

Bridges Research Brief
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As part of the ArtsConnection Bridges program evaluation, we compared Bridges students’ scores on the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project (TCRWP) “running records” with an equivalent comparison group of non-Bridges students from the same schools. The TCRWP running records are an accepted Measure of Student Learning (MoSL) in New York City schools, assessing reading ability, fluency and comprehension.

The treatment study sample consisted of Bridges students (kindergarten, first and second grade) with TCRWP pre-test and post-test scores during the 2015-2016 or 2016-2017 school year (n= 979). The comparison group included all students who did not participate in the program from the same grades and had TCRWP pre-test and post-test scores during the 2015-2016 or 2016-2017 school year (n = 949).

TCRWP scores are reported as levels A through Z. To conduct the analysis, the letter scores were converted to numbers (1 to 26) with scores below an A assigned to a value of 0. The pre-test values were subtracted from the post-test values to derive a score indicating how many levels each student increased throughout the school year.

Results indicate that Bridges students made significantly better progress on the running records than the comparison group.

The following table compares the average score increase for the Bridges students and the comparison group. Both groups increased about 4 levels, with the Bridges group significantly outperforming the comparison group (*t*-test, *p* < .05).

	N	Mean Increase	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Bridges	979	3.93	2.027	.065
Comparison	949	3.75	1.879	.061

The next table shows the average pre-test and post-test levels for each group. A *t*-test indicated that the Bridges treatment and control groups were equivalent at baseline.

	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test Std. Deviation	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test Std. Deviation
Bridges	5.77	4.447	9.70	4.363
Comparison	5.43	4.099	9.18	4.409

The significant difference in Bridges TCRWP progress may be due to the instructional content of Bridges, which emphasizes authentic discussion of character, setting, and narrative of stories – with embodied classroom practice – as opposed to a more formulaic presentation and recall of classroom texts. Young children benefit from experiencing language in an authentic manner, and physically embodying language through the artistic process.