

Teaching Youth Bridge In Schools and Communities

**Materials Designed to Help
Teachers Start New Programs**



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Letter of Introduction

This booklet was created with the idea that many different approaches, methods and vehicles can be used to teach bridge to a new generation of players.

We hope that sharing this information with each other will spark new ideas, foster cooperation and encourage new teachers to jump in and join us.

We hope that all of you are as excited as we are about attending the next Youth North American Bridge Championships. We're looking forward to meeting many of your students in Washington DC, July 30 through August 1, 2009. It is going to be a great tournament!

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Patty Tucker, Julie Greenberg and Dana Norton

Note: This booklet was started by Patty Tucker of Atlanta GA to provide information to teachers who are interested in working with school bridge programs. Programs that have been successful and the steps taken to ensure that success are spotlighted. Study these examples to find out what might work for you. Special attention has been given in the booklet to the highly successful program that is the brainchild of Patty Tucker – Atlanta Junior Bridge. Julie Greenberg and Dana Norton of the ACBL Education Department update and expand this booklet each NABC to provide new information.

Bridge Teachers for Youth

A new web site – Bridge Teachers for Youth (www.btfy.org) – has been created. It's a free one-stop site to find all the information you need to start your own class or program, or to find new ideas and information for your existing program.

We believe that the success of Youth Bridge will be assured by the sharing and trading of ideas and tools on a continual basis. New teachers and/or organizers will benefit from first hand information from those that have existing programs and from the organizations that are in place to help us become successful.

The site will have new information, stories and ideas almost every time you visit, so come often and be sure to submit any sources or teaching tools that you have developed.

In order for this to be a successful site every teacher needs to participate. Please help by submitting new information, ideas and suggestions often to patty.tucker@acbl.org.

Kids Can Play Bridge, Too

(And You Can Teach Them!)

by Marty Nathan

We need to teach kids to play bridge. It's as simple as that.

The average age of ACBL members is around 60. It's a little younger for all bridge players. That isn't necessarily a problem. I'd guess the average age of the typical bridge student is also around 60, and that IS a problem. Our current students are often familiar with the game. They might have grown up in a bridge-playing household. They probably played as teenagers, "retired" to pursue a career and/or family, and are now coming back to the game. We have, however, lost the next generation. They played video games rather than bridge. There is no next generation to come back to the game.

So if you and I are going to have bridge opponents 20 years from now, we'd better start developing them now. If we lose this generation, we'll lose the game as well. What a terrible loss that would be for all of us – and for them.

"Can't we just wait until they are older?" I hear you ask. The answer to that question is a definitive "No." These youngsters will find something else to occupy their time – there certainly is no shortage of alternatives – and it will be much harder to pry them away from that passion after they retire. We can, and must, make bridge their passion now.

We've all heard about parents over-programming their kids, and that makes our task even harder. How do we compete with soccer and dance and karate and the hundreds of other more established activities? My suggestion is to get there first. We should target middle-school children. They're old enough to handle the math and not as fully committed to other activities. After-school sports and clubs are mostly a high school experience. (After-school day care is another matter; we'll come back to that.) We've had some success with older kids, and we've had bridge students as young as 6. But middle school is our best shot.

It's just like teaching adults...

In many respects, teaching kids is like teaching adults. You don't need to radically change your lesson plans. I've tried programs aimed specifically at kids such as MiniBridge¹ and have found my regular lessons, somewhat tailored, work just as well. And it gets them playing real bridge quicker. It's often easier to teach kids. They didn't learn bad habits 20 or 30 years ago.

Teaching kids offers a hidden benefit. They'll make you a better teacher. Children have little inhibition about letting you know when they are bored or lost. They'll talk to a neighbor or let their eyes wander around the room. You'll get feedback on your teaching, like it or not.

¹ Even though it didn't work well for me, you might want to try Minibridge. You can learn about it, including the rules, at <http://www.acbl.org/documentLibrary/teachers/MiniBridge.pdf>.

...Only Different

There are, however, differences that you must accommodate in your lesson plan. With adults you might get away with talking for an hour and then letting them play (though even with adults, that's a bad idea), but not with youngsters. School teachers know to use the "six-minute rule." You can't talk for more than six minutes straight. You must stop to reinforce the concept. This might be through applying it in a hand or in a verbal quiz. If there are two different answers given, let them as a group (or subgroup, perhaps each table) hash out the right result.

You have to keep them engaged. Use visual aids; many kids (and adults too) learn better when they see something than just by hearing it. Scatter those visual aids around the room; walking from one to another as you talk means the students have to follow you. Ask questions, even if you answer it yourself. Just give them a second or two to work out their own response first. Or let the kids volunteer their answers. Oral quizzes will illustrate the points you are teaching while keeping the students involved in the process.

In her beginner bridge series, Audrey Grant suggests a wonderful technique. Give each table a deck of cards and each player takes one of the suits. Then rather than putting the hands on a whiteboard, let the students create them at each table. You just tell them by suit which cards in each hand. Let's say you are teaching responses to 1NT. You can easily illustrate the difference in an invitational and game hand by having them change one card. Or responding with a five-card suit compared to a four-card suit. And then a six-card suit. You get the idea. The key here is the kids are physically involved, not just passive observers.

You already know not to talk about "ruffing" or "king-queen tight" without first defining the term. With adults, however, you can talk about "distribution" and they have a basis of understanding that word. The kids' vocabularies aren't as well developed. I nevertheless teach bridge terminology, and may well be increasing their vocabularies at the same time. Don't underestimate these younger students. I admit I always get a few titters when I introduce the word "dummy." I've found I can mitigate this by stressing we mean like a ventriloquist's dummy – declarer gets to do all the talking. They'll still laugh for a while.

As with vocabulary, math skills are often limited, especially for younger children. They won't figure their point count as quickly. They'll have more trouble scoring. With your help (and a little maturity) they will overcome these barriers.

If you use handouts, limit them to one page per class. In my first class with kids, I asked them if they'd like handouts that covered what we discussed in class. They all agreed, "No, we already have too much to read." For the next group I just gave out one-page handouts, obviously just the highlights. That seems to work.

Kids need lots of review. They won't get it all the first time. Start each lesson with a review of the material from the prior one. If you've had a long layoff such as summer vacation, spend a whole class or two reviewing.

Kids will play more slowly than adults. Their fine motor skills aren't fully developed; mere manipulation of the cards takes longer. (Card holders will help as well as presorting the hands.) Their attention spans are shorter. They won't count their points as quickly. Depending on age and how long they've been playing, allow 10 to 15 minutes per hand.

They Need a Place to Play

There is one other difference with kids, and it is the biggest stumbling block in retaining young students. They need a place to play. You can easily move your beginning adults into a local club's 99'er game or even the I/N games at your nearest tournament. Or they can organize their own games at home. Kids don't have this luxury. They obviously can't play during the school day, and night games finish too late. Too many bridge programs teach children to play and then lose them when there is no place to practice their newly found skills.

You must create a regular kid's game. Playing with their peers reinforces that bridge isn't just an "old person's" game. This might be an after-school program or club. Consider a community center or church/synagogue. Atlanta Junior Bridge has had great success with an ACBL sanctioned game at a local club the first Saturday of every month. We hold classes the rest of the Saturdays. We do it early (9:30 to 11:30) to minimize conflicts with the many other activities kids have. We are considering switching to Sunday afternoon in the belief that there will be even fewer conflicts.

Have your youth game extend through the summer. Sure, your attendance will be down due to vacation travel and summer camps. But don't let the kids go three months without playing. Any middle school teacher will tell you that considerable time at the start of each year is devoted to reviewing what the students forgot over the summer. Don't make your job more difficult than it needs to be.

You'll want to make some other accommodations. Younger children cannot easily hold 13 cards; have card holders available. You can lose a lot of class time while kids with undeveloped fine motor skills sort the cards. If you are preparing hands in advance, sort them by suit and by rank within suit.

Organize tournaments for kids in conjunction with your sectionals and regionals. We've been holding youth games in conjunction with tournaments in Atlanta for almost two years. We've held separate Georgia Youth Team and Georgia Youth Open Pairs State Championships, with over sixty youngsters participating in both. We're working on youth national championships! Be sure to have plenty of adults to assist with scoring, sorting hands and moving boards but not with bidding and play decisions.

With proper adult supervision (due to safety and security concerns), on-line bridge can provide some unique opportunities. Local Atlanta bridge teacher Carolyn Eckert has organized Internet matches between students in Germany and those in her class. Just think of all the possibilities.

Where to Teach

So how do you get started? You need to find a class, which is easier said than done. Start with schools – that’s where, after all, your target market is. The idea is to make bridge part of the curriculum. A new organization, School Bridge League, is working on just that. It has developed a concept called “Bridge in a Box.” The lessons in this program, which can be found on their web site (www.LearningToGive.org), are correlated with the academic curriculum standards for all states and provinces. For the most part, the lessons address educational standards in Math, Language Arts and Social Studies. All of their material is free.

If you can’t get in the classroom, shoot for after-school programs. With so many working mothers, many middle schools now have these. Tip: Administrators aren’t as busy in the summer months.

Start with the principal if you can get in to see her. Stress how bridge is not just fun, but will help the students with their schoolwork as well. We have a study to prove it. Print out “Statistically Speaking”² and take it with you. The article documents the link between learning bridge and improved test scores. Thanks to the *No Child Left Behind* program, every school is looking for this.

Many schools have summer camps. Why not suggest they incorporate a bridge lesson of, say, two hours for five days. That’s enough to whet the appetite of any aspiring bridge player. Many schools have an all-activities type camp, a perfect place to add bridge.

School Bridge League has prepared a summer camp curriculum and soon will have a curriculum that a bridge teacher could use for an after school program. A ‘Talking to Educators’ toolkit should be available this summer.

You can hold a bridge summer camp anywhere. Libraries are a great location as a simple poster will reach exactly the parents and kids you want. Consider community centers, churches and synagogues. They generally have the space as well as tables and chairs. Your local bridge club offers all this and has an incentive to teach bridge.

You’ll need to publicize your classes. The ACBL cooperative advertising will pay up to 75% of those costs up to \$1000 per project. You might also get help from districts, units and your local clubs. Local businesses might help underwrite some of your cost. Remember everyone loves to help kids. The more funding you can get this way, the less you have to charge. Using such resources, the not-for-profit Atlanta Junior Bridge has been able to offer classes and camps for free. To be fair, many teachers do contribute their time.

² Available at <http://www.acbl.org/documentlibrary/news/statisticallyspeaking.pdf>

Where to get more help

- The ACBL has a web site – <http://www.bridgeiscool.com/> just for juniors (up to age 26). While the emphasis is on older students, you might find some help here.
- The Atlanta Junior Bridge website is <http://home.earthlink.net/~atlantajuniorbridge/>. The AJB President Patty Tucker will be happy to advise you on setting up programs in your area. You can email Patty at patty@atlantajuniorbridge.org.
- The School Bridge League is a new organization, but has a lot of material including lesson plans at <http://www.schoolbridgeleague.com/>.
- The ACBL Education Department has a lot of material for teachers. You can contact them at education@acbl.org and check out their web site – <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/schoolBridge.html>.

Patty Tucker, President of Atlanta Junior Bridge and a former North American Open Pairs champion, recently remarked, “I started playing bridge when I was 11 and have played my whole life. It has provided me mental challenges, a wonderful social structure and an opportunity to meet some great people. Bridge is a gift we can give to children.”

Teaching kids and spreading the word on our favorite game can be personally rewarding. You will, moreover, ensure we have opponents in the decades to come. Start teaching them now.

This article was originally published in the American Bridge Teachers Association Summer 2007 Quarterly Magazine



ACBL's Early Efforts with School Bridge

The ACBL began working to develop a program for school-age children in the late '80s. It was a hard sell at first.

The initial effort was aimed at the college level. The primary contacts for college bridge were the administrators who ran the on-campus recreation centers. They would usually find a student volunteer to work with the bridge teacher, place advertisements around campus and in the school newspaper and act as a liaison between the students, the teacher and the recreation center administration. ACBL worked with the ACU-I (Association of College Unions – International) for a while until that organization proved ineffective. There was some success at the college-level, usually the result of a student who loved to play bridge and was enthusiastic enough to start a campus bridge club. In general, however, college students didn't prove to have enough spare time to devote to learning the game of bridge, and in places where bridge activity was started, it tended to die out when the student organizer graduated.

In the nineties, ACBL's efforts focused on developing classes in elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. Sixth grade enrichment classes were found to be eager for new material, and the students were not old enough yet for social interests to be much of a deterrent. New lesson plans were created by Kitty Cooper for middle school students and MiniBridge was added to the mix. Donna Compton produced two sets of lesson plans for elementary-level players. This new material brought a lot of success to the school program, which continues to thrive twenty-plus years later.

Age and location of the classes cover a wide area. Bridge classes have been held for all ages of school children – even as young as first grade! They have been held in the classroom – most frequently as part of a progressive math program, one day a week to focus on logic, etc. They have been held as a substitute for study hall, at lunch, before school and after school. Bridge classes have been offered on Club/Activity Day. Sometimes they are combined with field trips to a club or tournament; sometimes they are expanded with sessions hosted by the school bridge teacher on Bridge Base Online. In some areas, summer bridge camps have worked.

School Bridge Programs across North America come in all shapes and sizes. Since the program started in the late 1980s, many teachers have been involved in the school bridge program, and they have helped introduce a new generation to the game of bridge. Some programs have lasted for years and passed from one generation of teachers to another; some programs are totally dependent on the dedication of one teacher; some programs have unit and district support; some programs live and die with their volunteers.

Interest in school bridge continues to grow, and its future looks bright.



SCHOOL BRIDGE LEAGUE

Contact Name: Paula Alford-Johnson
Contact Info: Paula.Alford-Johnson@LeagueWorldwide.org
Area: Nationwide
Type of Class: School-based, during school, after school
Teaching Material: School Bridge League curriculum

School Bridge LEAGUE is a program founded through the generosity of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett to further the effort of getting bridge into schools and attracting students to the game. School Bridge LEAGUE is a division of The LEAGUE, a web- and school-based system for service learning that builds character and empowers young people to “do good” in their community, the nation and the world. The LEAGUE consists of K-12 curriculum, coded to state academic standards, service events and a system for reporting and tracking students’ achievements and celebrating their successes.

In keeping with service learning standards, one part of The LEAGUE’s overall structure is to not only provide service events for the students, but to guide them toward identifying issues in their community. Once identified, students are encouraged and empowered to participate in service events that address those issues to help alleviate the underlying causes. This is where the game of bridge comes in.

