are several ways to approach this issue, bearing in mind that Bridges entails 75-80 minutes a day of instruction – one hour for Bridges sessions, and 15-20 minutes for Number Corner.

Alternative Approaches

1. If there is more than one second/third grade classroom in your school, group the students by grade level for Bridges instruction and conduct Number Corner with your own mixed group. That is, have one teacher work with all the second graders while another works with all the third graders in separate classrooms for one hour per day during Bridges sessions. Then have each teacher keep his or her own mixed age group for Number Corner, using Grade Two Number Corner the first year and Grade Three Number Corner the second year to prevent repetition over a two-year span.

Or...

2. Keep all of your own students for Bridges and Number Corner. Select and teach one level of Bridges, probably Grade Three, unless the majority of your students are second graders. In order to support your younger learners and adequately cover the second grade expectations, teach the Grade Two Number Corner in conjunction with Grade Three Bridges. You will probably want to draw resources from both the second and third grade Home Connections books to provide individualized homework for your students.

Or...

3. If you have access to second and third grade teacher's guides, blacklines, Work Places, and manipulatives, you may want to select units from both grade levels, with a heavier emphasis on the upper grade, to craft a more nuanced flow of instruction for your mixed-age group. The selection can be changed somewhat from one year to the next so children who spend two years in a mixed-age setting don't do exactly the same thing both years. (See Table 1 below). In both years outlined below, the Number Corner grade level has been selected to balance the choice of units, augmenting skills instruction at the needed level, and providing variation in instruction from one year to the next. You will probably want to draw resources from both the second and third grade Home Connections books to provide individualized homework for your students.

What about Reading Levels?

Bridges is not a workbook-based program. Most print materials for second and third graders, including game and activity record sheets, assessments, overheads, and Home Connections are used in whole-group settings or with the support of an adult.

The closest thing to a student workbook at either grade level is the Number Corner Student Book, and in third grade, the Work Place Student Book. These collections of blacklines score relatively high compared to Lexile measures for typical texts at second and third grade. (See Table 2 below). However, students use these sheets after the activities have been introduced to the class. Most pages include 1-4 questions or prompts and are intended to be used by children in the classroom with support from an adult. Many pages are record sheets that are repeated several times or more in a single month or over several months.



Additional Support

For personalized advice about using Bridges to meet the needs of the students in your blended/multi-age situation, contact one of our curriculum specialists at

MLCsupport@mathlearningcenter.org or 800-575-8130.

TABLE 1: Bridges Instruction for a Second/Third Grade Blend over a Two-Year Period

YEAR ONE		YEAR TWO	
Grade 3 Number Corner		Grade 2 Number Corner	
Bridges Unit & Grade Level	Sessions	Bridges Unit & Grade Level	Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 1: Sorting, Patterning & Number	23 Sessions	Grade 2, Unit 1: Sorting, Patterning & Number	23 Sessions
Grade 3, Unit 1: Computation, Algebraic Thinking & Probability	20 Sessions	Grade 3, Unit 1: Computation, Algebraic Thinking & Probability	20 Sessions
Grade 3, Unit 2: Place Value Structures & Multi-Digit Computation	30 Sessions	Grade 3, Unit 2: Place Value Structures & Multi-Digit Computation	30 Sessions
Grade 3, Unit 4: Multiplication & Division Patterns & Concepts	24 Sessions	Grade 3, Unit 4: Multiplication & Division Patterns & Concepts	24 Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 4: Shapes, Symmetry, Area & Number	25 Sessions	Grade 3, Unit 3: Two- and Three-Dimensional Geometry	15 Sessions
Grade 3, Unit 5: Place Value & Computation with Larger Numbers	20 Sessions	Grade 3, Unit 5: Place Value & Computation with Larger Numbers	20 Sessions
Grade 3, Unit 6: Money, Fractions & Probability	18 Sessions	Grade 3, Unit 6: Money, Fractions & Probability	18 Sessions
Grade 2, Unit 6: Get Those Marbles Rolling	13 Sessions	Grade 3, Unit 8: Bridges Design & Construction	15 Sessions
Session Total	173 Sessions	Session Total	165 Sessions

TABLE 2: Estimate of Bridges Reading Level

Bridges Component Title	Bridges Lexile Measure	Interquartile Measures
Grade 2 Number Corner Student Book Blacklines	640L	300L to 500L
Grade 3 Number Corner Student Book Blacklines	740L	500L to 700L
Grade 3 Work Place Student Book Blacklines	670L	500L to 700L