# Bridges Classroom Observation Guide

for Teachers, Coaches & Administrators

During the launch of Bridges in Mathematics, teachers are learning a new curriculum, along with new models, strategies, and assessments. It's natural that they have questions, and might wonder what implementation is supposed to look like, especially during the first months of school. This observation guide is meant to provide teachers, coaches, and instructional leaders with a look inside a Bridges classroom, especially during the first and second years of implementation. This guide identifies "look fors" in seven areas, with attention paid to preparation and planning, instructional practice, and student engagement within each area.

- □ Time Management
- Number Corner
- □ Work Places
- □ Family Communication

### Time Management

- Adequate time is devoted to math instruction each day.
  - Kindergarten: Begin the year with 45 minutes for Bridges and 15 minutes for Number Corner, transition to 80 minutes combined daily by midyear.
  - Grades 1–5: 80 minutes daily (60 minutes for Problems & Investigations and Work Places, and 20 minutes for Number Corner)
- Home Connections are available two to three times a week, depending on the homework policies of the district.

In Grades 3–5, optional Daily Practice pages provide additional opportunities to practice skills at home or at school.

- □ Classroom Organization
- Problems & Investigations (Whole-Group Instruction)
- □ Assessment
- □ Work Places are in use regularly.
  - Grade K: Most days, 20–30 minutes
  - Grades 1–2: 3–4 times a week for 20–30 minutes
  - Grades 3–5: 2–3 times a week for 20–30 minutes
- Number Corner consistently takes place on a daily basis.

Number Corner need not be scheduled in the same block of time as unit work.

 In the first year of Bridges implementation, teachers are within three weeks of the yearlong Scope & Sequence for the grade level.

(8 units, 20 sessions each, 160 lessons per year)

## **Classroom Organization**

The classroom is set up to facilitate partner and small-group activities as well as whole-group discussion.

> Tables or desks are grouped together. A whole-group meeting area has been designated.

- Whiteboards, document cameras, and projectors are set up for regular use by the students and teacher.
- Tubs, trays, or folders hold materials for the six Work Places currently in use.

 Students can easily access often-used manipulatives.

> Items may include individual whiteboards, cubes, tiles, measuring tools, and base ten pieces, among others.

 Recording sheets and materials for wholegroup lessons, Number Corner, and Work Places are prepared in advance.

Materials Preparation charts found in each module are helpful in preparing what teachers need.

#### **Number Corner**

Teachers maintain an up-to-date Number Corner display in a location that students can easily see and access.

> Each month of Number Corner includes five routines, called workouts. However, each workout is not taught every day. Teacher planners indicate focus workouts for any given day of a month.

- Word Resource Cards are used during Number
   Corner workouts and Bridges unit work to support use of math vocabulary.
- □ Number Corner lessons include student-to-student dialogue and think-pair-share time.

Instruction moves quickly, focusing on introducing and reinforcing skills and concepts. Teachers ask questions during workouts to probe student thinking and facilitate conversations.

Number Corner Student Book pages may be assigned for independent practice or used as formative assessments.

## Problems & Investigations Whole-Group Lessons

- Teachers are able to identify the skills and concepts being taught, and the models and strategies developed during a unit of study.
- □ Teachers pose open-ended questions.

Students are encouraged to listen carefully and to learn from one another's explanations, solutions, and misconceptions.

 Problem-solving tools are available to students during lessons.

These tools usually include manipulatives, visual models, paper, and pencil.

□ Students are asked to explain and justify their thinking.

Teachers value students' ability to explain their thinking orally and in writing in addition to finding a correct answer.

- Students are asked to share observations about charts, game boards, and other visuals.
- □ Student engagement is robust, but mastery is not expected by the end of each session.

Tasks are designed in a problem-solving format, and students may experience productive struggle and partial understanding on their way to longterm mastery.

□ As the school year progresses, students respectfully critique the reasoning of their peers.