The game of bridge improves students’ critical thinking skills which help them analyze their community issues. Bridge embodies cooperation, logic and problem solving and social skills such as trust, communication and patience. All of these combine to create a meaningful service experience.

School Bridge LEAGUE sponsors six virtual tournaments throughout the year. Teachers are e-mailed the hands and report the results back to School Bridge LEAGUE after they are played. Students compete in four different divisions, based on their level of experience (Mini Bridge, Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced) and the top finishers in each division are awarded trophies and other prizes.

In addition to providing opportunities for play, School Bridge LEAGUE has created resources designed to give newcomers the opportunity to learn the game. School Bridge LEAGUE offers a “Bridge In a Box” kit, which includes the classroom curriculum in a bound booklet, bidding posters, cards and other supplies to get a bridge team up and running.

School Bridge LEAGUE also provides training opportunities for classroom teachers, to allow them to not only learn how to play the game of bridge, but also how to teach the game to their students. School Bridge LEAGUE also has developed an Introductory Toolkit, designed to outline for principals or other educational decision-makers the benefits bridge can give to their students and their school. The classroom curriculum is also available for FREE as a downloadable document. All of these resources can be accessed at the School Bridge LEAGUE web site at www.schoolbridgeleague.org.

The School Bridge LEAGUE web site also offers a volunteer support database for school programs. Parents, grandparents, bridge clubs and other community supporters of school bridge can register with School Bridge LEAGUE. Classroom teachers can then access this database to provide additional support, counsel and instruction for their school teams. This service is free and available through the School Bridge LEAGUE web site at www.schoolbridgeleague.org.

Many classroom teachers realize the benefits of bridge, but do not play the game themselves. So, School Bridge LEAGUE can help provide training opportunities for classroom teachers interested in learning how to play the game and teach it to their students. For more information, please visit www.schoolbridgeleague.org or contact Paula@SchoolBridgeLEAGUE.org.

Why Form a Youth Bridge Program?

People begin to teach bridge to young people for many different reasons:

- 1) Your child or grandchild wants to learn bridge.
- 2) You recognize that the average bridge player is becoming older and that you want to help keep the game you love alive and well.
- 3) You love children, teaching and bridge and find an outlet that allows you to experience and realize all three loves.
- 4) Your unit or district is interested in forming youth classes and needs a teacher.
- 5) You are convinced that Bridge will be a good way to enrich a child's academic and social abilities.

In most of the other organized volunteer Youth activities available today, the coaches, teachers and coordinators are the parents of the children involved. In bridge, that will not be true because most of the children's parents do not play the game. For youth bridge to grow, we must look to the bridge community and the generosity of these players to supply their passion for bridge, their love of children and their time and expertise.

No one teaches youth bridge to become rich. As a matter of fact, you will probably break even or lose money trying to teach youth bridge. Whether you go through the ACBL's School Bridge Lesson program, the School Bridge League or simply form your own organization, you will find that while teaching these children is emotionally and intellectually rewarding, it is NOT a financial windfall.

The next articles describe how Atlanta Junior Bridge formed their Non-Profit organization and it is followed by Patty Tucker's "A Whole New Deal," a brief overview of Youth efforts in North America.

Why AJB formed a Youth Bridge Program (and how to do it yourself)

Atlanta Junior Bridge (AJB), a not-for-profit organization, was initially formed by a group of bridge players interested in teaching bridge to children and young adults in the Atlanta area. This group discovered there was a lack of organization and structure in the methods employed to identify youngsters interested in bridge, no methodology for teaching and an absence of a safe and happy environment for the youngsters to play the game with other children in Atlanta.

There are groups such as Bridge at Schools, Duplicate Bridge Association of Atlanta, as well as individuals within the city and outlying areas, teaching children. Individuals, such as Carolyn Eckert, Patty Tucker, and Nicolas Hammond, taught youngsters in schools, home settings, programs in after school settings and Saturday classes at local bridge clubs, but there was no organized effort to reach youngsters.

AJB recognized that many people were interested in teaching children, but for various reasons, they are unable to start the process. Such reasons include:

- 1) Can not afford the financial investment for supplies.

- 2) Did not know how or weren't comfortable in soliciting a school for a class.
- 3) Couldn't make the full time commitment necessary.

AJB's function is to find locations for classes, identify and provide a small stipend for instructors/teachers, provide teaching supplies, arrange for group teaching or substitutes for instructors/teachers who could not make the full time commitment and provide playing opportunities for our students.

Locations for Classes: AJB teaches in churches, recreation centers and libraries, as well as in schools. Three of the major bridge centers in the metro Atlanta area allow us to hold weekly classes for the students. The parents of the students we teach in the bridge centers and at our summer camps have become some of our most consistent contacts for introducing bridge to the schools in Atlanta. Our largest retention of students has come from the summer camps we teach (2 hours a day, for one week). I highly recommend a 'summer camp' approach followed up by weekly, year-round, classes.

Teachers: Teaching supplies (boards, bidding boxes, table direction mats), advertising of classes (a portion of which is paid for by ACBL marketing), teaching posters (a set of 11 posters developed by AJB teachers) and moral support to our teachers is provided by AJB. If at first you can't afford supplies, check with your local bridge organizations. Many times they will be happy to loan you supplies until you can afford to purchase your own. Background checks are run on all teachers prior to their teaching a class. You don't need 'great' bridge players to teach beginning classes, just good teachers. Although experience in teaching bridge is a very valuable asset, it is more important for the instructor/teachers to develop a rapport with the children and have a basic understanding of beginning bridge. For Intermediate and Advanced classes, our teachers will have a greater level of expertise.

We try to get 'team' teaching established for our groups, so that there is one 'lead' teacher who teaches with another (or two) teachers. That way, if a teacher goes on vacation or has a conflict, someone is ready to fill in – and it's someone the kids are familiar with.

Lesson plans are available through the ACBL School Bridge Lesson Program, School Bridge League and any of the other standard teaching manuals.

AJB prepared a budget and asked for funding from District, Unit, Local and National bridge organizations. They searched for donations in the our local bridge community and from the parents of our students. It is easier to attain financial assistance from members, corporations, trust funds and educational foundations, if you obtain the 501(c)3, tax exempt charity, status. AJB has done so.

Games and On-going Classes: AJB recognized that holding on-going classes and games was a key component in keeping the children interested. Games are held at every local tournament, 'club games' are held once a month at each of the facilities where there are lessons. AJB offers on-going, once-a-week classes in every geographic area where we held summer camps.

Summary: For AJB this approach worked. It is easier to be 'part' of a program than the whole program. A program supplies structure, help and an identity that your bridge community recognizes.

A vital component for the development of this type of bridge program is key members who can easily speak with strangers, conveying commitment and zeal for the

project. These individuals will find locations for classes, develop publicity, seek funding and perform the duties and responsibilities of a business. At a minimum, a program should include a President, Secretary and Treasurer to handle the business. At some point a Board of Directors for the corporation may be arranged.

This is a process. It will not be fast or easy. It is hard. With the help of many people in Atlanta, it took us at least four months to really get everything in place, so that we could make the big push for the summer camps. The results for our first summer program follow.

Steps Necessary to Form your own group:

- 1) Find a lawyer who will volunteer his services pro-bono to incorporate your group and apply for 501(c)3 status.
- 2) Obtain liability insurance and directors and officers insurance.
- 3) Go to your membership, tell them what you are doing and solicit help. Not only teachers, but teaching assistants, graphic artists, publicity people, snack providers and poster makers are needed for starters. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done. Involve as many people as you can.
- 4) Start a class at your local duplicate center or in other locations. Advertise a beginning class (about four weeks before you hold the class) on a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon, open the doors and teach whoever shows up. The next week someone will bring a friend.
- 5) Ask for financial assistance from your unit, district, local governing bodies and your membership. AJB was fortunate to receive some initial private funding which allowed us to create a brochure to ‘get the word out’ and to give us validity when speaking with potential class sites. Identify geographic areas that have a high concentration of families, and go to your local library or recreation centers, schools and community centers to start a class. Find members who have connections within a school or church youth group to start a class.
- 6) Create a website – gives the program validity and is a place where you can begin to post notices of classes.
- 7) Reach parents who support the development of their children’s mind and math skills which are a major component of bridge.

Start-up Expenses:

Non Profit Corporation Filing Fees	\$500.00
State Non-Profit Corp Filing Fees	25.00
Liability Insurance	575.00
Directors and Officers Ins	760.00
Website	275.00
Brochures	1465.00
Bulk Mail Permit & Application	320.00
T-shirts for the Students	500.00
Lthd, Bus Cards, Donation Notes	600.00

Total Expenses: \$5020.00

State filing fees may vary from state to state. Though it is a large expense, we were advised strongly by our lawyer to have Directors and Officers insurance when dealing with children. It is not required to have a brochure. If you are not going to send out a mailing to request funding, you do not need a bulk mail permit and application. T-shirts are not required, but the kids love them, and it is an inexpensive way to advertise the program. Letterhead, business cards, note cards and a card to send to people confirming their tax free donation are a necessity.

Summer Classes & Camp Program Summary May through August 2006

Camps Taught – 12

Children Taught – 153

Summer Camp Children Still attending classes or playing in games –96

Retention Rate: 62.7%

Ongoing classes to teach these Summer Camp children and children from Winter/Spring programs: 8

Children attending Classes: 114

Average table count in Classes: 2 tables

Expenses:

Teacher Compensation	\$3100.00
Supplies	1961.00*
Fixed Expenses	500.00
Advertising	1420.00**
Total:	\$6981.00

*\$1295.00 is a nonrecurring expense (Bid Boxes & Card Holders). More supplies will be purchased as we expand our class availability.

** 75% of this cost reimbursed by ACBL's Co-op advertising program

A Whole New Deal

by Patty Tucker

Everything old is new again, and this time it's bridge. Yes, Bridge. The game your grandparents played 50 years ago. Today's youth are rediscovering the fascinating and complex game of bridge, and it's pulling them away from the television and video games, out of the malls and off the streets.

Atlanta Junior Bridge (AJB), a non-profit organization formed in 2006, has taught more than 1,000 children between the ages of 7 to 17 the rudiments of bridge. At the Georgia Youth Open Pairs State Championship this past December, 74 players competed with brothers (ages 10 and 7) declared the winners.

When asked why they want to play bridge, these young players tell us it's because the game is fun and that it gives them a chance to hang out and play with their friends. In today's busy world, where many parents struggle to find quality after-school care, bridge provides an opportunity for their children to meet new friends, play a game and talk – all in a safe, controlled environment.

What's more, the game of bridge knows no geographic or socio-economic boundaries. There are no age or gender concerns. No physical or intellectual requirements. Any child can learn and enjoy it.

Bridge also helps surmount generational gaps. One of our parents recently shared how bridge has helped draw her family closer together.

She told us how, during recent trips to New Orleans, her children played bridge with their grandmother, great aunt and 97-year-old great grandmother. Conversations between her son and his great grandmother became relaxed and easy, especially when they partnered at bridge. Her daughter began reviewing the daily hands from the bridge newspaper with her great grandmother. Their grandmother is now participating in a weekly social bridge game and plans to start duplicate bridge when she retires. Her children also find themselves writing about their bridge activities to relatives in India. Despite the many cultural differences between the United States and India, stories about playing in a Swiss team game or doing well in a tournament are always easily understood and appreciated.

In addition to transcending generational gaps, parents are also looking to bridge to help their children learn sportsmanship and to play well with others. In fact, home school groups often rely on bridge as an entertaining method of teaching, as well as a vehicle for enhancing social interaction among kids.

Along the way, children are improving their concentration, as well as their math, problem solving and logic skills.

According to a study by Dr. Christopher Shaw, a former Board Member of the ACBL Educational Foundation, students who played bridge scored higher on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills than their non-bridge playing counterparts after 20 months and again after 32 months.

In addition, they scored higher in all five subject areas (reading, language, math, science, social studies).

It's precisely this brain-building power that led bridge enthusiasts, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett to pledge \$1 million for use in creating a youth bridge program to reach kids in schools nationwide. At the same time, a new youth-service organization called, The LEAGUE, was creating a web and school-based system for empowering kids to give back to their communities. After hearing about Gates' and Buffett's interest in youth bridge, The LEAGUE reached out, a partnership was formed and the School Bridge LEAGUE was born.

Today, the School Bridge LEAGUE is up and running. A web site, Bridge in a Box learning kit and lesson plans (coded to state educational standards) are helping teachers integrate the game into their existing curriculum.

The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) funds a program, the School Bridge Lesson Program (SBLP), which has been in existence for over 18 years. It provides practical and financial assistance to bridge players teaching bridge in school programs. Just in the past two years, over 250 SBLP teachers have taught classes, in 37 states and 6 Canadian Provinces, to over 7500 students.

While Atlanta has one of the most active programs, it is by no means the only one in existence. Non-profit organizations have been formed to teach children bridge in Nebraska and Hawaii. From New Jersey to California, Ontario to Florida and points in between, groups have been formed with the express goal of teaching bridge to children. More are being formed every month.

So the story comes full circle, back to Atlanta. All of these efforts have culminated in the ACBL Board of Directors approving a motion to create a Youth North American Bridge Championship, the first of its kind. The initial tournament will be held July 3-6 2008 in Atlanta Georgia. While this may be the first Youth NABC, it will not be the last. Washington DC is scheduled for 2009 and many of these young players are already planning on ways to raise funds to attend.

These young bridge players now have the chance to show what they can do. Together, they'll play and, without a doubt, build a few fine bridges along the way.

Links:

[Atlanta Junior Bridge](#)

[Youth North American Bridge Championships](#)

[American Contract Bridge League](#)

[School Bridge LEAGUE](#)

[The LEAGUE](#)

TEACHING YOUNG PEOPLE

The following ideas and information comes from workshops run by Val Covalciuc, a TAP Teacher-Trainer and past president of the ACBL, at the NABC.

Differences Between Teaching Adults and Children:

1. Kids want and need activity. Don't talk for more than five or ten minutes before you let them play.
2. Teach kids after they have played a hand. They need to "do it" and "see it" in order to learn.
3. It's difficult to make kids understand they have to study to learn a game. They frequently will say, "Learn a game? Why can't we just play?"
4. Kids aren't afraid to make mistakes. They are willing to take a chance because they MIGHT be right.
5. Kids like their cards to be secret. (One teacher reported that she had a student who put his $\subseteq A$ in his pocket during a class just to make certain it wasn't seen.)
6. Kids don't like to play their high cards if they are in danger of losing them.
7. Kids find it easier to write in textbooks to do the exercises. (The school, however, might not like having them develop a habit they can't carry with them to other classes.)
8. Kids love to be "dummy" and make jokes about it. (Teachers need to allow an extra five minutes for the hubbub to die down when they first introduce this concept or try to introduce the dummy as similar to a puppet used by a ventriloquist. That doesn't stir up as much excitement.)
9. Adults are very social; kids are very competitive. (Teachers need to set up contests for each lesson to satisfy this need.)

