Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Education and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education and Instruction Subcommittee held on Tuesday, January 12, 2021.

M. Ku	A. Uberti	C. Moretti	R. Notaro	P. Vitarelli
J. Vouros	F. Purcaro	C. McArthur	L. Silviera	

Also present Board of Education member Deborra Zukowski.

J. Vouros called the meetin to order at 11:00 a.m.
J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the 12/22/2020 meeting.
M. Ku seconded the motion.

Public Participation: None

Presentation of Grade 1 and Grade 2 Reading and Writing – C. McArthur, R. Notato, L. Silveira, P. Vitarelli, and C. Moretti

L. Silveira, Middle Gate Language Arts Consultant (LAC), began with an overview of ELA at Grade 1 & 2:

Instruction

- Workshop Model mini lesson, conferring, small group
- Concept-based units developed by identifying conceptual lens and generalizations

Reading Units

- Provide opportunities to build skills and strategies for both fiction and non-fiction
- Provide opportunities to integrate social studies, science and other interdisciplinary topics

Writing Units

- Provide opportunities to practice each genre of writing; opinion, information, narrative
- Designed to ensure students go through the writing process multiple times

Robyn Notaro, Head O' Meadow Language Arts Consultant, discussed how students are assessed:

- Built-in, ongoing assessments throughout the year; formative journal assessments and summative assessments such as DRA, and NWEA
- Opportunities for students to reflect on their use of strategies - students are thinking about their work and also how reading and writing are connected

Patti Vitarelli, Hawley Language Arts Consultant, along with the three other LACs, developed grade 1 & 2 reading and writing units. Lucy Hawkins Units of Study for Reading and Writing was used as a resource. In order to develop concept-based units, they identified process concepts students need to learn and then added in the core skills and strategies. Grade 1 begins the year with motivational strategies, teaching students what a reading life looks like. As students work through the units, reading and writing are typically integrated so that one text is used for instruction in both.

Cynthia McArthur, Sandy Hook Language Arts Consultant, presented grade 2 curriculum. Grade 2 is similar to grade 1, with an additional 2 week kick start to get the students writing. First units are very important to get students back to good writing. Students write with greater meaning. Students begin to write through the eyes of the author and writer.

M. Ku asked for the younger grades is it more difficult to come up with more provocative questions? P. Vitarelli answered that it is more difficult because they are so little but there are opportunities to connect to the concepts when conferencing with students. She added that some students are more ready to understand a broader concept than others. A. Uberti responded that since we are teaching students the process of reading and writing often the concept is linked to have students reflect on how a taught strategy helps them in their process of reading and writing.

J. Vouros commented that, as an observer, he believes that what is being taught in Kindergarten through grade 5 and how it is being taught is working. The children understand what they are doing.
A. Uberti noted that these curriculums complete ELA in grades 1-4 at the elementary with just Kindergarten remaining to be written.
M. Ku thanked the group for all of the work that they put into both the curriculum and the presentation. This curriculum will move forward to the full Board for a first read on February 2, 2021.

Update on K-5 Math Pilot from Frank Purcaro – Director of Teaching and Learning

F. Purcaro reminded the committee members that teachers in grades K-5 are piloting two new possible math resources in order to improve the quality of math instruction. In addition, he noted that we currently have 3 separate resources in the K-8 span and we are hoping to reduce that to no more than two or possibly one, depending on the resource that is selected. Whichever resource is adopted will be in place for probably the next 6 years so it is a significant commitment for the district. Next year we will begin this process for grades 6, 7, and 8 with the goal for grade 6 to implement a new district 6-8 program in 2022-2023. Grades 7-8 will still have a remaining year on their current program's contract, so they would implement the following year (23-24).

The two programs that are currently being piloted are Bridges Math and Envision Math 2020, both highly-rated programs. In addition to conversations with teachers throughout the process, an evaluation tool was also created to gather additional data on their experience with each program. Each group will complete this evaluation twice during the pilot, once in December and another in February to monitor changes in their opinions over time. Today, the data collected from December will be shared with committee members. Data collected from the evaluation rubric will help inform the final program selection sometime in April so that materials can be ordered and distributed to teachers before they

leave for the summer. We are asking for feedback in three major categories: organization, content, and technology. We also asked the members of the team to give us some written feedback. Both programs have some pros and cons with Bridges having an edge in terms of content. In fact, feedback on Bridges content was 100% positive.

F. Purcaro then went through the various categories and shared the information gathered. The presentation is attached.

J. Vouros asked if teachers who are piloting will serve as mentors to teachers next year.
F. Purcaro responded that there are teachers from each pilot in each school to help support each other and with next year's rollout.
J. Vouros asked how that would work.
A. Uberti shared that our math specialists have been involved in all of the meetings and professional developments for both pilots. They will be instrumental in supporting teachers for one of the programs this time next year. In addition, each program has its own professional development plan for teachers. Teachers who have piloted the selected program will serve only as informal mentors.

M. Ku asked how the 6-8 pilot will work.

F. Purcaro explained that the decision about what to pilot when is related to when existing licenses expire. Reed's current license expires a year before the Middle School's license. He further explained that we will assemble a group to select which resources to pilot at 6-8 just as we did for K-5. Bridges only goes up to fifth grade but Envision goes through grade 8 and is already at use in Grade 6 so it is likely to be one of the pilots whether it is chosen for K-5 or not.
M. Ku asked how much switching programs matters.
F. Purcaro stated that less transitions are better. Because Newtown has an extra transition for intermediate, students experience 3 different programs in just 4 years, which is a lot. Our goal is to get it to just two with the change, if needed, occurring at Reed where teachers can work together to understand what shifts occur from one program to the next and mitigate the impact on student learning.
A. Uberti shared that it is common in other districts for a change of program to occur between 5th and 6th as students typically transition from elementary to middle school. In Newtown, we have a benefit of having an intermediate school that could work together to smooth that transition.

A. Uberti reminded the Committee members that some money was included in the current budget in order to partially fund the purchase of a new program; however, she added that there is a significant amount of funding included in the next year's budget necessary to finalize a purchase.

Assistant Superintendent Updates – Anne Uberti

A. Uberti notified Committee members that parents of students in grades 1 through 8 will receive NWEA results via email on January 13th. She added that at this time it appears that the state will move forward with Smarter Balanced and NGSS testing in the spring. In that case, the NWEA will be given again in March but not again in the spring.

