

An Introduction to the Bridges in Mathematics Facilitator-Led Implementation Guides

The Bridges in Mathematics Facilitator-Led Implementation Guides provide the information and materials that facilitators, such as district math specialists, need to conduct monthly meetings with teachers during their first year implementing the Bridges curriculum. Each Implementation Guide is a plan for a two-hour meeting in which a facilitator helps teachers at the same grade level (for example, all the third grade teachers in a district) prepare for the upcoming Bridges unit and month of Number Corner.

How often will Bridges Implementation meetings be held?

Grade-level teams will meet for two hours once a month to prepare for the upcoming Bridges unit and month of Number Corner activities. This means that there will need to be six separate meetings (one for each grade level K–5) at roughly the same time each month; it makes the best sense to hold the meetings toward the end of the month when teachers are beginning to prepare for the next month’s worth of lessons. If you are responsible for facilitating all of the meetings, arrange to have them scheduled at different times during the last two weeks of each month.

The schedule below shows the Number Corner month and Bridges unit that are featured in each month’s meeting for each grade level.

Meeting Month	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sep.	Sessions 20–33 Oct.	Unit One Oct.	Unit Two Oct.	Unit Two Oct.	Unit Two Oct.	Unit Two Oct.
Oct.	Sessions 34–47 Nov.	Unit Two Nov.	Unit Three Nov.	Unit Three Nov.	Unit Three Nov.	Unit Three Nov.
Nov.	Sessions 48–71 Dec./Jan.	Unit Three Dec./Jan.	Unit Four Dec./Jan.	Unit Four Dec./Jan.	Unit Four Dec./Jan.	Unit Four Dec./Jan.
Jan.	Sessions 72–83 Feb.	Unit Three Feb.	Unit Five Feb.	Unit Five Feb.	Unit Five Feb.	Unit Five Feb.
Feb.	Sessions 84–94 Mar.	Unit Four Mar.	Unit Five Mar.	Unit Six Mar.	Unit Six Mar.	Unit Six Mar.
Mar.	Sessions 95–107 Apr.	Unit Five Apr.	Unit Six Apr.	Unit Seven Apr.	Unit Seven Apr.	Unit Seven Apr.
Apr.	Sessions 108–121 May/June	Unit Six May/June	Unit Seven May/June	Unit Eight May/June	Unit Eight May/June	Unit Eight May/June

What happens during each meeting?

In each meeting, you'll address teachers' questions and concerns about implementing the curriculum, preview the upcoming unit and month of Number Corner, and do some model teaching with a few of the activities from Bridges and Number Corner. The agenda below shows approximately how you will spend your time in each meeting. The agenda is nearly identical for all of the meetings, but the specific activities you'll model will be different each time.

You'll notice that the agenda does not include a break. This is because two hours isn't much time to accomplish all that you'll need to do with teachers. You might mention this to teachers at the start of the meeting and suggest that they use the restroom whenever they need to. The activities in most meetings give teachers the chance to move around and talk to each other so that they don't get restless. If you seem to have a little extra time, you might insert a break into the meeting whenever it seems appropriate.

SAMPLE AGENDA		
Part	Time	Summary
I Introduction & Agenda	5 mins.	The group establishes a positive and professional environment and reviews the agenda.
II Sharing Successes	5 mins.	Table groups share their successes, and then a representative from each group shares a success with the whole group.
III Gathering & Reviewing Questions & Concerns	15 mins.	Participants write their concerns on sentence strips and turn them in to the facilitator. (Concerns or questions will be submitted via email for future meetings.) The group reviews the sentence strip concerns and the facilitator addresses one or two of them.
IV October Number Corner Preview	15 mins.	The facilitator helps teachers preview key pages in the Teachers Guide related to planning and assessment for the October Number Corner. The facilitator leads teachers in a few activities from the month.
V Looking at the Unit Planner and Exploring Unit Two	10 mins.	Teachers develop a big picture of Unit Two while the facilitator helps them locate resources in the Teachers Guide that will be helpful in planning for and teaching the unit.
VI Reading the Unit Introduction	10 mins.	Teachers read the unit introduction to consider the big mathematical ideas of the unit, as well as the flow of instruction and assessment.
VII Doing Key Activities from Unit Two	45 mins.	The facilitator helps teachers explore, discuss, and have hands-on experiences with key activities from Unit Two.
VIII Brainstorming Solutions to Challenges	5 mins.	The facilitator helps teachers brainstorm solutions to challenges they have encountered.
IX Wrap Up	10 mins.	The facilitator confirms the time, date, and location of the next meeting, collects teachers' exit cards, and shares giveaways with participants.

What will I need to do to prepare for each meeting?

The first three pages of each guide include detailed lists of the materials you'll need for the meetings. In general, to prepare for each meeting you'll need to:

- download the meeting guide from the Math Learning Center Web site www.mathlearningcenter.org/resources/materials/grades-k5.asp
- read the meeting guide
- read portions of the Teachers Guides
- gather and prepare manipulatives and materials
- make photocopies of handouts for teachers (masters are included in the guide, downloaded from the Web, and included in the Bridges kits)
- prepare giveaway items for teachers (The giveaways are usually items teachers need to prepare in advance that you will instead prepare for them. Page 3 of each guide includes three possibilities to choose from, based on the time and resources available to you.)
- the day of the meeting, set out materials for each table group and post materials on the wall for use during the meeting

In addition to these items, it is wise to read over the entire introductions (for both the unit and Number Corner) and as many of the lessons as possible. This will give you a better understanding of the material you are helping teachers prepare to teach.