Suggestions for Getting a School Group Started:

1. At the high school and middle school levels, it is good to go through the local school board to obtain a list of school principals. The individual principals can refer you to interested teachers. (Math teachers and teachers working with gifted students tend to be most receptive toward sponsoring ACBL bridge programs.)
2. To run a program in a school, it is necessary to have a faculty sponsor. (This is generally an insurance requirement.) The personality of the sponsoring teacher is important in getting the bridge program started.
3. The sponsoring teacher can participate in the bridge class or can simply grade papers while the class is going on. To keep the program going, however, the sponsoring teacher should agree to start a bridge club at the school that would meet during activity periods, at lunch or after school.
4. The fact that your bridge program is funded (by the ACBL) is a big plus when you make your proposal to the schools in your area. A teacher is paid \$350 to teach the course if there are at least twelve students at one school who complete the sixteen hours of lessons. The program also provides Bidding (Club Series) texts for the course.
5. The School Bridge Lesson Series can be run for credit if accepted by the local school system as a part of the curriculum. Note that the textbook is pedagogically sound.
6. Some math teachers or teachers in gifted student programs may be able to offer the bridge lessons as part of an already accepted course.

7. Some teachers may agree to give extra credit to students who take the bridge lessons as part of an after-school program.

Incentives for Students:

1. Teachers should offer prizes for -
 - a. Good answers.
 - b. Recruitment. ("Bring a friend and win a prize." The friend gets a prize when he/she comes back for the second lesson. Put the onus of teaching the friend what has been missed on the student.)
2. Field trips to play in a 0-00 game at a local sectional tournament can be very exciting for the students. (The teacher can pre-deal the Club Series hands for the students to play.)
3. Interest local TV stations in your bridge program. Kids like publicity.
4. Kids are used to taking quizzes. Bridge quizzes can be fun.
5. Use the bridge theme in other school activities with very young students. Making "thank you" cards for the ACBL in appreciation of the lessons is a good project for Art Class.
6. Let kids play the lesson hands outside under the trees on blankets after a picnic lunch. The novelty is terrific fun and the kids will enjoy being outside.

Let's take a detailed look at some of the school programs that our ACBL teachers have introduced in North America ...

CALIFORNIA

Contact Name: Bill Grant
Contact Info: wbgran@yahoo.com
Area: San Diego, California
Type of Area: City/Suburb
Type of Class: Class time
Name of School: Chula Vista High School and La Jolla High School
Grade Level: 11th-12th graders
Teaching Material: Club series textbook provided by ACBL

As an Advanced Placement Calculus teacher at Chula Vista HS, I started using the "downtime" between the AP exams in early May and the end of school in middle/late June to teach bridge. After I retired, my math teacher friends wanted me to come back and teach bridge to their classes.

This year, with the help of my own bridge unit (526), I was able to expand my teaching to two AP Calculus classes at La Jolla High School as well. I've been working in the schools since 2001.

Now that we have "returning" bridge students in the schools where I teach, I want to take more advantage of the scholarship options provided by ACBL. (This year I was able to award two scholarships at the school's Honors Assembly.) But my biggest dream is to have several high schools involved and to have intra-mural bridge competition between the schools.

Knowing the competitive instincts of high school students, and especially the high-level math students I teach, I realized early on that explaining matchpointing and the availability of penalty doubles would increase their enjoyment substantially. Even though these topics are not in the basic 16-hour curriculum, I add them each year and the results in terms of student interest are undeniable! Further information about the program this year can be found on the following two websites:

<http://www.lajollabridge.com/LJUnit/Education/LaJollaHigh2009.htm>
www.eastlakebridgeclub.com

Contact Name: Lauren Friedman
Contact Info: e-mail: info@center4bridge.org Phone: 415-586-9030
Area: San Francisco CA
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: After School and In School
Teaching Material: Self-developed and *Bidding* text

Our mission is to teach bridge to students and adults. We got started by sending letters to the after-school coordinators. At the first two schools, a principal and an assistant principal had had some exposure to bridge, and so we had support in the administration. It turned out that at the third school one of our regular duplicate players taught there.

We have begun by concentrating on students. We currently teach in three high schools. Two of these schools are in low income less advantaged neighborhoods. We are working hard to expand these programs and to expand the program to junior high schools and elementary schools. However, we have found it more difficult to get into these schools.

We teach duplicate-style bridge to students using bidding boxes, boards, and travelers. One of our students played in the 2007 San Francisco NABC and won the 0-5 strat of the event he played in. We had a couple of our kids caddy. At our recent sectional, we had five students who played and two others who planned to play, but one got lost and the other got sick.

The schools that we are in so far have someone there who plays bridge. Two are rubber players and the third duplicate. We have developed a PowerPoint presentation and plan to start going to PTA meetings to try to convince parents that having bridge available in schools is a good thing. We hope to use the PowerPoint promotion to help convince schools to establish the clubs. Our program began early in 2007, so it is quite new.

We also are working to get into the teen program at the library. Starting in January 2008 we have a regular game on Saturdays for the schools at the library. It hasn't brought in any new players yet, but we need to give it more time as it has just started.

We are currently working with the communication director for the junior high schools' PTA association to try to start up some junior high schools in the fall (2008). We met her when we discovered she is the mother of one of our students.

At this time, all teachers are volunteers. We have raised about \$5,000 from the bridge community to help fund our activities including about \$1,000 from the ACBL Educational Foundation. We provide all materials including tables, boards, books, refreshments, etc. to the schools free of charge. We are a California not-for-profit corporation and have 501(c)(3) status with the IRS.

FLORIDA

Contact Name: Tina Pomeroy,
Contact Info: e-mail: rtpomeroy@cs.com Phone: 321-733-0313
Area: Melbourne Beach, FL
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: After School, In School, Bridge Club, Summer Camp
Teaching Material: ACBL material; Kitty Cooper's Lesson Plans;
School Bridge League Summer Camp

I worked in two area schools this past year, one elementary and one middle school. The elementary school is one in which I taught until I retired in 1994. I approached a teammate (Dianne Peterson, currently teaching 5th grade) and she agreed to sponsor the bridge club. We have been doing it for four years now. She is very supportive and stays after school with me with no compensation. The middle school serves the same community. I called and offered to teach a bridge class during their club period. This is my second year there. I have two volunteers who help at the middle school.

We have an after-school bridge club at the elementary school that includes grades four, five, and six. This past year 22 students participated. We have an in-school bridge club at the middle school that includes grades seven and eight. The elementary class meets for one hour a week; the middle school meets every Friday for the last 30 minutes of school. Needless to say, the 30 minute club setting was too short, but that's what they gave us.

I used the ACBL material put together by Kitty Cooper. Her lesson plans are excellent. We also use coded cards and set up hands each week. The children prefer random dealt cards, so we do that whenever we have sufficient time.

The students participated in two virtual tournaments sponsored by the School Bridge League. The "goodie" bags were great. The competition gave the students a taste of competing with a larger group. We ended with our own tournament to close the 2009 year. Students received t-shirts and certificates from the ACBL. The winners took home trophies.

Next year I plan to use the material provided in The League's "Bridge in a Box." Their lesson plans are very well developed. I will combine this material with the ACBL's lessons. Also, I hope to develop a Power Point Lesson Plan to use this year. I began using Power Point about mid-way through the middle school term. It is difficult to get the students to view the screen in a bridge play situation. They seem to do better with small posters at each table. I am using Patty Tucker's posters for this.

I have some repeaters this year, so I have a volunteer working with them concentrating on conventions: Stayman, Jacoby Transfers, Ace-asking Bids, etc.

I have a larger group (20) in my elementary group. I have some adults sitting in and they are a help. I love watching the young ones as they figure out what to do with what they have been dealt. I am pleased that the elementary group has grown each year it has been offered.

I did a presentation to 60 math teachers in September 2007. I have had one follow-up. I met with a Gifted Student teacher in a touching community. She is the leader of a chess club and plans to try the bridge club this semester. She does not play bridge. I offered to find her a volunteer when she is ready to begin. I don't plan to offer the in-service to the math leads again next year, but I would be willing to present to the Gifted Teachers group.

I feel like "The play is the thing. We concentrate on the fun of the play, only spending ten to fifteen minutes on each lesson, allowing at least 45 minutes playing the game."

August 2, 2007

Mrs. Diane Peterson
Surfside Elementary School
475 Cassia Blvd.
Satellite Beach, FL 32937

Dear Mrs. Peterson;

I would like to thank you and Mrs. Pomeroy for your dedication and hard work hosting the after school bridge club at Surfside. My daughter, Sarah Van Sickle, participated in 5th and 6th grades and always looked forward to bridge club days. She even taught my husband and I how to play!

As a parent, I was impressed with the quality of the program. It integrated math skills with concepts of teamwork, gracious professionalism and strategic thinking in a fun, low stress environment. I enjoyed watching Sarah progress from learning the language and rules of the game to actually planning and discussing playing strategies. It was truly an eye opening experience for her to see first hand that it is not necessarily the cards or talents that you are dealt in life, but the choices that you make that can turn any hand into a winner or loser.

It is these kinds of mind expanding opportunities that give children the tools and confidence to embrace and rise to new challenges. Success in bridge, as in life, requires practice, strategic thinking and making good choices. If we want our children to make good choices and be successful throughout their lives, we have to provide opportunities for them to learn how. Surfside Bridge Club was definitely one of those opportunities.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Enderle

Contact Name: Mark Goldschmidt
Contact Info (e-mail): Goldschmidtmark@hotmail.com
Area (City/County): Dunedin- Pinellas County, Florida
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: Before school
Name of School: Dunedin Highland Middle School
Grade Level of Class: 6th to 8th grades
Teaching Material Used: Bridge Basics 1 and 2

I got this class started with the help of the school librarian who became the sponsor and wanted to give it a try. We meet in the school library before the school day begins.

Our program has been going on for three years but we had a dramatic drop off this year. Our plan is to do a bridge camp in June to try and revitalize the program for the fall.

GEORGIA –

Contact Name: Patty Tucker
Contact Info: e-mail: wimsey@mindspring.com or
patty@atlantajuniorbridge.org
Carolyn Eckert carolyn@atlantajuniorbridge.org
Area: Metro Atlanta Georgia
Type of Area: Urban and Suburb
Type of Class: After School, In School, Bridge Club, Other
Teaching Material: Teach Me To Play, Bidding Series text, School Bridge League's curriculum and material developed by individual teachers

A 501(c)(3) public charity called Atlanta Junior Bridge was formed in January of 2006, teaching in all venues with a mixture of volunteer teachers and paid teachers.

Summer Camp Programs: We teach two hours a day for one week and get through the basics of opening bids and responses. We then attempt to keep open classes going throughout the rest of the year so that interested students can continue to learn. After our Summer Camps in 2006, we were able to enter several schools in the fall with contacts made during the summer, such as parents of children we taught that were school teachers, PTA members, school volunteers, etc. We were also able to generate some publicity which helped us to become more visible to the general public.

In-School Programs: Usually 'club days' (though we have had bridge classes in conjunction with math classes). Classes vary from 45 minutes to 1 hour. The shorter session time each week requires a longer commitment of 14-16 weekly classes spread over several months. This can make it difficult to cover the material you would like to cover. Other considerations are makeshift 'card tables' and conflicts with other school activities.

After-School Programs: These are a little easier to run as the classes are usually one to one and a half hours, so you have more time in each class. You still have a long commitment and conflicts with other activities.

Other: Classes at libraries, homes and bridge clubs are easier. You can schedule your time as you like (our classes usually run 1 to 2 hours). If you have vacations or emergencies and can't find a substitute, you can cancel classes. (We have a 'sub' list of teachers willing to help or substitute for teachers who have assumed responsibility for a class.) Children attending classes outside of school are generally more committed to learning bridge.

We have three free games every month (held at several different bridge clubs) for the kids and a free game at every sectional and regional tournament. In 2007 we had five camps for advancing students in addition to thirteen camps for beginners. We are working closely with the School Bridge League to make games available on an ongoing basis during their bridge classes during the school year. Carolyn Eckert is coaching and arranging on-line team games with a teacher in Germany. The more experienced children are beginning to play in the local clubs limited-games and some open games.

We have taught bridge to over 500 children. 40 have become ACBL members. Roughly 100 regularly attend classes and play in games. Approximately 380 still receive information about classes and games on a regular basis and occasionally participate.

Letter of Appreciation to Atlanta Junior Bridge from a mother:

Dear Patty, Carolyn, John, Lola, Karen, Nancy, Barbara, Marty and other Atlanta Junior Bridge volunteers,

I want to thank you for the wonderful opportunities Atlanta Junior Bridge has provided our family. My kids, my husband, and I enjoyed learning bridge basics at your camp in the summer of 2006. Tage and Maya participated in continuing lessons, games, and tournaments during the school year. This summer, Maya went to the advanced beginner camp while Tage attended the intermediate camp.

When we began home schooling, the opportunity to socialize and compete against other students was something my children missed. At AJB events, my daughter chats and giggles with female middle school players. Although there are not as many teenagers for my son to meet, I like the friendly atmosphere evident when my six-foot-tall son bends down to confer with his seven and nine year old teammates for a Swiss game. Games and tournaments allow them to see how they rank against other students.

Tage's and Maya's participation in bridge has also influenced our extended family and friends. Maya encouraged one of her friends to learn to play bridge from her uncle this summer. During trips to New Orleans to visit relatives, we played bridge with their grandmother, great aunt, and their 97-year-old mother. My son and his great-grandma have difficulty finding a common topic for conversation. When they partnered for bridge, they easily beat Maya and me. While playing, they both relaxed and began talking. On another visit, Maya's great-grandma spent time reviewing the daily hands from the bridge newspaper

column with her. After playing with Tage and Maya, their Grandmother Nancy began participating in a weekly social bridge game and plans to play duplicate when she retires.

My kids also write about their bridge activities to their grandparents in India. Since their grandparents are lifelong players, it is fun for the kids to share their interest. Because of the lifestyle differences between India and the United States, I am never sure if Tage's and Maya's Indian grandparents understand my kids' descriptions of scout trips and swim meets. However, I know that when they write about playing in a Swiss team game or doing well in a tournament that their grandparents appreciate this activity.