Public Participation: None

J.Vouros adjourned the meeting at 11:54 a.m.
M. Ku seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Norling

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE.

K-5 Math Pilot 2020-21

Mid-Year Evaluation Report

Goals of the Pilot

Adopt a resource that supports rigorous math instruction and is fully aligned to current curriculum standards.

Adopt a resource that may be used by students uniformly through the grade spans to support more consistent instructional practices.

Commit to a resource for multiple years to build internal capacity and understanding for staff as well as long-term familiarity for students and families.

District Math Resource Adoption Plan

Math resource pilot and adoption 2020-2023

	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
K-5	Pilot	Implementation		
6		Pilot	Implementation	
7-8		Pilot		Implementation

Description of the Programs

Bridges Math:

Bridges in Mathematics is a comprehensive PreK-5 program that equips teachers to fully implement the CCSS for Math in a manner that is rigorous, coherent, engaging, and accessible to all learners.

A program that emphasizes inquiry-based math instruction, Bridges receives one of the highest ratings for K-5 math programs on EdReports.

EnVision Math 2020:

EnVision Math is a standards aligned, comprehensive PK-6 math program, emphasizes digital and visual learning to help students build a conceptual understanding of math.

As with Bridges Math, enVision received one of the highest ratings available for K-6 math programs on the market.

Selection Process Timeline

- ✓ Informational meeting with teachers interested in piloting – May 2020
- ✓ Assignment of teachers to specific resources & follow-up notification – June 2020
- ✓ Initial implementation PD for both pilot teams – August 2020
- ✓ Fall/Back to School - Pilot Begins – September 2020
- ✓ Pilot Check-In with Anne and Frank – November 2020
- ✓ First pilot evaluation recorded into Google Forms – November 2020
- ✓ Mid-Pilot PD for each team – December 2020
- ❑ Structured Observations – January/February 2021
- ❑ Second pilot evaluation recorded into Google Forms – February 2021
- ❑ Analyze evaluation data & finalize selection – March/April 2021
- ❑ Begin ordering materials and arranging for PD – April/May 2021
- ❑ Professional Development prior to end of school year – May/June 2021

Pilot Teams and Programs

	K	1	2	3	4
HAW	Bridges Gina Cappelli	Envision Kathy Leja	Bridges Brianne Vazzano	Envision Jen Pirone	Bridges Mike Poeltl
MGS	Envision Tanya LaBonia	Bridges Leanne Connors	Envision Hallie Knapek	Bridges Colleen Carreira	Envision Kim Turey
HOM	Bridges Deb Keith	Envision Tara Demers	Bridges Karen Dreger	Envision Lindsay Kohn	Bridges Lynn Taylor
SHS	Envision Marissa Sallati	Bridges Meredith Wallsky	Envision Sallie McKenzie	Bridges Kristina Pierce	Envision Connie Sullivan

RIS 5th - 3 Teachers	Bridges: Jon Hull, Matt Dalton, Denise Strong
RIS 5th - 4 Teachers	Envision: Kelly Marcoux, Lara Brown, Rich Neeb, Amanda Eide (Lauren Moore for Amanda)

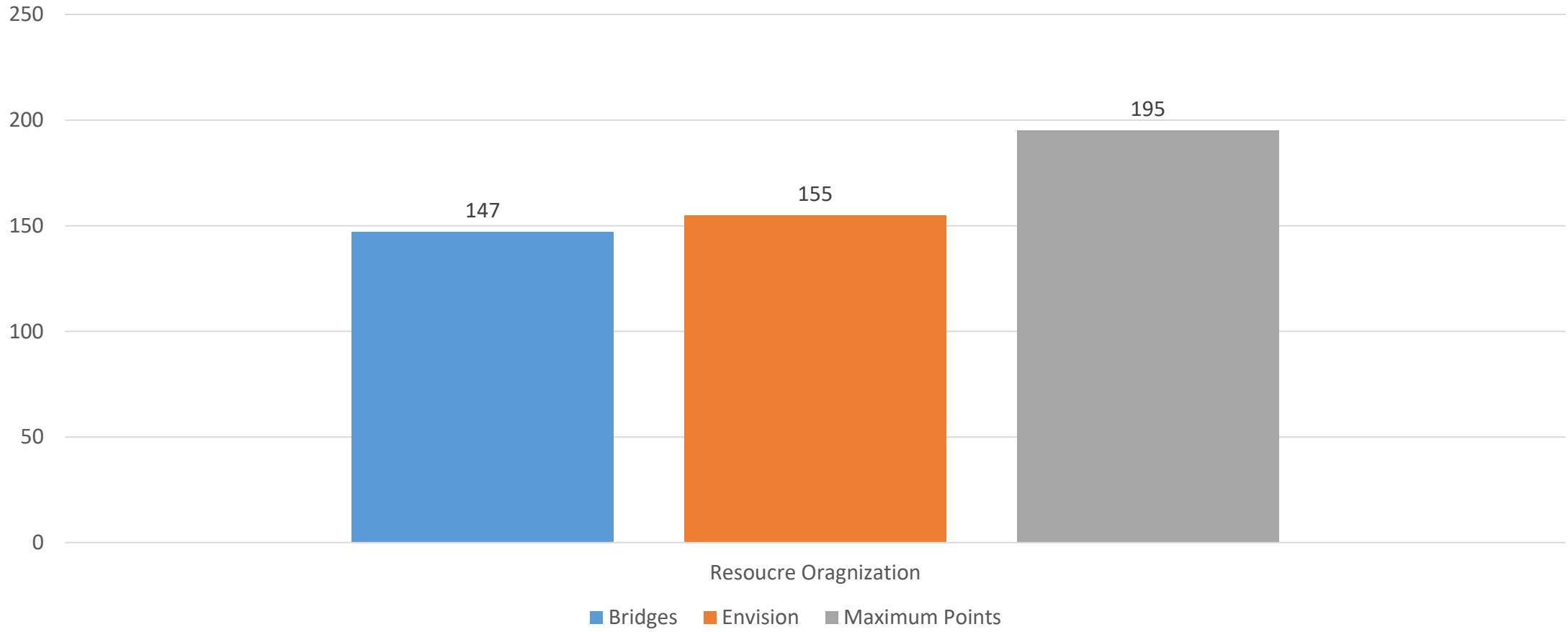
Evaluation Rubric

- Each team will complete an evaluation rubric twice during the pilot, once in December and another time in February.
- Data collected from the evaluation rubric will help to inform the final program selection.
- The evaluation rubric asks team members for feedback in three major areas: organization, content, and technology
- Team members will also be asked to provide written feedback and overall impressions as part of the evaluation.