Students engage with their peers' thinking to make meaning and attach language to the concepts they are learning, as well as to assist one another in understanding and correcting errors.

## **Work Places**

Work Places are introduced as part of a whole-group Problems & Investigations session and then become a station.

Each new Work Place replaces an old one that is removed.

Students have regular opportunities to practice skills and extend understanding at Work Places.

Work Places change on a regular basis, with six different activities available at any given time.

- Routines for Work Place distribution, use, care, and cleanup are well established by the end of the first month of the school year.
- □ There is a clear sense of purpose and accountability during Work Places.

Once students have selected their activities and started work, moderate noise and purposeful movement around the room are expected. Kindergartners use menu cards on a pocket chart to indicate their choices, and students in Grades 1–5 carry folders with Work Place Logs to indicate their progress. Students typically complete each activity in a given set of Work Places once or twice.

 Teachers actively engage with students during Work Places.

> Teachers circulate to observe student thinking, confer with individuals or small groups, play Work Place games with students, ask questions to enhance understanding of skills and concepts or conduct individual math interviews/assessments.

 Teachers use the Assessment & Differentiation sections within each Work Place Guide in the Teachers Guide to differentiate instruction as needed. □ Students engage with one another during Work Places.

Interactions may include parallel play, negotiation of game rules, cooperation to complete a task, explanations of their thinking, or comparisons of the results of an investigation.

- Students are able to offer age-appropriate explanations of the learning goals for the game or activity as well as their strategy, actions, and thought processes.
- Students use math language while engaging in Work Place activities.

Sentence frames and Word Resource Cards may be used to support the use of precise math vocabulary.

#### Assessment

□ Teachers consult the Skills Across the Grade Level chart in each unit introduction when planning instruction.

This chart indicates when concepts and skills will be reinforced in later units and months of Number Corner, and clarifies the point at which a concept or skill is introduced, developed, or expected for mastery.

Teachers use the yearlong assessment map in Section 2 of the Assessment Overview to identify where each standard will be assessed and when they should expect mastery.

> *This section also identifies the priority standards from the CCSS Critical Areas of Focus.*

 Teachers can describe how the session they are teaching contributes to their students' understandings of state and district standards. Depending on school or district guidance, teachers may use the Number Corner Baseline Assessment as a screener to assess the major work of the previous grade.

Number Corner also offers four quarterly checkups to monitor student progress.

- Teachers make use of the scoring guides in the Assessment Guide or online.
- Teachers are familiar with the Assessment Overview portion of the Bridges Assessment Guide, as well as the Year's Worth of Assessments Chart that identifies an assessment schedule with formative and summative opportunities.

The schedule includes informal and formal observations, individual interviews, and written assessments. All grade levels include formative checkpoints. Grades 1–5 include unit postassessments.

## **Family Communication**

- To help families understand what's happening in the classroom and to participate in their child's math education, teachers share the introduction to Bridges family video.
- Teachers may print Unit Overviews and other documents for families from the Resources section of the Bridges Educator Site.
- Families are introduced to the Bridges Family
   Support page, where they can access grade-level
   support, including Bridges Unit Overviews and Math
   at Home Activities.
- □ Families are introduced to the free apps based on the visual models featured in Bridges.

To help educators with the implementation process, The Math Learning Center (MLC) has developed a set of flexible resources designed to address a variety of professional learning needs. These resources are available on the Implementation tab of the Bridges Educator Site. The resources (e.g., planning documents, videos, blog posts, webinars, articles) are designed for flexible use by classroom teachers, PLCs, and coaches, as well as school or district instructional leaders.

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#### **Additional Resources**

Subscribe to the MLC Newsletter for access to the Bridges Blog and news from MLC.

Learn more about the professional learning workshops MLC offers.

Contact a member of the MLC Customer Experience team for questions about the curriculum, ordering materials, or scheduling a support workshop.