With three weekly youth games and lessons, you are providing wonderful opportunities for our children. The toughest part of being a "bridge parent" is allowing my children to participate according to their interest and not pushing them to do it all. Thanks to your excellent organization, I know my children will enjoy bridge their whole lives.

Sincerely yours,
Erin Kelkar

Letter to Patty Tucker from a school bridge lesson series teacher...

Hi Patty,

In answer to your request for interesting hands, let me tell you what happened recently.

The dean of students asked if he might monitor one of our Bridge sessions, and of course, we welcomed him. A hand was dealt, and North, a sixteen year old, put out a 1H card. I stopped them, and asked what we knew about his hand. In unison, six voices chimed in, "He has at least twelve points and at least five hearts." Lefty passed, and partner put out the 2H card. I said "stop," and asked what we knew about his hand. In unison, six voices said, "Six to nine points, and at least three hearts."

Opener, thinking out loud, said that they didn't have enough for game, so he was passing, and he hoped to make eight tricks with hearts as trumps. I asked the pass out seat if he had anything to say, and correctly, I thought, he didn't. But he added that he had a good idea how many points his partner had, and maybe they could beat two hearts.

The dean pulled me aside and commented that I was really teaching deductive reasoning, and if that were the case, they should make Bridge a curriculum course. I don't think we'll see that soon, but the awareness on the part of the teaching staff as to the benefits of learning Bridge is certainly becoming heightened. Anyway, we had fourteen newbies show up this term, and a couple of them are already showing some promise.

Thanks again for your wonderful efforts.

Evan

Evan Sachs

HAWAII

Contact Name: Busaba Williams
Contact Info: e-mail: busaba808@gmail.com and phone: 808-753-0970
Area: Honolulu, Hawaii
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: After School

Teaching Material: Kitty Cooper Teacher Manual / UK Mini Bridge / Better Bridge by Audrey Grant.

Our Youth Program is an after school program at several middle schools around the island of Oahu. We are also teaching at the Boys and Girls Club. We are presently working with middle schools and plan to start teaching at community colleges next year.

How did we get into middle schools? We met with the Department of Education (DOE) and presented our program. The DOE approved our program and sent e-mails to some selected middle schools which were most likely to be interested in the program. Then we contacted each school and found one teacher to assist us with the program. It is essential to have a teacher in the school as our contact and to help us promote the program through the school newspaper, school TV program and year book.

Our program runs 28 weeks (once per week). Each session is 1 ½ hours: 15 minute lecture, 30 minutes playing sample hands, 10 minutes of refreshments and about 30 minutes of a mini tournament.

We use the Kitty Cooper Teacher Manual and the U K MiniBridge program. This part of the program is 14 weeks. Once the students graduate from MiniBridge, they will continue with “bidding.” We are using Audrey Grant’s *Better Bridge* and the *Bidding Series* text.

Since June of 2006, the Hawaii School of Bridge has taught 78 students. May of 2007, we had our 1st inter-school tournament in conjunction with the Unit 470 Sectional.

ACBL has provided us with cards, T-Shirts and partial teacher stipends.

Our ultimate goal is to be able to bring bridge into the classrooms and summer camps.

Summer 2008: We taught our first summer school program in 2008. The students can choose between Robotic and Bridge. Summer school is four weeks long, two hours a day, from Monday through Friday. We plan to continue this in the summer of 2009.

ILLINOIS

Contact Name : Chris Shaw
Contact Info: e-mail ccshawjr@yahoo.com
Mary Lattan e-mail mlattan@frontier.net
Area: Carlinville Illinois
Type of Area: Small Town (5700)
Type of Class: After School
Teaching Material: Own Materials based on ACBL School Bridge Program

We formed the Carlinville Middle School Bridge Club which meets Monday after school. We have had a program since Fall of 2002 (five years) with an average of 8-10 students completing the class (our highest completion was 12 students). Terry Levan was teaching in the middle school and we started the bridge club in his classroom as an after-school activity on Mondays. Terry has moved on and Mary Beth Shaw, my wife, is now the middle school bridge club sponsor.

In addition to our regularly scheduled club day, the children from this program have attended the St Louis NABCs, the St Charles Sectional and the Champaign Regional. For the last four years, we have had a regularly scheduled game in May playing against the Lincoln Middle School in Edwardsville. That bridge lesson program is run by Andrew Carver and he hosts the student tournament each year.

About a year ago, I got in contact with Debra Owen, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Effingham and tried to get their students to the NABC in St. Louis. Debra said the students could play a hand but couldn't bid yet.

When I contacted Debra in September to see if the five schools in Effingham were continuing with their lessons, I found out they did not have a bridge teacher at that time. Mary Beth and I volunteered to "Teach the Teachers" if Debra would make the arrangements, which she did.

Seven teachers attended an all-day class in October in the conference room of the Effingham School Board. I used the draft copy of Kitty Cooper's updated lesson plans as their syllabus. We followed up with evening sessions in November, December and January. All five schools plan to register with the ACBL school program this month.

This plan of teaching the in-school teachers to give the classes provides an opportunity for the local bridge club to work with the in-school teachers to help the kids, either by helping to teach the class or by mentoring the students.

In January 2008, I directed the first Effingham County School tournament. Five schools and 45 students participated. The plan is to have one tournament per month with each school hosting a tournament.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY SCHOOL BRIDGE LEAGUE

by

Mary Beth and Chris Shaw

This effort has become a model of how to start a student bridge league in a rural community. The program got started when Sharon Osberg approved a mini-bridge grant for the 2006-2007 school year that paid for teaching seven teachers in five schools how to play MiniBridge. They then taught their students how to play. It finished with a MiniBridge tournament between the five schools in March 2007.

The student response to learning MiniBridge was so positive that the school administrators wanted to continue the program in the fall of 2007, but they could not find an experienced bridge teacher to “teach the teachers” how to bid.

In September 2007, we contacted the Assistant Superintendent of the Effingham School District, Debra Owen, and offered to give the “teach the teachers” seminar at no cost, so that the program could continue. She made the arrangements to pull the teachers out of the classroom on Tuesday, October 2, 2007 to attend our one-day seminar on bidding and provided the Effingham School Board meeting room for the seminar.

Seven teachers attended the seven-hour bidding seminar that we presented that day. The last hour of the session was spent on planning a school bridge league. Each of the five schools agreed to host one of the monthly tournaments that started in January 2008. They started after-school Bridge Clubs in October and a total of 75 students in the five schools participated. We met with the teachers on a school night in both November and December to keep them ahead of their students.

The five school districts in this program have treated Bridge as a school-sponsored activity. This approach required that a coach’s stipend be paid for the after school activity. The amount is stated in each schools’ Collective Bargaining Agreement. Three American Contract Bridge League funding sources; the School Bridge Lesson Series, the ACBL Educational Foundation grants and resources from ACBL Unit 223 were discussed.

All five schools registered their after-school classes with the ACBL’s School Bridge Lesson Series. The teachers received the \$350 stipend after teaching 16 hours of lessons to at least eight students. They also received the Club series texts, T-shirts and trophies for their students.

Two schools submitted grants to the ACBL Educational Foundation. These grants requested the additional funds needed beyond the \$350 from the SBLs to cover the cost of the after-school activity stipend for the teachers. The Board of Trustees approved them with payment to be made after completion of the School Bridge Lesson Series classes.

Unit 223 provided the \$500 requested to buy the boards and bidding boxes needed to play duplicate bridge. Unit 223 also voted to pay up to \$1,000 of the travel expenses of the top pair to the first Youth North American Bridge Championships to be held in Atlanta, GA in

early July 2008. District 8 voted to match the Unit 223 reimbursement to allow the runner-up pair to travel to Atlanta.

We worked with Debra Owen to submit a grant application for the November ACBL Educational Foundation Board of Trustees's meeting to provide funding for the resources needed to support transportation to an ACBL Sectional event. Another grant application was submitted by Teutopolis. Effingham requested \$2750 and Teutopolis requested \$350. Both grants were approved at the Fall NABC meeting by the Board of Trustees for the ACBL Educational Foundation.

On January 15, 2008 at Teutopolis Middle School in Illinois, 45 students from five schools participated in their first duplicate bridge tournament. Three local members of the Effingham Duplicate Bridge Club helped with the directing and scoring of the tournament. Two of them played in the tournament to fill out the 12th table.

The second tournament was held at Dietrich on February 19, 2008 with 41 students participating. We were able to announce that Unit 223 had agreed to pay up to \$1000 in travel expenses to the Youth NABC to be held in Atlanta, GA for the overall winners of the five tournaments.

The boards for this tournament were sent by the School Bridge LEAGUE and were scored as part of its Valentine Day Tournament. Two students from St. Anthony's School placed 5th in the beginner category and 11th overall. There were 100 beginner pairs and 76 intermediate pairs competing in the School Bridge LEAGUE's Valentine Tournament.

The third tournament was held at St. Anthony's School in Effingham on March 18, 2008. This time 48 students participated in the pairs event.

The fourth tournament was held at Beecher City on April 8, 2008. A Swiss Team competition was held for the 48 students. Four three-way matches were held, so that each team competed against two other school teams. St. Anthony's teams placed first, second and sixth. Beecher City took third, fifth and ninth. Teutopolis took fourth place. It is extremely important that the students record the board number of the hands that they play and the team they played for each board.

Twenty students from the Effingham Country School Bridge League participated in their first ACBL Sectional tournament in Effingham on April 26th. A total of six tables played, because four students from Carlinville participated.

The fifth tournament was held in Effingham on May 7th. There were 40 students playing the six boards provided by the School Bridge LEAGUE's End of Year Tournament. Over 450 middle and high school students in 35 schools in the United States and Canada competed in this event. The top pair from this event, Michael Goldstein and James Ritz from St. Anthony's, will be participating in the Youth North American Bridge Championship in Atlanta with the travel expenses for them and their chaperone paid by ACBL Unit 223, Southern Illinois and Paducah, KY.

The last activity for the 2007-2008 school year took place on May 17th when 24 students from three of the five schools in the Effingham County School Bridge League rode a school bus for two hours to travel to the St. Charles, MO sectional. Rick Beye, the Chief Tournament Director of ACBL, directed the eight -table event and used the new remote scoring system being tested by ACBL. These middle school students caught on very quickly to using this technique.

The students are looking forward to continuing playing duplicate bridge in their Effingham County School Bridge League next year. Their coaches are planning to be there for them next year as well.

INDIANA

Contact Name: Mary Testin
Contact Info (e-mail): mtestin@zcs.k12.in.us
Phone: (317)873-3355 x 12105, home: 317-844-2326
Area: Zionsville, IN
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: (new situation this year)

My high school has a new program where for one 60 minute period every other week, the students select a seminar to attend. Teachers list their topics and students select from the list for a given date. There are about 16 school days that include a “seminar” period. I will teach Bridge to any student choosing my “seminar.” So it is possible for me to have a kid 16 times a year.

I have four ACBL Bidding books left from past years. I plan to make the students share them. I am counting on students from last year’s club to attend, so that after a short lesson, the bulk of the time will be for playing. I have "cheat sheets" with a few bidding guidelines on them that everyone will get.

I'm not sure how this will work, since I probably will not get the same students each time, A student might for example pick another topic for the first two seminars and then wish to attend mine, then not come back until 2 months later. Since this is a new concept, it might not last- teachers are already grumbling about it – and so the program is on “hold” for the time being. I’m counting on not getting too many new students and letting them learn as they go.

IOWA

Contact Name: Clarence (Zip) Mettenburg
Contact Info: e-mail: zipandmary@iowatelecom.net
Phone: (319) 385-1109, (319) 850-1309
Area: Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
Type of Area: Small Town (9,000)/Community
Type of Class: In School
Teaching Material: ACBL SBLs Program, Kitty Cooper Teacher Manual

Our local duplicate club first made contact with a Middle School (6-8 grade) teacher (Enrichment) that had played bridge and the Talent & Gifted (TAG) home room teacher. This was done during the middle of 2005-2006 school year. The TAG home room teacher implemented two volunteer bridge classes at noon lunch periods (50 minutes) with the help of a bridge instructor from the community that also was a teacher in the middle school, plus a bridge-playing ex-teacher. These two bridge instructors (one during his lunch period) had lessons twice a week on Monday and Wednesday at the 4th and 5th lunch periods for at least 16 lessons. We started with 35 students (6-8 grades) and graduated 24 (20 boys, 4 girls). We took 12 of the 24 to the Jr. Bridge tournament held on August 5 in Council Bluffs at the 2006 Nebraska Regional. They played against six Atlanta and six Omaha students and had lunch with Bill Gates and Warren Buffett.

ACBL provided the teacher manuals, EZ Deal cards, text books, T-shirts/trophies for graduates and teacher stipends. The school provided copying material, transparencies, etc. The TAG homeroom teacher maintained schedules, discipline and attendance records. The local Duplicate Bridge club provided aids at each table to assist the instructor, a coordinator for the junior bridge program and minor financial support (\$.50 increase at weekly Club game).

The local Duplicate Club contacted the Superintendent of the Mt. Pleasant Community School District in 2006 and discussed the positive results of the Carlinville IL data analyzed by Dr. Chris Shaw on teaching bridge to students. It was recommended that a more formal instruction be implemented in middle school. A video was prepared by the TAG home room teacher and presented to the School Board. The School Board recommended that the Bridge Program be presented at the next Iowa Conference for Teachers and Administrators planned for 16 Nov '07 in Des Moines.

A class was included in the Enrichment Program that was at the 9:30 period, every other day for six weeks. This class was started in addition to the TAG classes and would allow access to 20 seventh graders every six weeks. Sixty students were instructed in the 2006-2007 school year. These 60 students continued the TAG lessons which ended up providing bridge instruction to over 90 students. Continuation of this program could result in having bridge offered to 60% of all seventh graders. (We completed our Enrichment classes for this school year, 2007-2008, with 60 students.)

In January 2008 we started four luncheon classes with 60 students enrolled for both beginner and intermediate instruction. We have had over 200 students, over the past three years. This summer, with the assistance of Dr. Chris Shaw, we will do an analysis of their performance in taking the annual Iowa skills test and compare that to other students that did not take bridge. We also provide a Saturday a.m. game for high school and other school bridge

players as a practice session.

There are about 20 volunteer adult bridge players involved in the Mt. Pleasant Middle School Bridge Program sponsored by the local ACBL Duplicate Bridge Club and the Mt. Pleasant Middle School. Taking students to sectional, regional and national tournaments has maintained student interest in bridge with seven attending the special 0-5 masterpoint session at the 2007 National in St. Louis and 15 attending the Jr. session at the Mt. Pleasant Sectional in 2007, plus three playing in the Swiss team event. We will have three tables at the Des Moines Regional July 4th for their 0-50 session (stratified with 0-5) with a reduced cost to school age bridge players.