Section 1: Resource Organization Comparison

Bridges: 147 / 195

EnVision: 155 / 195



Organization – Key Question

I - Organization and Layout

The material is presented in an order that make sense for teaching: The resource provides a useful Table of Contents, Glossary, and Index; the size and format of the print is appropriate; and the non-text content (graphs, picture, charts) are accurate and well-integrated *

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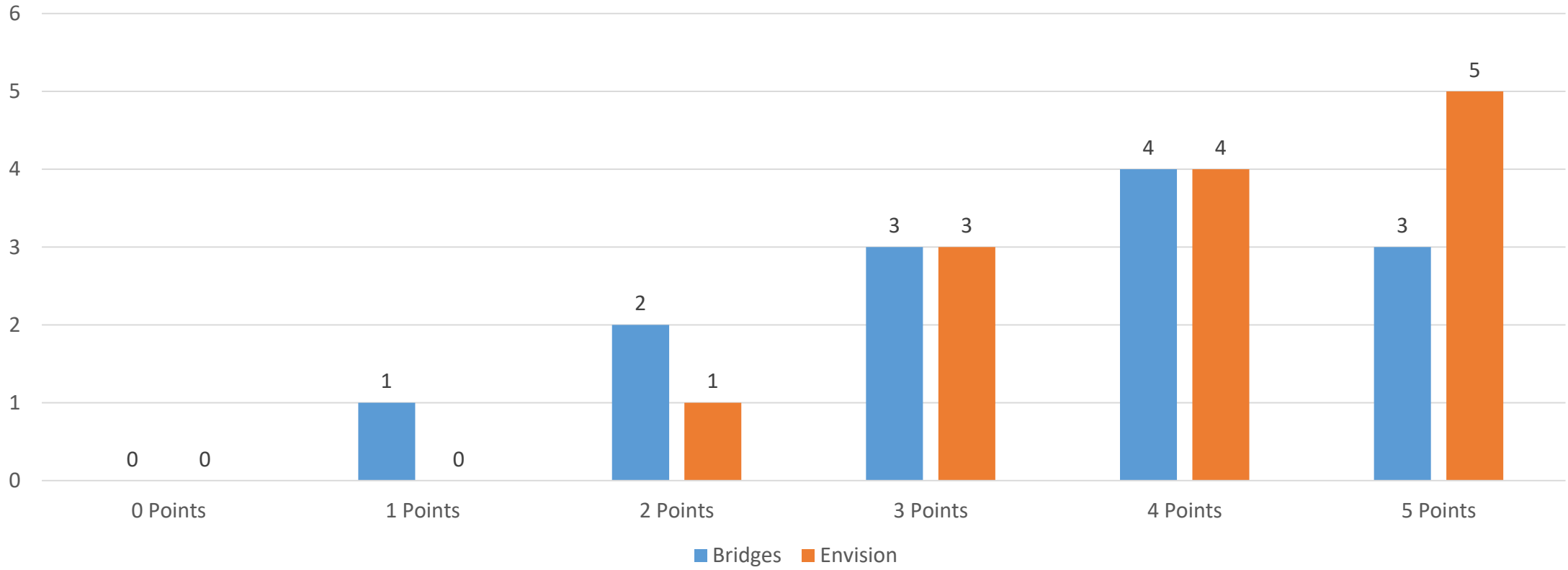
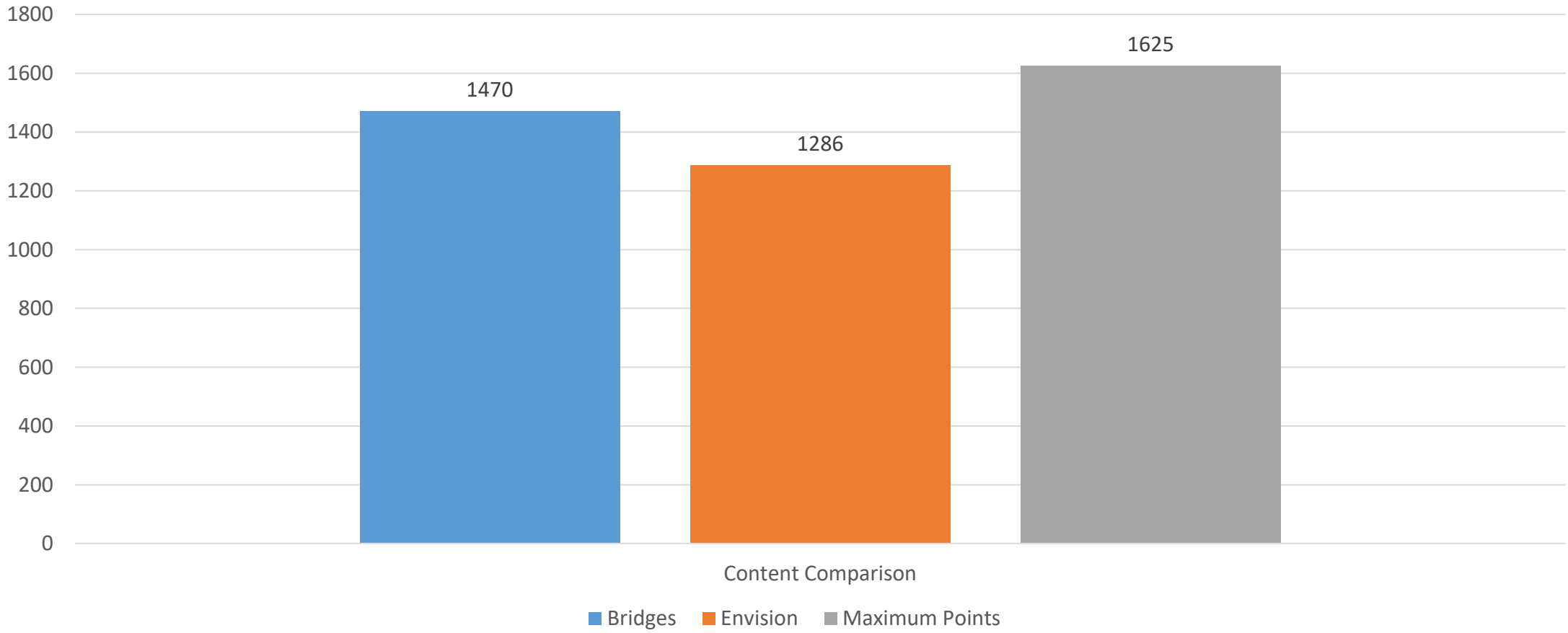


Section 2: Content Comparison

Bridges: 1470 / 1625

EnVision: 1286 / 1625



Content - Key Questions

The resource provides students ample amounts of single step AND multi-step problems in order to develop students' problem solving skills.

