

Using Bridges in Mathematics, First Edition with Common Core Supplements (CCSS) in a Multi-Grade Class

Districts sometimes create blended classrooms due to enrollment issues and bulging classrooms. Here are some scenarios we've seen:

- A rural or private school creates a combination class with one teacher and less than 20 students. This arrangement may or may not continue the following year.
- A district creates a combination class with one teacher and the left over enrollment from two grade levels. An example might be 18 third graders and 10 fourth graders. This arrangement is unlikely to continue the following year. In some cases the instructor teaches two grade levels of Unit Work (30 minutes each) and picks and chooses from the two grades in Number Corner where students are kept together.
- A district creates a combination class with one teacher, but the students “walk to math,” receiving their grade level math instruction in another classroom. For example, the instructor teaches math to the 18 third graders, but the 10 fourth graders are split into 2 other fourth grade classrooms (5 fourth graders join each class, for a total of up to 35 students in a class).
- A district creates a combination class with one teacher, and provides an assistant during core instructional time (reading and/or math) to split the class according to grade level.
- Philosophically, the school and teachers make an intentional decision to plan for and celebrate the diversity in student learning and continue the multi-age approach each year. Teachers keep students for two years and can adjust instruction to meet their growing needs.

Where do I begin?

The Math Learning Center has recreated the first edition of Bridges, to meet the new Common Core State Standards. As a result, the curriculum is more focused on grade level standards, and the supplements are rigorous and coherent.

We suggest you download the new grade level supplement sets, with yearlong pacing summary, new unit planners, and correlations to each CCSS for both grade levels that you are assigned to teach. Take a look at the units of study and series of supplemental lessons.

<http://catalog.mathlearningcenter.org/catalog/bridges-1st-ed-grades-k-5/ccss-supplements-grades-k-5-free>

One of the biggest challenges facing a multiage teacher is designing curriculum that aligns with grade level Common Core State Standards. Educators are faced with greater challenge if some of these students have seen first edition Bridges and CCSS Supplements the previous year, or will be assimilated into a one-grade classroom the following year.

Consider using the BASELINE ASSESSMENTS from Number Corner to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of your students. Assessments are correlated to specific grade level CCSS standards and will give you some idea of where you need to spend more time, or where you can compact the curriculum and spend less time. See Revised Number Corner Quarterly Assessments:

<http://bridges1.mathlearningcenter.org/resources/materials/ccss>

Depending on your configuration and the academic needs of your class, we recommend blending Number Corner workouts to best meet CCSS standards. For example, you might spend less time on probability concepts, but address all the key skills in Number & Operations, Place Value and Fractions domains (15-20 min a day).

We recommend teaching mostly from one unit of instruction (choose the best fit for your students). Two grade levels of Work Places will provide additional support and challenge in a guided math/math workshop setting. The authors of the CCSS identified the "Critical Areas of Focus" for each grade level. Plan to focus on those areas as you create a blend of Unit Work and Work Places.

Use the RESOURCES on the Bridges First Edition Support Page. Organized by grade level and units, these games and activities can help you differentiate your instruction, using computers as stations/work places.

Here's the link to grade two:

<http://bridges1.mathlearningcenter.org/resources/materials/grade-two/units/exlinks>

Consider several approaches:

- Teach one grade level curriculum well, especially in situations where you are unfamiliar with both grade levels of Bridges. Use questioning and visual models to provide access to the concepts you are introducing and developing. Choose the grade level that best fits your students, but keep in mind the standards from the other grade level, so you don't pitch your instruction too high, or too low.
- Get an extra pair of hands in the room while you are teaching math, so you can send one grade level off to Work Places while you teach the other grade level, then reverse groups.
- If no other adult is available, spend about 30 minutes working with each grade level, compacting the curriculum to allow you to nestle in with small groups of students regularly.

Sample Lesson Plans – on the MLC website, view sample planners from multi-grade teachers.