We now have 10 students that are now ACBL members and seven of them have masterpoints. We are planning on taking eight students to the Youth Nationals in Atlanta over the 4th of July (2008). Remember that it's important to keep the classes fun for the students: take them to ACBL tournaments and get their pictures and articles about your bridge classes in the local paper.

KANSAS

Contact Name: Ted Applegate
Contact Info: e-mail:
Area: Hays, Kansas
Type of Area: Small town
Type of Class: In School
Teaching Material: Club Series

In Hays, Kansas for the school year 2004-2005, I had a class of six kids in the 5th grade. The school is Lincoln Elementary, one of six public, elementary schools including the magnet school. The Principal is a great woman named Elaine Rholeder who practically jumped across the desk to hug me when I went in to ask IF I could start a bridge class as something for the brighter kids who wanted for an "extra." Lincoln has only one 5th grade. I did not know their chess class had quit, and she needed something else.

With the help of one of my advanced students, a very good player in her own regard and a retired high school math teacher, we had two tables through which students rotated to have them experience different techniques, although the lesson plans were the same. We both believed we had had a successful year.

At the end of the school lessons in May, we surveyed the kids who all said that their bridge class helped them with their math (expected) and their English (unexpected). We followed the kids through the 6th grade. I do not know how much influence otherwise we had, but I do know that ALL six of the kids finished the 6th grade with a GPA of 3.8+ and were invited to the honors tea! I would like to think we were at least a small part of their drive.

MARYLAND

Contact Name: Mark Rosen
Contact Info (e-mail): tildenbridge@comcast.net, fbelford@sympatico.ca
Area: Bethesda MD
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: After school
Name of School: Tilden Middle School (7th – 9th grades)
Teaching material used: Kitty Cooper lesson plans and E-Z Deal Cards

I made my first contact with the school through the after-school activity coordinator and my wife (a teacher at an elementary school that feeds into my middle school) who has an excellent reputation. These contacts made it much easier for me to set up the program.

The program has been going on for five years and we plan to continue. It starts each year with about 25 kids and generally about half finish the course. Some leave because they start other activities that begin later in the year. Some move away. I never know about the rest. Kids often sign up in pairs...girls sometimes in groups of 3 or 4. And one day they just all stop coming.

The big job is recruiting enough students in the beginning so that we have 10-12 at the end. I personally show up at the after-school-activity assembly at the start of the school year to promote the activity. I have a teacher who is co-sponsor. She teaches ESOL, and is well liked. She is probably the main reason I get so many kids. Many of my kids are ESOL. Not surprising...students who don't speak English well can do very well at math intensive activities like bridge.

I started out 5 years ago trying to teach the Kitty Cooper curriculum verbatim. I have since learned better. Concepts like playing the high card from the short suit are just too much. I'm happy if they learn about pulling trumps, and not leading solitary honors. That's about all the offensive and defensive skills they need.

By the end of the year, some are still asking how many points are needed to open the bidding. I printed up the bidding algorithms in Kitty's lessons (one sheet for responding to 1NT openers, one for opening bids, one for responder's first bid, etc) and have a bound folder made up, 2 for each table, which I keep on the tables after they've learned bidding. Hopefully they will eventually remember at least some of what's on it. But, if they don't, so what? Some bright kids get it. Others never learn. Some don't even understand where to look for the right bid. But, they all love playing and have fun. And that's what it's all about.

So, I follow the Kitty Cooper lessons rather loosely. I use the Club series hands. I concentrate on teaching the bidding lesson, and less on the playing lesson in each weeks curriculum. She has 16 lessons, so I use them for the fall semester, ending with an individual tournament. In the spring semester, I've created my own lessons for things not covered in the Cooper lessons: preemptive bidding, and bidding with very strong hands including slam bidding. The rest of the spring semester is just playing (often mini-tournaments among ourselves). We have participated in some of the national tournaments. This year, we participated in the School Bridge League Tournament.

Contact Name: Ron Starr
Contact Info (e-mail): r4starr@aol.com
Area (City/County): Bethesda, MD
Type of Area: City/Suburb (Washington, DC)
Type of Class: During lunch period
Name of School: BCC High School
Grade Level of Class: 9th thru 12th
Teaching Material Used: Basic playing and bidding rules

I got this class going because some of the students wanted a bridge club. I was cleared by the school administration and a sponsor teacher was found so we could use her classroom.

I have been at the high school for the past five years to develop a bridge club. Over the years I have seen the number of students increase per session from two tables to four and five occasionally. The most difficult part is that we have to meet during their lunch time which is only 45 minutes and while they are eating lunch. I provide them with basic literature which I have put together and try to stick the new kids in a game with the older ones. I use a half of a dozen boards that I mix each time and set some up with the types of hands that I am trying to teach.

We meet weekly and the sessions are fairly well attended with new kids sitting around to observe. I go from table to table to coach as much as possible. Most of the other high schools have two or three lunch periods and after school for the high school is impossible.

My goal is for the students to have a small understanding of the game of bridge and build on that foundation as they move on.

Contact Name: Ellen Rosenthal
Contact Info: nealandellen@cs.com
Area: Montgomery County, Maryland
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: After School
Teaching Material: Kitty Cooper Teacher Manual

I got started by making calls to the middle schools (6th – 8th grades), getting the names and e-mail addresses of the After School Activity Program (ASAP) Coordinator or other contacts (teacher/secretary). I sent e-mails alerting them to the fact that I would be sending out the ACBL brochure about the school program. I followed the mailing with calls to the school if I didn't hear from them.

We got seven programs for our first year. We had a teaching seminar where the Kitty Cooper teaching manual was given out, as we decided that it would be best if everyone started with the same instructional material. Our volunteers are very energetic and enthusiastic which will translate into a very positive experience for the students.

After my e-mailing later in the year, we picked up an additional two schools for the winter/spring semester. The key is to keep the communication with the schools on-going.

We plan to get more info to the students and families earlier next year – probably through the PTA. We also plan to hold a youth game in the spring. Since the program started, I am constantly receiving names of interested volunteers.

Contact Name: Martha DeVries Bley
Contact Info (e-mail): Martha.Bley@pgcps.org
Area (City/County): Upper Marlboro, Maryland
Type of Area: Suburban
Type of Class: After school on Friday from 2 to 4 PM
Name of School: Marlton Elementary School
Grade Level of Class: Grades 4, 5 and 6
Teaching Material Used: ACBL Bidding course

I teach at Marlton Elementary and I asked the principal last year (07-08) if I could do a “Learn to Play Bridge” class after school. We got started in April of 2008.

I’m not sure we will continue. The children are not progressing as I feel they should. Many of them had no card playing experience, so the ones who did have card playing experience got bored waiting for the rest to get with the program. I started with 30 + kids and 3 adult bridge-playing friends, but my friends are not teachers, so they feel uncomfortable being strict with the children. I cannot be the only adult maintaining order. I did have some teaching staff that came for the lessons last spring, but they didn't continue for this school year.

Other problems are that my bridge-playing friends are playing bridge in tournaments around the area and out of the area, so sometimes they can't come because they are at tournaments. It is difficult for just one or two adults to manage 6 + tables (when all the kids show up) when two or more of the adults are gone.

If I continue next year I think I am only going to accept 16 children, that way one adult could be at each table....have to contemplate these issues further.

MINNESOTA

Contact Name: Evan Sachs
Contact Info: e-mail: essachs@msn.com
Area: Minneapolis, Minnesota
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: In School
Teaching Material: Teachers use their own material, Supervised Play

Bill Phillips got our school program started. After retiring, Bill volunteered to conduct a humanities class at St. Anthony Village HS, and as an adjunct to that, he started teaching bridge to some of the kids. It grew from there. When he needed help, our board contact asked me to provide it, and we've made progress since then. This will be my fourth year as a teacher there. I recruited my friend Colin Kehe to be there also, to team-teach with me.

This year we have about fourteen youngsters showing up for the class, with intense interest and desire to learn all there is to learn, and who are just beginning to realize that they never will. Our time has been increased to two hours, and parents are also invited to participate. The math teacher has suggested that all his students study Bridge, because he sees the results of that study in his classroom.

We've started programs at several grade schools in the Twin Cities, as well as high schools, and they seem to be enthusiastically received so far. The fifth-graders come back, and they bring their friends, and some of them bring parents, who become part of the class.

John Edmondson is a teacher at Mounds Park Academy, and as an interested bridge player, he got the program started there. He's on leave now for a couple of years with the Peace Corps. We have had two matches so far with Mounds Park Academy. We play a ten board match at BAM scoring, under the auspices of Tony Ames. Everybody has a great time.

At the recent Gopher Regional here (May 2007), some of my youngsters were caddies, and they were "bugging" me to tell them when they'd be ready to play in the I/N games. The reply, of course, was "soon"!! So, we're aiming toward the Gopher Regional (May 2008). Colin and I are planning to provide personal mentoring to three or four pairs of kids, preparing them to compete in the newcomer events. We'll have to work around their schedules, so Sunday afternoons and evenings seem to be the time slots. The kids are chomping at the bit.

Contact: Bill Phillips
Contact Info: e-mail: freudel@earthlink.net
Area: Minneapolis, Minnesota
Type of Area: Suburban (working to also get a metro area league)
Type of Class: One hour per week during school day. The kids miss an hour of Algebra; staff tells me that their Algebra has improved.
Teaching Material: ACBL Bridge Series

I got my bridge class started at St. Anthony High School because I've been a volunteer at that school for many years. I've been teaching bridge at the high school for two years. The school appreciates what we do, and they have made bridge a letter sport.

I'd advise new teachers to get to know the major staff in the school. Remember that kids are kids, a little flakey in the beginning. But when the overall pattern of the partnership game becomes understandable, they really get with it.

Contact Name: Marilyn Norenberg
Contact Info: e-mail: knmln@cpinternet.com
Area: Duluth, Minnesota
Type of Area:
Type of Class:
Teaching Material:

I am a retired school teacher, offering bridge at the Homecroft Elementary School and the Lowell Elementary School.

Steps taken before beginning to teach:

1. Arrange for a well-qualified assistant. Deb Ruprecht has proved critical to the successful Junior Bridge Classes.
2. Meet with the principal of the school to discuss the benefits of Bridge, and the reasons for students to become involved and expend the time to learn Bridge.
3. Show the principal the introductory letter and permission slip attachment (samples follow), and ask for permission to photograph the class for the ACBL.
4. Complete the permission slip for use of the school classroom.
5. Send out the introductory letter one month before the start day of school. This time period allows the classroom teacher and the parents time to get schedules started and revised.

First Bridge Class Meeting:

1. Use the first meeting of the Bridge Class to meet with both students and parents to discuss the rules of the class.
2. Answer questions regarding dismissal times, student pickup, rides, snack contributions, and homework assignments.
3. Inform parents that there will be communications sent home with the students concerning their progress during the course of the Bridge lessons.

Sample Letter of Introduction:

Dear Parents of 5th graders,

I would like to introduce myself as a representative of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and make you aware of an outstanding fully-funded program to teach bridge in schools. Founded in 1937, ACBL is a not-for-profit membership organization charged with promoting the great game of bridge.

Educators have found the game of bridge improves students’ behavior and sharpens math, memory, communication, analytical, and teamwork skills. It is seen as a stimulating way for youngsters to study statistics and probability.

The School Bridge Lesson Series has served about 6,000 students and more schools are considering the program due to its many student benefits. Once a student has learned, the game can be played almost anywhere with a deck of cards and three friends. The bridge game appeals to children because it is a competitive event that does not require athletic ability.

If this is of interest to you and your fifth grader, I will be offering the School Bridge Lesson Series, *free of charge with all materials furnished*, at Homecroft Elementary School. The series will include 16 one-hour classes to be held on Wednesdays. **START DATE:** The first Wednesday in October in the assigned room, immediately after school until 4:00 p.m. If interest continues following the first series, a second-level class will be scheduled in the New Year. **Note: When there is no school, there will be no Bridge Class.**

Please sign the form and return it to Homecroft Elementary School at your earliest convenience. Following commitment by the parents and children, **the first class** will be used for an initial meeting and orientation.

Marilynn Norenberg
Retired School Teacher

Deb Ruprecht
Assistant

I grant permission for my child to participate in the after-school School Bridge Lesson Series. I agree to pick up my child following the bridge class at the designated time.

Parent Signature & Telephone Number

Student Signature

Date

MISSOURI

Contact Name: Kathy Rolfe
Contact Info: e-mail: krolfe5@comcast.net
Area (city/state): metropolitan Kansas City, MO
Type of Area: suburban
Type of Class: usually in school, one afterschool program
Teaching Material Used: Club Series. I also provide extra material

I first got a school class by contacting the gifted teacher that my sons had had and asking if she would be interested in offering bridge in her classes. She was thrilled as she'd always wanted to learn the game herself (and has now!) She helped spread the word within her school district.

I teach in the ASPIRE (Lee's Summit Gifted and Talented Program) classes to as many teachers as I can get to round up at least 8 students. Their classes are normally 2 to 2 1/2 hours twice per week, so I take up one of their classes per week for 9 weeks. The number of schools I get into varies each year, depending on the number of kids in the program and when the last time I offered it at that particular school was.

I use the Club Series and I provide extra material of my own - crossword puzzles, word Searches, etc. I also distribute a 10 page "cheat sheet" which is basically a summary of the lessons in the Club Series. I try to get the kids to use it as a study guide, but only refer to it during the bidding of the hand if they are really stumped. I tell them I'll take it away if they refer to it constantly.

I have also taught the Diamond Series through this program. Once I taught in an 8th grade study hall at a Catholic school for eighteen one hour classes. Once I taught in an after school program with the youngest student only in first grade.

I have been teaching in the schools since January 2002. When ACBL dropped the Instant Matchpoint Competition, our local Unit 131 helped by adding a student section at our Spring Sectional Tournament. It was open to any student in our Unit with fewer than 5 masterpoints. The kids got to play for free if they joined ACBL. 19 joined the first year. The unit also paid for a bus to get the students from the Lee's Summit School District to and from the tournament and also paid for trophies for the top four winners. I also provided \$50 scholarships to the top four winners through the Eugene J. Rolfe Memorial Education Fund, administered by the Truman Heartland Community Foundation. And of course, some of the kids picked up their first masterpoints, which may be important in getting another scholarship I offer. 2007 was the first year to do that and we are continuing this year.