The resource is designed to make explicit connections for students between what they have learned and how it extends to mathematical situations and real world applications.

The resource is designed to build perseverance in a grade-appropriate manner giving students the opportunity to grapple with unique, non-traditional problems while applying the knowledge and skills they have learned.

The resource is designed to provide sufficient opportunities for students to reason mathematically through classroom discussion, written work, and independent thinking.

Content instruction respects the differentiated needs of all learners.

The resource leads students to make meaningful connections between mathematics and real-world situations.

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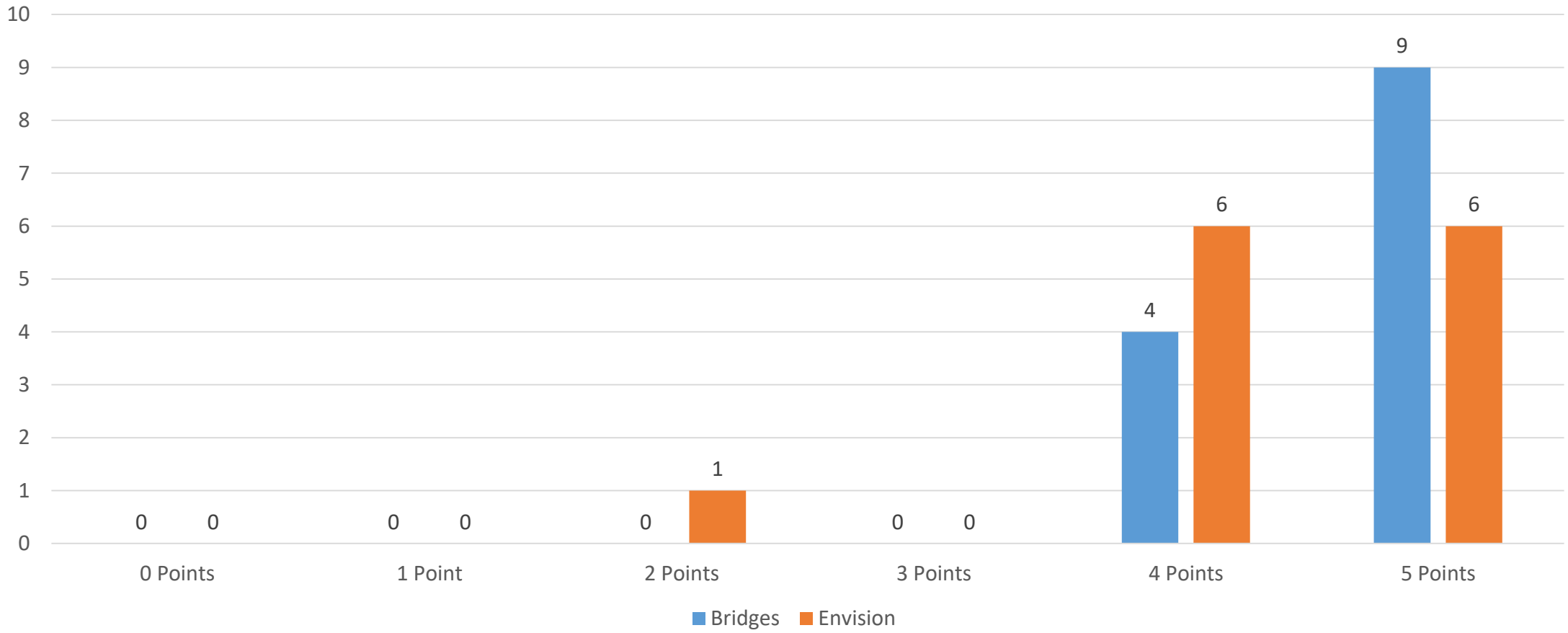

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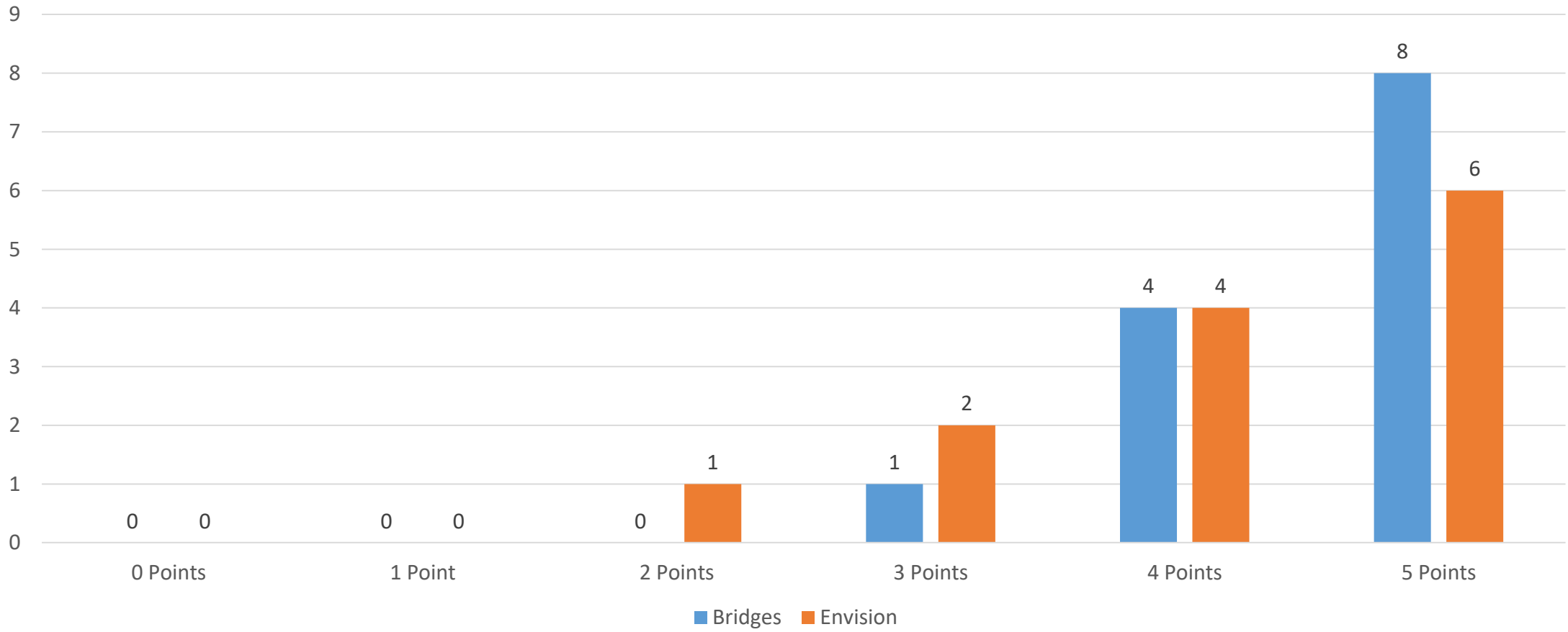