Where can I find the materials I need?

Most of the materials you'll need are included in the guide itself, are available on the Math Learning Center Web site, or come in the Bridges kits. If you don't have your own Bridges kit, you'll need to borrow the Teachers Guides and manipulatives from someone. In most meetings, you'll use manipulatives from the kits, you'll need to read portions of the Teachers Guides ahead of time and use them as a reference during the meeting, and you'll need to make copies of some of the blacklines and overheads. It might make the most sense to collaborate with a teacher at each grade level who is willing to lend you his or her books and bring the manipulatives you need to each meeting. Even better, you might host the meetings in the teacher's classroom so that you have access to his or her manipulatives, pocket charts, and books.

You'll also need to bring materials like index cards, paper, markers, and the like. The first page of every guide includes a detailed list of what you'll need for that meeting.

Where should I host the meetings?

The location is up to you or the district staff member in charge of arranging these meetings. No matter where the meeting occurs, you'll need:

- tables where groups of 4 to 6 teachers can sit
- an overhead or document projector
- space to post teachers' work and pocket charts on the wall or whiteboard

The ideal location is probably a classroom. If you can, arrange to host the meeting in the classroom of a reliable teacher who doesn't mind having visitors in his or her room. This way, you'll have access to the teacher's books, manipulatives, pocket charts, and other materials.

How can I support teachers as they implement Bridges?

During their first year implementing the Bridges curriculum, teachers will at times feel frustrated and confused, while at other times, they will feel confident and excited. Each time you meet, try to get a sense of how things are going and how teachers are feeling about the program. Use what you notice to help structure your meeting to meet their needs and address their feelings. You will gain teachers' trust by showing empathy and offering a listening ear, but try not to cater too much to pessimistic attitudes or allow teachers to linger too long in a place of negativity. Instead, help them find ways to solve their own problems and provide a support network for one another. Also make sure they know how to contact you with questions, and try to respond quickly and productively when they do get in touch with you.

What kinds of teaching strategies should I model during the meetings?

During each meeting, you'll model portions of Bridges lessons using the principles and philosophies of the program, which are similar to high-quality teaching anywhere. Bridges teachers make an effort to learn about their students and use what they learn to ask productive questions, provide meaningful feedback, allow time and opportunity for reflection, and create a learning environment that fosters growth for all students. The modeling you do during the Implementation Meetings can make a difference in the success of teachers' implementation of Bridges. The guides include fairly explicit directions and examples to help you model best practices, and you can try to work in the following suggestions as well. As it seems appropriate, draw teachers' attention to the techniques you are modeling.

Questioning

Try using some of these questions while modeling activities in your meetings.

Question	Context
How do you know?	Could be used after someone has shared an answer.
What makes you think that? or What made you think of that?	Could be used after someone has shared a strategy.
How will this _____ (activity, problem, way of thinking, example) challenge your students or enrich their learning experience?	Before, during, or after modeling an activity from the curriculum.
Imagine a student in your class who often struggles with math. Now imagine a student to flourishes in math. How will these students respond to this problem, strategy, model, or example?	While modeling an activity from the curriculum.

Building Discussion

Use strategies like those listed below to model how teachers can empower their students to take greater responsibility during class discussions. You can use these strategies throughout the meeting, including during model Bridges activities.

- If a teacher asks a question, pose the question to the group instead of answering it yourself. For example, if a teacher asks how to get students to participate more in class discussions, ask others in the group to share ideas or strategies that have worked for them before responding to the question yourself. At times, you may not need to add anything to the discussion.
- Ask teachers to add on to what has just been said, for example, by taking an idea a step further or generating specific examples to go with someone else's idea. In this way, you can help teachers build on one another's thinking.
- Encourage teachers to ask each other questions or to question each others' thinking in a respectful way.
- Ask teachers to provide examples that support their thinking.

Partnering Strategies

Model different ways of pairing teachers up, including:

- Have teachers turn and talk with the person next to them. Next time, have them talk with the person on their *other* side.
- Pull names out of a bag to assign pairs.
- Have pair themselves up by finding someone who shares their birthday month, who has a similar interest, etc.
- Ask teachers to find a partner they have never worked with before.
- Have four (or more) colors of stickers. Place a sticker at each person's seat. Then ask teachers to group themselves by sticker color.

Sharing During Group Discussions

To ensure a rich conversation that includes thinking from many teachers, use the following strategies to have teachers share their ideas during group discussions:

- Have teachers share with partners or in small groups and then have one or two people report back to the whole group.
- Have teachers share their work with partners, and then ask a few people to explain *their partner's* work.
- Have one or more teachers come to the overhead to share.
- Have teachers walk around and look at each other's work. If there is time, they can leave comments on a sticky note.
- Always ask if someone has solved the problem *a different way*.
- Invite other teachers to provide feedback when someone shares.

How can I get more information about Bridges or about using these Implementation Guides?

You are welcome to call or email the Math Learning Center, where a customer service representative or curriculum specialist will answer your questions free of charge. Please provide the following information when you call or email with an inquiry about the curriculum itself:

- the grade level of the curriculum
- the unit or month of Number Corner
- the session number or title of the Number Corner routine, challenge, or workout

Web site	www.mathlearningcenter.org
Implementation Guides on the Web	www.mathlearningcenter.org/ resources/materials/grades-k5.asp
Email	MLCsupport@mathlearningcenter.org
Phone	(503) 370-8130
Toll Free	(800) 575-8130