In addition to teaching in the schools, I also offer the kids a chance to practice by opening up my home to them and/or their parents a couple of times during the school year and once a month during the summer at least. My original ASPIRE teacher, Wanda Hartter often helps out at these events which I call Kids Bridge. Developing speed during these practice sessions has led some of my students to try duplicate at the club level. One of those students is now a sophomore in high school with over 10 points -gold, red, silver and black.

Starting with graduating Seniors in 2008, I also offer a \$500 renewable scholarship (also through the Eugene J. Rolfe Memorial Education Fund) to any of my students who have at least a 3.0 GPA and are members of ACBL with at least 1 masterpoint. The scholarship is renewable if they add to their masterpoint total each year, continue their ACBL membership and maintain a 3.0 GPA in their post-secondary work. I don't anticipate anyone qualifying this year, but in 2009 and 2010, I already have two students likely to receive the scholarship.

This year (2009) I worked with one of my classroom teachers, Wanda Hartter, to get her class involved with School Bridge League. I've returned to her classroom to supervise the running of the SBL 6-board-tournaments for five tournaments. We missed getting started in time for the first one. Her kids have done really well, every student in the class has won at least one SBL trophy. I'm sure she will continue this next year if at all possible with whatever kids she can teach the basics to in time to start participating.

Tips for either getting into a school or running a successful program: Contact the gifted and talented coordinator for the school districts near you. Also try contacting the Activities Director or After School Director for schools near you to try to establish the program in after school daycare or in student clubs. Contacting Math Teachers is another way to go. If you can get bridge players you know, who are currently teaching in a school, to work on getting your bridge program into their school, it can also be helpful. I have one duplicate club player who is also a high school teacher, trying to get the program going at his school for me to come in to teach.

Contact Name:	Luke Lucas
Contact Info (e-mail):	laurancel@sbcglobal.net
Area (City/County):	Festus. Jefferson County, MO
Type of Area:	Rural
Type of Class:	Summer Program
Name of School:	Festus Y.M.C.A.
Grade Level of Class:	Ages 11 to 16
Teaching Material Used:	Easybridge! by Edith McMullen

Our first contact to get this program started came through the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Link Luttrell EdD., who put us in touch with the director of the local YMCA, Matt Clark. It has taken us two years of plugging away to finally get the program up and going. We are introducing the game the Easybridge! way and are supplementing the lessons with a power-point presentation.

Now that we have recruited some interested students, our plan is to try to get it into the schools in the fall.

NEBRASKA

Contact Name: Carol Phillips
Contact Info: email: cap2@prodigy.net
Area: Omaha, Nebraska (Burke High School)
Type of Area: Metropolitan
Type of Class: Both In-School and After-School
Teaching Material Used: ACBL Bidding Series

I first made contact at Burke High School through the Academic Decathlon Teacher.

Our first venture was an after-school bridge club in the March through May time-frame (after completion of the state competition for the Academic Decathlon event). We started with 16 students and ended with only 8. These students were mostly seniors with some juniors. The major downfall to this type of after-school program, that late in the school year, was all the conflicts with other school activities, plus graduation. You will find that your AD students are the ones who are extremely involved in many of the other organizations (both non-athletic and athletic ones). Of this group, four students did compete in our Newcomer Event at our Summer Regional. One other downside is that most of our participants were off to college (but at least knowing some bridge!)

The following school year we were invited to teach the entire AD class to play bridge during their school period (32 students ... again heavily seniors). Had we been able to do this early in the year, it would have been much better for our program. However, the state competitions for the AD event are held in the February time-frame. Until those are completed, the focus of this class has to be on that competition. To further complicate matters, their AD team won the state competition (how great!) and was preparing to go the nationals in Hawaii. We managed to get our bridge lessons “sandwiched” between all this ... but again the majority of our students were graduating. We will be working with this group again this spring. Through some “pathing” of bridge programs, we hope to develop a base of incoming students already knowing how to play bridge and eventually have an “operational” bridge club and hopefully promote inter-school bridge competitions.

Here are some tips from this program: Consider using some of your more advanced AD students as aids in teaching MiniBridge in your elementary school programs. We did this with two of our students and they were able to earn community service credits toward their National Honor Society requirements. Our elementary students loved having them at their clubs.

Contact Name: Carol Phillips
Contact Info: email: cap2@prodigy.net
Area: Omaha, Nebraska (Fontenelle Elementary)
Type of Area: Metropolitan
Type of Class: After-School Club
Teaching Material Used: Kitty Cooper – MiniBridge

During our first season, we offered a free bridge class to any of our school district's teachers who had some knowledge of the game. We let them know our hope was that they might have some interest in teaching bridge at their schools, but that was not a requirement to take this class. The principal and two teachers from Fontenelle Elementary took this class (as part of a group of 16 in total). They decided they wanted to start a bridge club at their school the following year. One of our unit bridge teachers provided a training session on MiniBridge before they began their club.

The first season they held a 16-hour MiniBridge after-school program with 16 students. Their lead teacher developed some wonderful visual aids for all the bridge terminology she was teaching, to supplement the Kitty Cooper lesson plans. At the end of their club, we held a competition for them. We then critiqued the program with them and jointly decided that a 16-hour program was too long for 4th-6th graders.

The second year we decided to trial a MiniBridge program for 8 hours, rather than 16. They have just finished their club. This spring we will again look at the results and decide what the optimum time interval for these younger students should be. We again ran an end-of-club competition for the students. Their teacher then had them prepare write-ups on their bridge experiences. These were published in their local school newsletter. (Wherever possible, we are attempting to get photos and articles published in each school's paper to give us more exposure.) While these write-ups were very humorous, we were amazed at how much these students had learned in such a short time. We believe MiniBridge is a great vehicle for our younger students to begin the bridge learning process.

This school plans to continue its MiniBridge program next year and anticipates even greater numbers of participants, as enthusiasm is growing at their location for this new "sport." Our unit is attempting to do some "pathing" for this program by adding a "feeder" middle school in their area to our BIS program, thereby providing a continuum for these students.

Contact Name: Carol Phillips
Contact Info: email: cap2@prodigy.net
Area: Omaha, Nebraska (Picotte Elementary School)
Type of Area: Metropolitan
Type of Class: After-School Club
Teaching Material Used: Kitty Cooper – MiniBridge

This program came about via “word of mouth” between the Burke High School Academic Decathlon teacher and the Picotte Elementary Gifted & Talented teacher, who are friends.

The first season we held an after-school 16-hour MiniBridge program with four students participating. One of our unit bridge teachers ran the club with the aid of two of our senior AD students from Burke High School. They were able to receive community service credits for their National Honor Society requirements. We actually had them do part of the teaching for the class. As with our Fontenelle program, we felt that 16 hours was too long for these younger students.

The GT teacher/sponsor then took our next set of free bridge lessons we provided to local schools teachers, to enable her to teach the club herself the second year. She has just concluded that venture (this time for 8 hours) with from 6-8 students participating. As stated with our Fontenelle information, this spring we will again look at these results and decide what the optimum time interval should be.

This school teacher has advised us she plans to continue this program next year and hopes to have a larger group, as the club is now getting more exposure. Our unit will be analyzing the time for approaching the “feeder” middle school in their local area, in an effort to start a bridge club there in the not-too-distant future.

While the ACBL does provide one trophy for your competitions, we decided we’d like to reward the winners both directions. We advertised in our local unit newsletter asking for any bridge trophies our members might be willing to donate. We then changed out the title plates and are using them with our local competitions.

Contact Name: Darlene Rischling
Contact info: email: drischli@cox.net
Area: Omaha, NE – McMillan Magnet School – Grades 7 & 8
Type of Area: Metropolitan
Type of Class: After School Club and During the School Day
Teaching Material: ACBL Bidding Series

Due to publicity about students playing bridge during the 2006 Nebraska Regional, the teacher of gifted and talented at McMillan Magnet School visited with my daughter, who also teaches at McMillan, about starting a bridge club. My daughter gave me the information; I contacted the teacher, and we organized a club for the first semester of the 2006-2007 school year.

During the first semester of the 2006-2007 school year, we had a Bridge Club that met for 1.25 hours after school. We had a total of 16 students with a range of attendance, abilities, attention span, etc. Our decision was to have no rules about attendance as Middle School students have many interests. Example: when basketball started, we had students gone for a while and then they would return. In addition to the teacher sponsor, many other teachers volunteered to help with the club. The students were enthusiastic, and we did have an end of club competition. As a result of the interest of the students, the teacher sponsor wanted to have during- the-school-day bridge classes for her grade 7 and 8 students. We organized this for 28 students in grade 7 and 16 students in grade 8. Power Point presentations were developed for the ACBL Bidding Series. The school sponsor, the principal and the parents were very pleased with the addition of bridge to the classes.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the school sponsor decided to use a similar format. During the first semester, a school bridge club met after school. Amazingly, 75% of the class consisted of boys. The same attendance standards as previously were implemented. The Bridge Club had a core of about 16 students who never missed a class. Twenty-four of the 28 students participated in the School Bridge League Winter Holiday Tournament and did very well. A grandmother attended the club to learn to play bridge; several parents visited the club to see what was happening. One young lad shared that his father promised to buy him a deck of bridge cards for Christmas if he did well in his other classes.

During the second semester of the 2007-2008 school, there will be bridge during the school day for grade seventh and eighth grade students. The eighth grade students have a semester of experience; they will be building on their previous knowledge. The grade seventh students will be primarily beginning bridge players.

Hopefully, the teacher of the gifted and talented will assume the teaching responsibility for the club as well as for the during-the-school-day classes at McMillan. A feeder school, McMillan Magnet, has committed to an after-school Bridge Club in 2008-2009. The school has identified a sponsor and, hopefully, we will be able to identify a teacher in the building to teach MiniBridge. The high school to which most of the McMillan Magnet School students will advance, has been contacted to determine interest in establishing a club and/or during-the-school-day bridge classes. The McMillan students who are attending this high school are clamoring for opportunities to have bridge be a part of their school experience.

Here are some of my tips: Communicate positively! Attribute successes to the students and to the school personnel! Be sensitive to the demands made on schools. Be a good listener and have a sense of humor.

Contact Name: Darlene Rischling
Contact Info: drischli@cox.net
Area: Overview of Omaha NE and suburbs (2009)
Type of Class: Variety: during school day, after school clubs
Teaching Material Used: Elementary schools used Kitty Cooper lesson plans,
Middle School and High School used ACBL Bidding course.

Omaha has bridge classes in the following schools: Elementary (All MiniBridge): Underwood Hills Focus, Fontenelle, Liberty, Picotte; Middle Schools: Marr's, McMillan Magnet, Nathan Hale Magnet, Beveridge, Westside; High Schools: North High, Mercy Catholic High School for Girls.

We have been working in the schools for four years. This year, we met with the Central Office Coordinator for Gifted and Talented to encourage inclusion of bridge in the curriculum. In other years, some times the school contacted us and, in a few cases, we contacted the schools.

For the upper level classes, we have developed Power Point presentations to accompany the text. The unit owns a duplimate and all hands at the end of the chapters are saved on a computer and are easily placed in bridge boards for use by our teachers. Each teacher is responsible for duplication.

In addition, sets of deals have been developed for many of the concepts to be used for drill and practice. For instance in Notrump Bidding and Responses, a set of 36 boards has been developed and saved on the computer. Deal 1 – North opens 1NT and South is responder; Deal 2 – East opens 2NT, etc. Every student gets practice opening and responding to NT bidding for 36 boards. The same is applied when teaching Stayman and Transfers. Single concept boards have been developed for suit bidding and responses. A variety of worksheets have been developed and shared by teachers to enhance and expand on what is in the book. The Unit Education Coordinator visited each class at least once.

Judging from this year's success, we will have more schools involved in the future. We are most successful at the middle school level. At the high school level, students have many choices, jobs and active social lives. That makes bridge seem less attractive. Our Bridge in the Schools Committee originally had the idea that we should develop a sequential approach – start in an elementary school, move to the middle school into which the elementary school feeds, move into the high schools into which the middle school feeds. This didn't work for a variety of reasons.

We have had tremendous success and interest at the middle school level. We have a number of adults in the unit that are interested in mentoring middle level students on a once a month basis in club play. In the past few months, we have created six adult-student pairs. The six students range from Grade 6 to Grade 9. We'll see how this concept develops.

The unit held its first Youth Tournament and is now examining the idea of having more Youth Tournaments or including a section for youth in our sectional tournaments or both. We've made no decision at this time.

We had more than 300 students involved in bridge lessons this school year. One eight grade group went to one of the clubs, and each student was paired with an adult for a regular club game – kind of like an over/under game. The students were very positive about this experience. Our main goal at this time is to get the students playing at our clubs. We lose them at the high school level.

NEVADA

Contact Name: Bud Brewer
Contact Info (e-mail): budbrewer@budor.com
Phone: 775-849-4113
Area: Reno, Nevada
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: After School
Teaching Material Used: ACBL Bridge Series, Learn to Play Bridge

Four members of the Reno Unit of the ACBL formed a non-profit Company called “Reno Youth Bridge” (RYB). The goal was to promote, fund and provide qualified teachers to teach bridge in the Washoe County School Districts’ after-school program. The program began with two Elementary schools, three Middle Schools, one High School and a Charter School.

In the summer of 2008, RYB made a proposal to the Washoe County School System’s Department of Student Services to provide a fully funded program for teaching students how to play bridge. After review, the WCSD approved the establishment of a Pilot Program to include a few schools in which the Principal volunteered to be a part of the program. With a high response from the Principals, the Director of Student Services elected to select seven schools to participate, thus the inclusion of elementary, middle and high schools, plus a Charter School.

I contacted each Principal and made contact with their after-school activities chairman to set up the class on the school calendars. In those schools where appropriate, a parent-student evening orientation meeting is held to gain their support for home work and the use of the computer for practice. Our first class had 44 students attend, but we think that to be more the result of the Principal’s enthusiasm rather than the student’s, so we expect that to drop back to around 16 to 20 students. We have ten volunteer teachers who will be paid either by ACBL or RYB based on the number of students who complete the classes. We are working on getting a corporate sponsor to provide the majority of funding for the Pilot Program and to help defray the cost for Junior Tournaments after completion of the 1st semester classes. All school Principals expressed enthusiasm for interscholastic team competition after the various clubs get experienced in the game. We have a page on the Reno Unit’s Website at <http://www.renobridge.com> .

Contact Name: Kathy Lane
Contact Info: klane0353@charter.net
Area: Reno, NV
Type of Area: City
Type of Class: After school activity
Name of School: High Desert Montessori School
Grade Level: 3rd through 6th grades
Teaching Material: ACBL school materials for the first 2 classes

Bud Brewer contacted the local school district, met on that level, and then his contact, Jeff Freeman, contacted several schools. Seven of them agree to let us teach an after school bridge program. Some of the schools didn't follow through.