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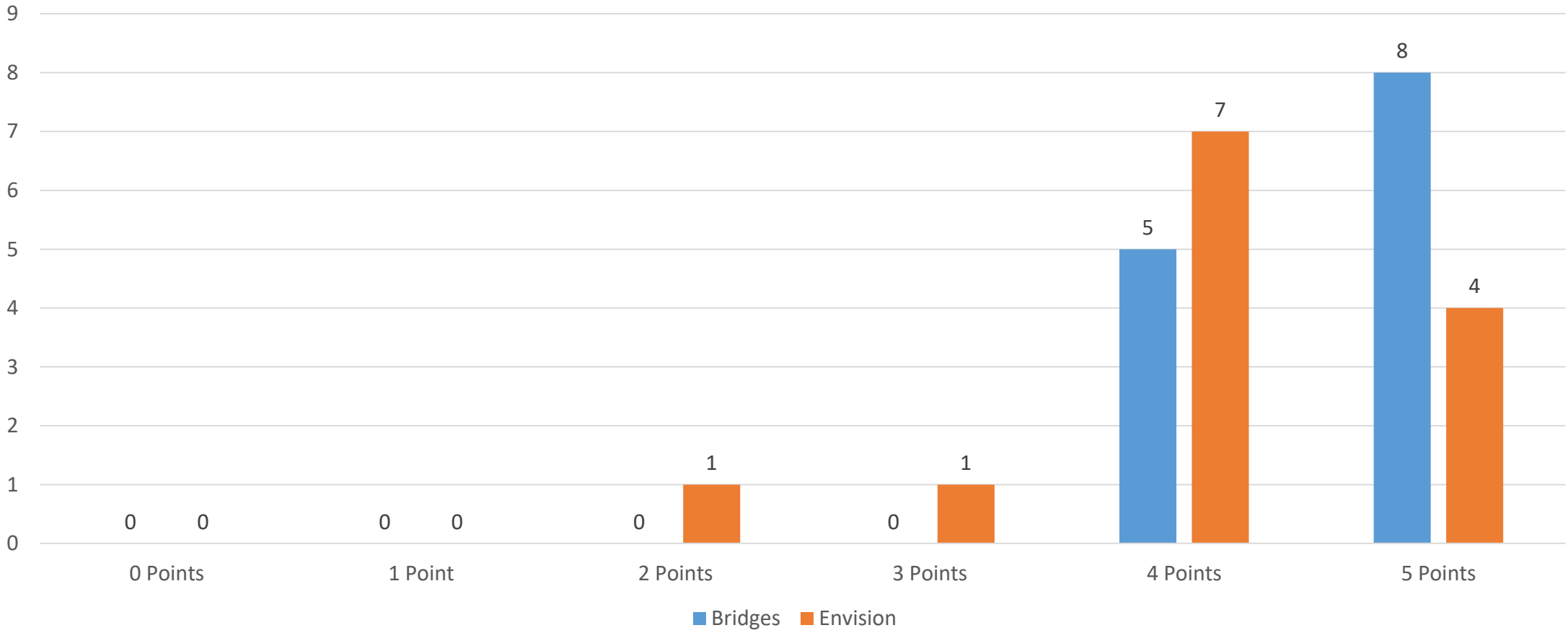