We started at HDMS in September of 08 and are still teaching there. We have a Youth tournament scheduled for June 6, 2009 to be held at the Bridge Center. We are inviting all of the children from all of the schools to attend.

We have found the best success comes when the principal is supportive. We have had good success with the middle schools. They seem to be the most interested and the quickest to learn. Our biggest "ah-ha" is that we need to "invite" students to attend the classes. We ask for recommendations from the teachers and staff. We found when we merely extend a request to students who would like to learn to play bridge, none of them respond because they don't know what bridge is.

NEW JERSEY

The following four programs are all working together in New Jersey.

Contact Name: Robin Gillett
Contact Info: bridge@robingillett.com or fbelford@sympatico.ca
Area: Nutley, NJ/ Essex County
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: Saturday Gifted and Talented
Name of School: John Walker Middle School
Grade Level: 4th, 5th, 6th
Teaching Material: ACBL Bridge Series

We first got this program started when Barbara Clark, Toni Archambault and Charlene Young from Unit 140 Board approached the Director of Special Services in Nutley. The program started in September 2003 and is ongoing.

Contact Name: Robin Gillett
Contact Info: bridge@robingillett.com or fbelford@sympatico.ca
Area: Summit, NJ Morris County
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: After school
Name of School: Oratory Prep for Boys, Private Catholic School
Grade Level: 7th through 12th
Teaching Material: ACBL Bridge Series

This program got started through a reference from Dana Poston after she contacted the ACBL. The program started in September 2008 and is full of very positive kids who are enjoying the lessons.

Contact Name: Efron Nelken
Contact Info: nelkenef@mail.orange.k12.nj.us
Area: Orange, NJ Essex County
Type of Area: City
Type of Class: After school bridge club
Name of School: Central Elementary School
Grade Level: 1st through 6th
Teaching Material: ACBL Bridge Series

This program started in September of 2007 with the help of District 3 (through Joan Gerard) and Unit 140 (through Debbie Wasik and Barbara L. Clark). An after school program was initiated in response to the ACBL's national incentive program and it is ongoing.

Contact Name: Barbara L. Clark
Contact Info: clarkbar@mail.orange.k12.nj.us or bsyllab@aol.com
Area: Orange, NJ Essex County
Type of Area: City
Type of Class: Saturday gifted and talented
Name of School: Orange Middle School
Grade Level: 6th
Teaching Material: ACBL Bridge Series

This program started because I (Barbara Clark) am an administrator in the district. This program started in 2003 and is ongoing.

I (Barbara Clark) started out trying to bring a lunch-time club into the district about 10 years ago. When I read about the Bridge in Schools Program, I discussed it at a Unit 140 Board meeting and several teachers volunteered. We used a letter of introduction and contacted people in the school system that I knew. However, we later reached out to district administrators in Edison, Plainfield School Districts. Our model was to work with a district teacher who was responsible for the day to day routines such as discipline and paperwork. This also eliminated the need to be fingerprinted, since the district's teacher was always in the class. The program has been going on for five years. The biggest challenge is finding

teachers to volunteer on a regular basis. The two district cooperating teachers love the game of bridge and have been constant. We also run a class in our summer Cybercamp Program with the same teacher.

Since school budgets are tight and schools realize the intellectual and social benefits of the game, they are amenable to getting involved. We give every student a new deck of cards to take home and practice. The ACBL has provided trophies, tee shirts, etc. faithfully for every class and we are very grateful for the free supplies.

Our school program in Orange NJ is for gifted and talented students, known as the Discovery Program, and has been in effect since the fall of 2003. This program has been taught by many different teachers but I've assisted in the teaching responsibilities since it started. A modified Kitty Cooper Program (MiniBridge) was implemented, since many of the students were in 3rd to 6th grade.

A similar program began at the same time in the CAP Program in Nutley, NJ, a suburban area, also taught on Saturday's in their district's gifted and talented program. This program has been taught consistently by Robin Gillett. In Nutley, classes run from about 9:00 a.m. to 11:00a.m. at the John Walker School (formerly Franklin Middle School).

The Orange School District with the financial support of the ACBL and Unit 140 started an afterschool bridge program during the 2007-2008 school year taught by Ron Nelken. Classes operate from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Students bring a bag lunch and break from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30a.m. for lunch in the cafeteria with their teachers. The Program is housed in Orange Middle School with students in grades 3 to 8. The ACBL teaching methods and materials taught in the TAP will be implemented this fall.

Contact Name:	Tom Prentzel
Contact Info:	tprentzel@verizon.net, 973-838-4637
Area:	Bloomingtondale, NJ
Type of Area:	Nothern Suburb/Small Town (Butler NJ)
Type of Class:	After School
Teaching Material:	ACBL materials

I got in touch with the Superintendents of three different towns in northern NJ (Kinnelon, Butler and Bloomingtondale). All arranged interviews with the principals of their middle schools, some 5 thru 8, some 6 thru 8. All of the principals were anxious to have extra-curricular programs other than sports.

Kinnelon has an after-school enrichment program that charges a fee. They advertised all their courses and charged a minimum for bridge at \$45, since we were volunteering to teach it at no charge. Butler and Bloomingtondale showed my DVD, from Patty Tucker, of the PBS program on the Atlanta Jr. Bridge group. Though it is only 5 minutes long, it is quite enthusiastic and effective.

I am teaching in a Middle school, grades 5 through 8. We have had four tables for the first two weeks and are teaching MiniBridge. We intend to start bidding in the third week.

NEW MEXICO

Contact Name: Kitty Cooper
Contact info: email: kitty@kittycooper.com
Area: Albuquerque, NM
Type of Area: Metropolitan
Type of Class: After School Club and During the School Day
Teaching Material: Kitty Cooper School Manual

Introduction

In Albuquerque, NM, we started a Bridge lessons in the schools program in the fall in five schools, three middle schools and two high schools. So far, it appears to be easier to get into the middle schools. They need after-school programs and can give us an hour and a half every week, while high schools seem to have more trouble fitting it in. One of our schools gets 30 minutes, the other 50 minutes but low attendance.

Here is the step-by-step action plan we used to get this to happen:

Organize a group of teachers and helpers:

We have a core group of about five totally committed people plus a list of 20 teachers willing to teach and substitute. This is how we got there.

I talked to everyone at our local Bridge club about my interest in starting a program for teaching Bridge to in the schools. Then several of my recruits talked to more people and recruited others. My friend Janet Youngberg sat down and called every ACBL accredited teacher in Albuquerque (there is a list of these on the Find a Teacher section of the ACBL web site). We collected a list of people willing to teach, as well as those willing to help in other ways (make posters, make phone calls, go around to the schools, collect materials).

Make sure everyone has a master list of phone and email addresses.

Find your local unit or district's educational liaison to the ACBL and ask for their help/support and include them in your meetings and your email. They are a valuable liaison back to the unit to get donations of cards, bridge tables or whatever for your program. Our liaison, Bill Isham, was invaluable, creating the master list, finding the central person in the school system and getting the support of our Unit board, including funding for supplies.

Contact the schools and sell the program:

Get started contacting people in the school system several months before your proposed start date so that budget money can be set aside. Start in the early Spring for the following Fall. Look for Bridge players with contacts in local schools. See if you can find someone central who can push it with a large number of schools. It may be possible to do a presentation for a group of after-school administrators like we did in Albuquerque. My power-point presentation is yours to use. It is all about why learning Bridge is good for kids in the schools. It will be demonstrated at the end of this talk.

We also put posters around at about 20 middle schools, spoke to school administrators at about 10 schools, and had a mention in the local paper. Of the five schools we have going now, three came from personal contacts and two from the presentation plus newspaper

mention. We had another one from personal visits to the school, but they did not get enough sign ups this semester.

For each school that signs up, you will need a sponsoring teacher and a school administration supportive of this effort. Most middle schools have after-school programs and are interested in this free program. Many already have chess clubs, so a Bridge club is logical. You need to get them excited about this, because they are the ones who will recruit the kids, which we leads to the next topic.

Help the school publicize the class:

Some schools needed no help, others needed posters and ideas. It's best if your sponsoring teacher is encouraging the kids she thinks will like to come. Remember Bridge is not cool these days. I always mention Bill Gates and James Bond as lovers of this game. Be sure they make an announcement in assembly on the day you start. At schools with other mind game clubs, e.g. chess, be sure to be scheduled on a different day. Get the chess teacher to announce and recommend the Bridge club also.

Decide on a curriculum:

The ACBL will sponsor either a club series based lesson program or an EZ Bridge program with books and a stipend for the teacher. In Albuquerque, we were excited by the layout of the pre-club series: 16 one hour lessons which go through the club series hands twice, the first time with no bidding.

However one of our teachers, Norma Casey, had been to a MiniBridge presentation at the Toronto Nationals and was very keen on that. After looking at those materials, we realized that it would not be too hard to combine the two programs. So we put together a curriculum of 16 one to one and half hour lessons (most of our middle schools have at least one hour and fifteen minutes) using the club series hands and MiniBridge for the first half of the course. This lets the kids learn to play, count high card points and score without having to bid yet. Our teacher manual can be downloaded free from the ACBL web site (Go to Resources for Teachers, School Bridge Lesson Program, and scroll down the righthand column to "Kitty Cooper." If you don't know what MiniBridge is, you can find information at: <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/teachers/Minibridge.pdf>.

Get the materials:

You need lots of decks of cards. Many of these kids may not have cards at home, so we like to give each kid a deck of cards. Ask your unit or Bridge club to replace their decks a little early and give you the old ones. Or if you have a local casino, they give away their used cards also.

One of our people had a laminating machine so we made each kid a laminated card with the rules of MiniBridge, as well as a laminated card with the rules for opening the bidding (responding to 1NT on the flip side).

Sign up with the ACBL so that once you know how many kids you have, the Bidding (Club Series) texts will be sent to you.

Make some card holders or get them donated. Or your shop teacher may be able to reproduce them. We use a simple piece of wood with one long slit, slightly diagonal, across it. Some fifth and sixth graders have very small hands and really do need these, at least for a while.

Bridge teacher support once you get going:

Every teacher has a partner. Make sure everyone has a list of all the teachers with phone numbers and email addresses, these are the substitute teachers. Since many of us retired folk have weekly commitments, also indicate on the list what days are good.

Have regular teacher support meetings to discuss what works and what didn't. Audit each others classes and give each other positive feedback. When you want to criticize something be sure to dish out the praise first.

The kids:

They love to do, not listen. Give them lots of worksheets (some can be optional homework) and have them learn by playing. Don't try to show them hands on the table like you would adults. Do use the blackboard if you like to, they are used to that.

Be flexible:

After-school programs will get *new kids every week* for many weeks. Figure out how you will handle this. We usually had the assistant run a separate table for newbies after the first few lessons.

Sometimes *only a few kids show up* because of holiday or other issues, so you don't want to run a lesson that other kids will miss Be ready to rerun old hands (the 4th hands from every week), review mechanics and just play.

You will *not be able to stay on schedule*. Some lessons may need repeating or stretching to 2 weeks. Don't worry about it. Cover it next semester in the "pre-diamond" classes. The kids who love the game will read about it in the book or go online.

Be sure to *run a competition at the end*. even if you have to run it MiniBridge-style. Remember your objective is to leave these kids with a love of cards and a taste of Bridge. They do not need to learn every detail now.

NEW YORK

Contact Name: Enith Friedman
Contact Info: ecd726@gmail.com
Area: White Plains, New York
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: Conducted as part of an enrichment program. Lessons and play took place during the lunch/recess period, 2 out of a 6 day cycle
Name of School: Solomon-Schechter of Westchester
Grade Level: Grades 3, 4, 5
Teaching Material: Teacher prepared materials

I first made contact with this school when I was hired as the enrichment specialist. The program has been going on for two years.

Unfortunately, due to budgetary responses, the enrichment program as it is has been cancelled. My position as a permanent teacher at the school has been eliminated. I am working with the parents of my students to continue the program. It appears that the program will be an after school enrichment program taught by someone other than me.

I think the thing that made this program so successful was the rapport I had with the students and the ability for the students to play any day. I also hosted "Family Bridge Nights" to explain and show the parents how the game works. Much support was generated through those events. I have introduced students to the local bridge clubs and have played with them as my partner so they are comfortable. Students were also encouraged to play on Bridge Base, and most of my students are regular players.

The program began with mini-bridge. My lessons and playing time were casual. I let the students do a lot of exploring with the cards and deals. They were very quick to formulate hypothesis. A great deal of time was spent on etiquette, playing of the hand, and the idea of 40 points and the distribution of those points. As the students were ready for more information, lessons were prepared and presented.

My student players will continue. Their level of play far exceeds my expectations for them. Their enthusiasm never wavers.

OHIO

Contact Name: Sally Veauthier
Assistants: Kathy Garcia and Chuck Coleman
Contact Info (e-mail): sallyv@localnet.com
Area (City/Country): Youngstown OH
Type of Area: City/suburb (changing from suburb to city population)
Type of Class: Afterschool
Name of School: W.S. Guy Middle School
Grade Level of Class: 7th and 8th Grades
Teaching Material Used: Kitty Cooper Lesson Plans

A long-time school board member is a bridge student of mine and personally contacted the middle school principal to start the arrangements. We were able to make plans to hold eight classes. For the first two classes, we had 19 enthusiastic players. However, a school track program began and the class dwindled to eight. They were faithful and had fun – really got into it. We provided snacks – chips, cookies – and maybe that helped.

Using MiniBridge is a wonderful thing. The game handout instructions and playing homework assignment was a great supplement. The “class” was able to:

- Count points
- Make the opening lead
- Display the dummy
- Determine a contract
- Keep track of their tricks
- Calculate a score
- Keep a calm demeanor
- Play at the appropriate time

We ran a tournament for the 9th session. I purchased a small trophy with a bridge hand on it, and gave participation gifts of some kind of bouncy yo-yo’s – they went over big. I also made a sign for the door that said “Bridge Club.” I also made Bridge Club member cards for them. I did need the assistants. I was somewhat hampered because there was only one blackboard, and the teacher had an elaborate plan on it that couldn’t be erased. I was apprehensive about them being able to hold 13 cards, but this was no problem at all – I did not need card holders.

We got great publicity – an article and picture that appeared on the front page of the second section of our local newspaper. I’ve received lots of positive comments from my fellow bridge players because of the article.

The principal seemed open to continuing the bridge lessons next year. I’ll contact her in August for the coming school year.