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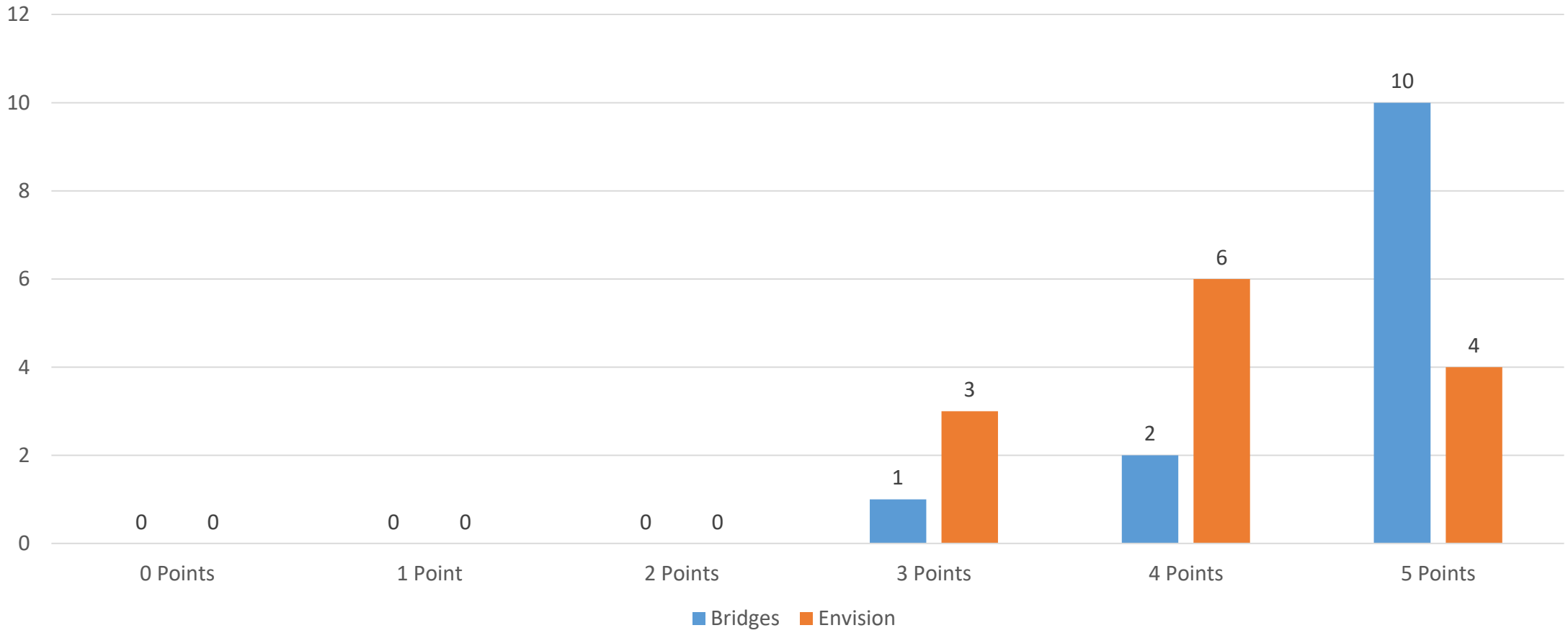
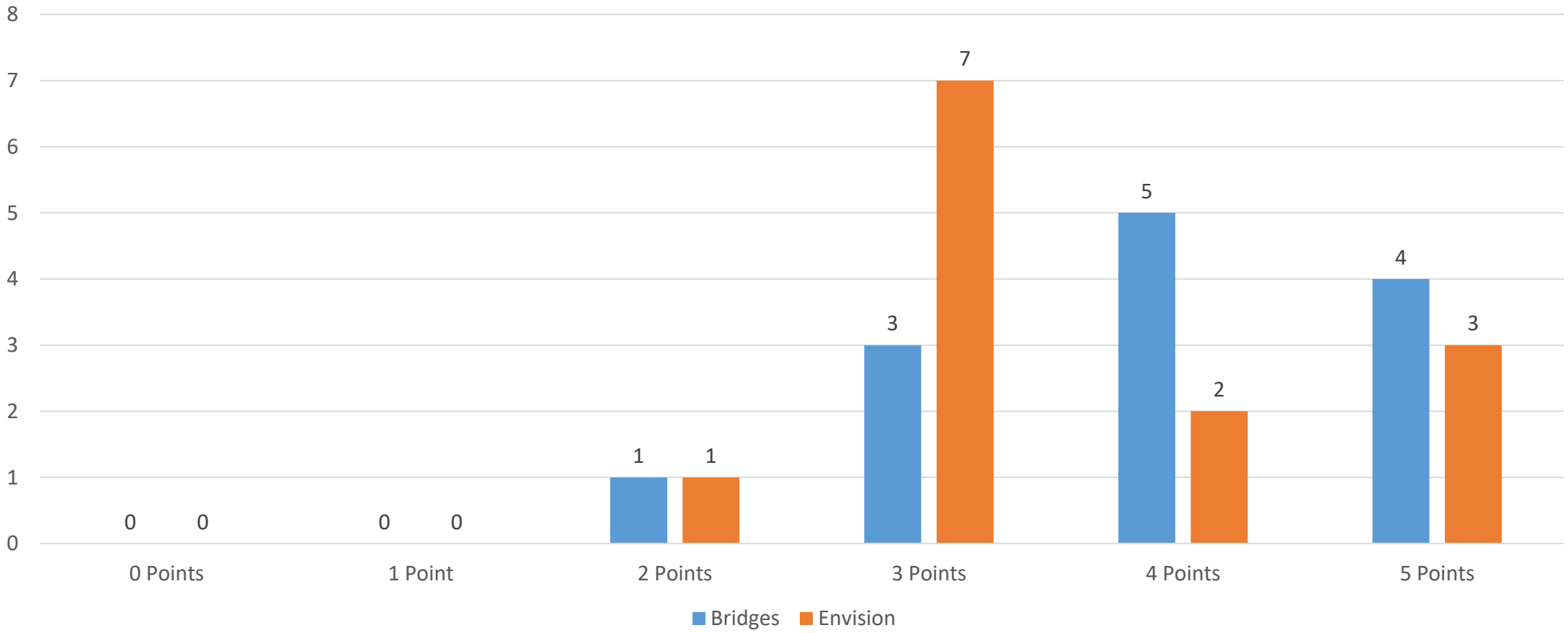


Content instruction respects the differentiated needs of all learners.



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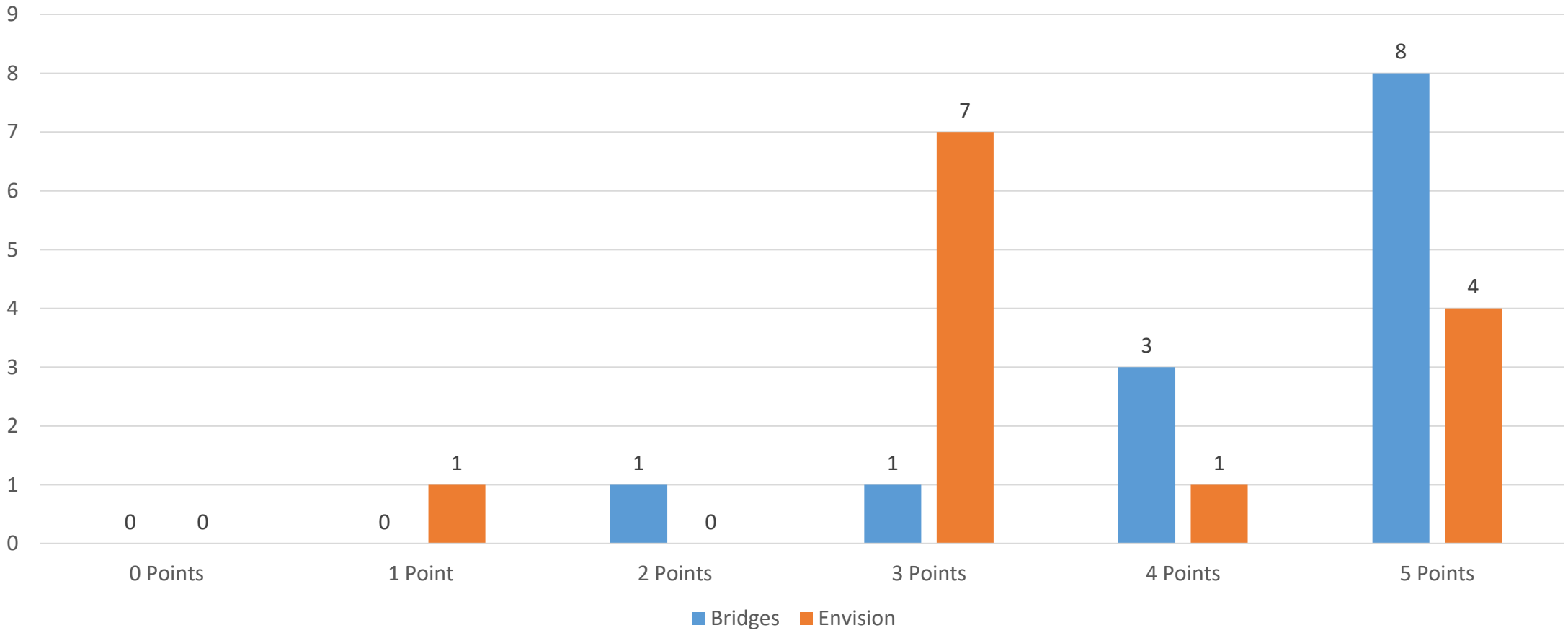
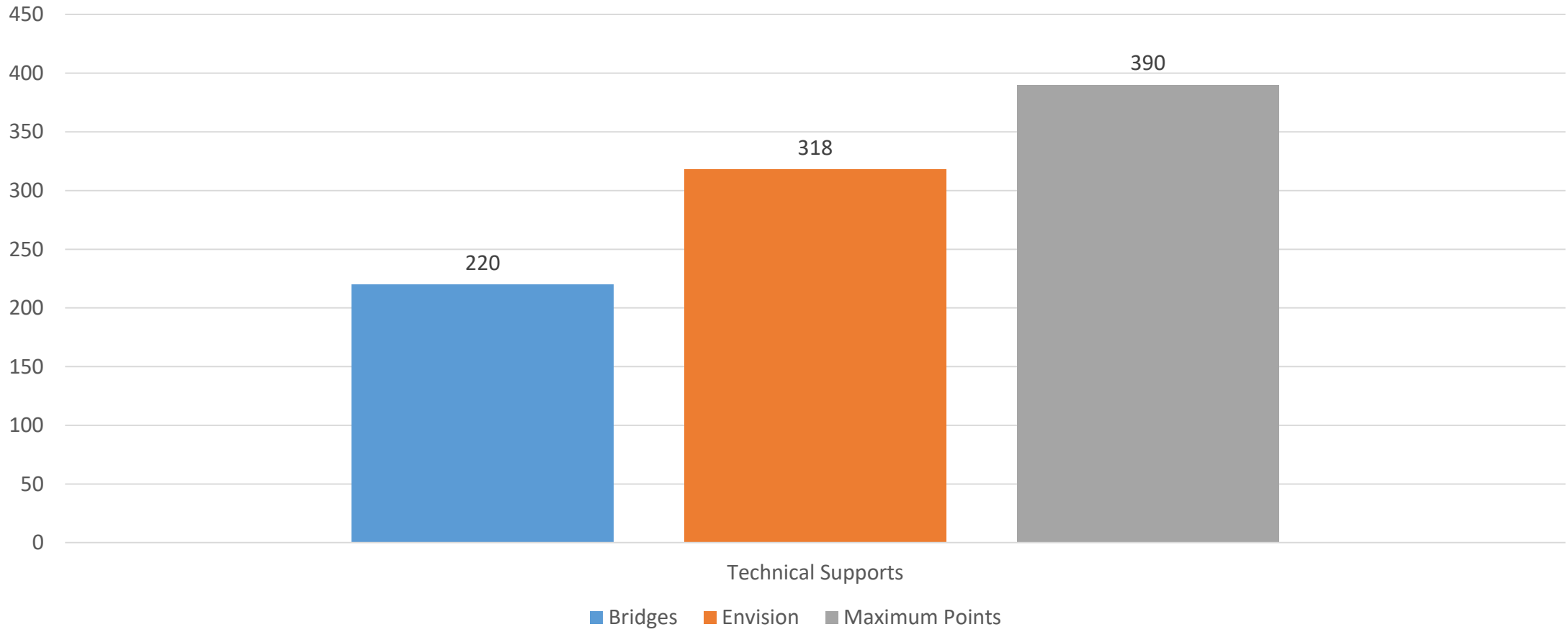


Section 3: Technical Supports Comparison

Bridges: 220 / 390

EnVision: 318 / 390



Technical Supports – Key Question

III – Technology
Technology that comes with the text/series enhances and compliments instruction.

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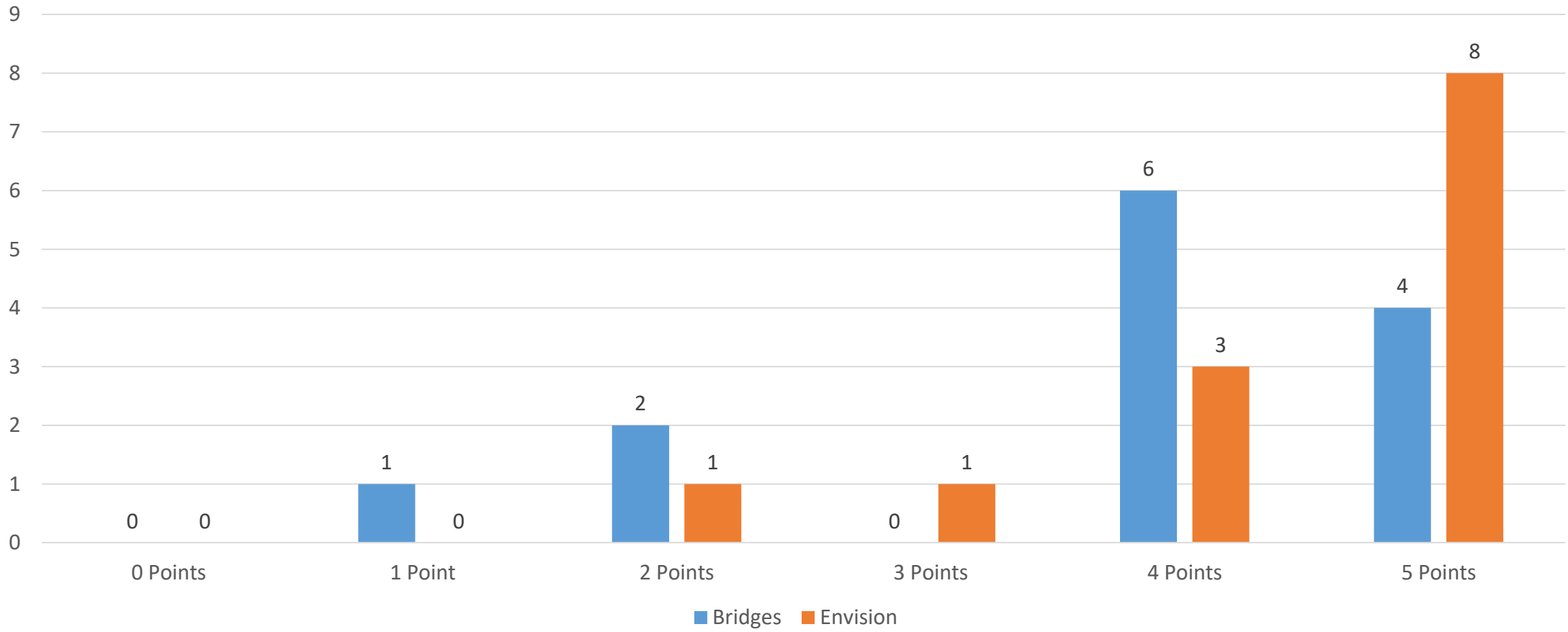
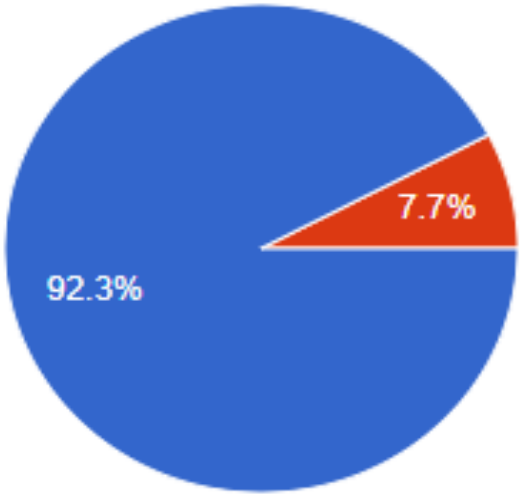


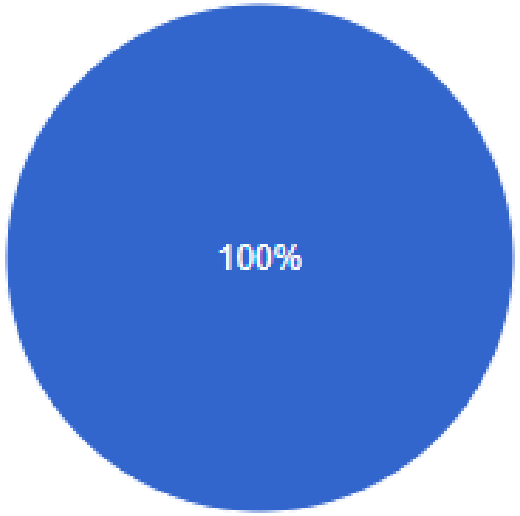
Overall Comparison

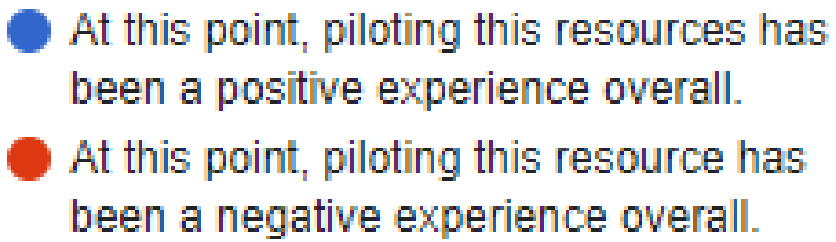
Please choose one of the following that best reflects your overall impressions of the text/series piloted thus far…

EnVision



Bridges





Bridges Comments

- Overall, I love, love, love this program and am excited to work more with it and learn more about it. My students are engaged and happy and making solid math connections in all math areas! Such a difference from our previous program!!!
- I love the rigor of this program and how my students love math time now. All of the manipulatives keep them engaged.
- Using this resource during my math instruction has benefitted my fourth grade students. They have been exposed to many more mathematical concepts than my prior fourth grade students at this time of the year when I was using Origio. Additionally, student engagement in the math activities and lessons is very high. A few of my students even cheer for certain math activities.
- I love this resource but the organization of it, paired with time limits due to current circumstances, is making planning very difficult. It has a lot to offer but it's hard to explore it all and know how to use it well right now. I am honestly finding it to be a bit overwhelming, despite receiving support from math specialist.

EnVision Comments

- At this particular point in time, the online component is a huge benefit! I would love for there to be more use of manipulatives. The centers are not substantial and I often supplement with my own. The workbook pages are very busy and the directions change for each problem. I would love for it to have a compatible app for use in the classroom.
- There's too much information to take in before teaching a lesson and it takes a great deal of time to get through a lesson. There's a lot of "teacher talk" and not enough time for students to explore and talk about math themselves. I like the vocabulary and feel, in the long run, this will be helpful for our students. My 2 biggest concerns are the lack of hands-on exploration for students and the amount of time students spend completing workbook pages.
- Overall, I think the program has it's perks and is more challenging than what we've had. I am not digging for resources or creating things on my own. This year has added struggles that I have to separate from the program. Sometimes when I struggle with this pilot I stop and think this is a 2020 thing, not Envisions. The program has more rigor, more technology and a great amount of resources.
- It is a very rigorous program. I am curious to see at the end of the year why it started with harder 1st grade concepts such as addition / subtraction story problems. Maybe it would not have been so rigorous if as kindergarten students they were using the Envision program. Students are rising to the occasion and learning the standards and skills quite successfully. Students seem to love the program and are excited about the videos, games, and manipulatives.

Questions/Comments