OREGON

Contact Name: Tara Atkinson
Contact Info (e-mail): Taratw11@yahoo.com
Area (City/County): Beaverton, OR
Type of Area: Suburb of Portland, OR
Type of Class: Class for Homeschooled children during day time hours
Name of School: Meet at Village Home Education Resource Center
Grade Level of Class: 9 to 17 year olds
Teaching Material Used: Bidding and Play of the Hand texts plus some games and activities that the kids and I have created.

I made the first contact with this group through my children who take classes there, and I have taught other subjects at the Resource Center. My program started in September of 2008. I hope to continue and maybe grow the program as long as there are students who are interested. I would love to see some of the kids get to a level where they can play in local clubs... but we will see.

I am continually amazed to find that some kids have an innate understanding for the game and know how to play the cards, while others struggle with the basic concepts. In spite of that, all of the kids are worth teaching and working with!

I have found that the most important thing is to keep things moving, presenting the material in as many ways as possible. Then we have to step back and just let them play. They learn from their successes and from their mistakes. The kids come back when it is fun, and almost all of them have fun playing the cards rather than listening to the lessons.

PENNSYLVANIA

Contact: Sue A. Wessner
Contact Info: Email: bearsbysue@aol.com
Area: Hamburg, PA
Type of Area: Suburban
Type of Class: Weekly during school day (rotate mornings and afternoons)
School: Hamburg Area High School
Grade Level: Grades 9 to 12
Teaching material: ACBL Bridge Series

I attempted to start a bridge class at our high school in 2007, but it was not very well planned or orchestrated by the administration. By the fall of 2008, they decided that it might be good to offer classes on a weekly basis during "club period." It really caught on. The kids look forward to the continuity of a weekly schedule and are very faithful in their attendance. We will conclude with the end of the school year, sometime in June. I am hosting a pizza party on the last day, to which I have invited our Assistant Principal and other faculty to attend.

If I were to state what I felt was the single most influencing factor for getting students involved, it would be the fact that they actually played a hand on the first lesson day. That was so important to this age level. They did not want to study for a few weeks and then play. This instant hands-on was dynamite!! I might add that the ACBL was very generous in providing great text books and other classroom aids for the students. If I am invited to return for the 09-10 season, I will be most happy to do so.

Contact Name: Bruce E. Bayuk
Contact Info (e-mail): BNB33@verison.net
Area: Harrisburg, Susquehanna Township, Dauphin County PA
Type of Area: City and Suburb
Type of Class: Afterschool at first; now during school time
Names of Schools: Downey Elementary, Susquehanna Township Middle School and High School, Woodward School, John Harris Campus of Harrisburg High School, Wm. Penn Alternative School
Grade Level of Classes: Downey – 1st, 2nd Grades; Woodward – 3rd to 5th Grades; John Harris – 10th Grade; Susquehanna Middle – 6th to 8th Grades; Susquehanna High – 9th Grade; William Penn Alternative – 9th and 10th Grades.
Teaching Material Used: Bidding and Play of the Hand courses, Flash Cards

My first contact with the schools was through the Harrisburg City Major, Stephen Reed and the Susquehanna Superintendent of schools. I started my program in 1990 and joined the ACBL school program in 2005. We have slowly expanded into all of these schools.

In 2007, I taught a group of socially disadvantaged students. This turned out to be a thrilling experience. They took to the game like sponges. It was a noble experiment!

My goal is to have Bridge taught in every school in the country as a **REQUIRED SUBJECT**.

Tips: Use Bridge flash cards (150) standard plays of card combinations by Alan Truscott. They are sold by Devyn Press, Inc., 151 Thiermanlane, Louisville KY 40207

TEXAS

Contact Name: Charles Lawson
Contact Info: e-mail: Bridge_Teacher@consolidated.net, Phone: 936-291-7711
Area: Huntsville, TX
Type of Area: Small Town
Type of Class: In School and Other
Teaching Material: ACBL Series Bridge, Pat Herrington's Lessons, Audrey Grant's Better Bridge Lessons, my own material

I teach a School Bridge Lesson Series at a private Christian school. The initial contact was made through the Headmaster of the school. My wife is a full-time teacher at the school. He knew I played and taught bridge, and the Headmaster wanted to offer bridge as an elective for secondary students.

The class is held during regular school hours. This fall will be my third year teaching for the school, and I will have two classes – one for 7-8 graders and one for 9-12 graders. Class size is 12-20 students. I start out with MiniBridge and then use the ACBL *Bidding Series* books for teaching with a lot of cards on the table, exercises and playing of hands.

I also teach adult classes through Sam Houston State University's Continuing Education Department. I was contacted by the Director for Continuing Education. She got my name from someone via an ACBL contact. Their previous instructor wasn't going to continue, and they had students wanting to take a beginning bridge class.

One new feature I added this past year to my classes is to use actual hands from the ACBL tournaments played on Bridge Base Online to create hands for a tournament for my last class session. I matchpointed the hands against the actual results from the ACBL tournament. My students loved seeing how they did against these "tournament" players and were surprised that they were generally above average on most hands.

At the private Christian school, I set up my laptop and used the school's wireless network to demonstrate BBO and to show the classes the different features of BBO. We joined a table in the Recreational Bridge area and they watched me play several hands while they made suggestions on the bidding and play. For my adult bridge classes, I have used the BBO teaching tables to do additional teaching for any of the students who are interested.

My future plans include getting a college team started at Sam Houston. I've talked with one of the student activity directors about this and I'm currently working on a presentation for the college.

VIRGINIA

Contact Name: Leo Cardillo and Suzanne Abrams
Contact Info: e-mail: cardillo@bellatlantic.net; s.abrams1@att.net
Area: Fairfax VA
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: In-School
Teaching Material: ACBL Bridge Series, other selected materials and articles

My classes are held at the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Bridge Club. Jay Lamb has been the faculty member and Bridge Club Sponsor for as long as I can remember. The TJHSST Bridge Club began at least ten years ago, and I inherited the club from Dot Lewis in about September 2001. I was the Advisor to the Bridge Club for six full academic years. The current Advisor is Suzanne Abrams, who took over in September 2007.

The TJHSST Bridge Club meets on Fridays and consists of two periods or blocks as they are known at TJHSST. Each block is about forty minutes and the Bridge Club meets on the last two blocks each Friday, roughly 2:00 - 4:00 PM, about forty weeks of the academic year. Some of the students stay for both blocks. During the six years that I was at TJ, the bridge club grew from a single classroom to a four room, trailer quad! Life was good!!

Suzanne is the current Advisor and I assist from time-to-time. Suzanne is also running a very successful Bridge Club at Garfield Elementary School, which she began a few years ago. The Garfield Bridge Club has about 29 students and meets after school on Thursday, each week.

Every program is different and TJHSST is a marvelously unique school. TJHSST was recently recognized as the top high school in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. The TJ Students are truly exceptional and a delight to have in a Bridge Club. My own success with the club was based upon great support from Jay Lamb. Jay is the best of all possible faculty sponsors, bringing great enthusiasm for bridge and the students every week, no matter what. I can't give Jay enough credit for the enduring success of the TJHSST Bridge Club.

In addition, I'd like to think that I also brought great enthusiasm to the Bridge Club. Finally, as President of the Northern Virginia Bridge Association, ACBL Unit 218, I have asked the Unit to provide cookies for both TJ and Garfield for the last seven years or so, an annual expense of about \$700 - and at COSTCO prices - that is a lot of cookies!! These cookies are much appreciated by students of both schools.

In addition, as President of Unit 218, I invited David Banh (2006 King of Bridge), then a Junior (maybe even a sophomore), to be a non-voting member of the NVBA Board of Directors. David faithfully attended the monthly Board meetings and provided an invaluable link between the school and the Unit bridge programs, and he helped promote student/youth play in both environments. David was an exceptional student and player and went on to be named the King of Bridge in his senior year at TJ.

The ACBL bridge T-shirts have always been popular with the students. In addition, the ACBL National Matchpoint event was the highlight of the Bridge Club each year.

Overall, I think that it is imperative that the Advisor be responsive to the particular needs of the students. A few students at TJ enjoy formal instruction and competition, but many have responded even better to an Easybridge! type of environment. I again defer to Suzanne to provide additional current and future data.

Contact Name: Suzanne Abrams
Contact Info: e-mail:s.abrams1@att.net
Area: Fairfax County VA
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: After School Bridge Club
Teaching Material: MiniBridge

I worked for the Fairfax County Public Schools but am now retired. Garfield Elementary was one of the schools assigned to me as a school psychologist. The principal knew I played bridge and was extremely supportive of starting a club. For the last two years, the principal has allowed me to give out the end of the year tournament trophy at the school awards ceremony. Fairfax County Public Schools also made a video which was on the local cable channel.

This is my third year at Garfield. We had an amazing 29 students sign up for the after school club. There are at least six tables every week, and I have two teachers and one parent who rotate as volunteers to help me. The students learn MiniBridge and we do the end of the year tournament. The club is open to 4th through 6th graders.

I plan to continue at Garfield. Many of the 6th graders have asked if there will be bridge at middle school, and I am trying to find a volunteer so they can continue. I have about six 6th graders for whom this is their third year.

I have a winning pair each week, and they get extra an extra snack. The North Virginia Bridge Association provides snacks. The first two years the school provided juice, but they lost the grant money that helped pay for this. I couldn't run this program without the support of the teacher/parent volunteers.

Contact Name: Fred Gramlich
Contact Info (e-mail): fmgramlich@cox.net
Area (City/County): Fairfax County Virginia
Type of Area: Suburban
Type of Class: Afterschool for 1:15
Name of School: Garfield Elementary School
Grade Level of Class: 4th – 6th
Teaching Material Used: Own materials developed.

This program has been going on for four years. I joined last year as a helper to Suzanne Abrams who got the program started. This year I am running it by myself.

My plan is to keep the program going. It's a nice age group. I have the snacks down. The space is good. We have about 15 kids, and I have a helper most of the time.

One thing that works really well is to have a running tournament, keeping score of each kid's performance each week. I "lecture" for about 5 minutes on something at the start, then they play. They can fit in two hands, sometimes three.

I kept the focus on the rules of the game and the scoring initially, for a few weeks, before giving them any information on how to bid or how to play. It seems to me to have worked.

Contact Name: Sam DeCroes
Contact Info: sdecroes@cox.net
Area: Williamsburg, Virginia
Type of Area: City (12,000)
Type of Class: In School - Lunch hour and Math Class
School: St. James Elementary
Teaching Material: *Teach Me to Play* by Jude Goodwin

Here's how I got started: I read a newspaper article about a local elementary school (James River) being a magnet school and involved in a variety of experimental educational programs. I contacted the school and was invited by the Special Education teacher to present a brief program to her 5th grade class. It was her decision to give bridge a try and we moved on from there.

The initial year went very well indeed. My first year was relegated to the lunch hour and volunteer students: I stuck with MiniBridge and suffered through the normal disruptions caused by eating, drinking, etc. while playing cards.

I arranged with Donna Bowser (tournament director) to offer a special game during the Williamsburg Regional for my class, and I contacted the local newspaper which sent a reporter and a photographer to write up the event. All of the kids played one session. Unit 110 entertained the children after the game with lunch and goodie bags. The school was happy to let me teach their top math kids the following year.

This past year I presented the game exactly as listed in the “Teach me to Play’ workbook. The Gates/Buffer foundation provided the funds to allow each student to have a workbook. I was given the top 22 math students in a regularly scheduled math class each Wednesday from October through May. About half of the kids regularly left the 60 minute class after the first 20 minutes to participate in band practice, so it was basically ten minutes instruction followed by 50 minutes of playing preset hands by those present.

Some of the children completed their workbook pages; others did much less, but all enjoyed the game and progressed reasonably well. The TMTP workbook focuses entirely on the bidding side of the game, so their card-playing skills left something to be desired. As you might well imagine, their favorite bids were “double” and “redouble.”

The school principal has asked me to repeat my program in the next school year, and I presently plan to try another approach. I will begin with the “Bidlittle” concept of playing the game with a 32 card deck and focus on both the auction and the play of the cards. Bidlittle is a great starting tool for 10 and 11 year olds who have trouble holding and sorting 13 cards. As soon as possible I will move up to MiniBridge to give the kids their best shot at competing the in January ‘08 Williamsburg Regional. Following the tournament, I will switch into the full game as recommended in the School Bridge League lesson plans.

Lastly, I hope to encourage a few of the kids to present the Bidlittle game to their classmates while I stand around for assistance if/when needed.

I plan to offer a one-day camp sometime this winter, if I can drum up some family interest. I have contacted my local library and found that, when available, there is a large room, completely equipped with all modern a/v aids, that can be rented for \$100. That would be reimbursed by Unit 110.

As you can see, I’m still groping for the best approach. It is a work in progress.

Summer 2009 Update: Entering the final month of this year’s bridge class at James River Elementary School, I consider it to have been reasonably successful.

It has been several years since an after-school class has been tried (a during-school class is greatly superior), but the schedule called for the class to begin at 3:15 and run until 4:30. The class began in early February with ten 4th and 5th graders, a grandmother, a mother and a father as students. After providing snacks and drinks at the outset, we were able to play four or five bridge hands each week, primarily because I had two able assistants in Fred and Terry Bender. The final class in mid-May will be an individual Howell tournament with a trophy going to the top placing young man or woman.

Six of the children are new junior ACBL members, and I have installed the MiniBridge flash drive on their laptop/home computer in hopes that they will continue to enjoy the game. There is a possibility that a different elementary school may be able to provide an opportunity next year to present this great game to more and more children. Let us hope.

Contact Name: Earlye Lee Miller
Contact Info: e-mail: elm71@verison.net
Area: Norfolk VA
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: After School and In School Bridge Club
Teaching Material: Bidding Series, Teach Me To Play, History of Bridge, Transparencies, Ballgames, Bingo Bridge Games, hands-on materials.

I am a retired Norfolk Public School Principal. I offered the bridge lesson program and three Gifted and Talented teachers accepted the first year. My program has been going on for four years.

I begin the end of October and go until the end of March. I teach one hour per week in each of seven schools at the present time. I have taught in a high school and a middle school, but have had more success with grades three, four and five in elementary schools. I teach during the school day except for one school which is after school. We have had two family bridge nights where students brought a parent or older brother or sister to play.

I plan to continue the present program and hold a summer bridge camp if funds are available. I also have approached the Gifted and Talented Director to have bridge included in Norfolk Public Schools Summer Junior University but no answer yet.

Tips: Have a good time teaching. Teach the basics and to enjoy bridge.

I suggest you vary your teaching methods. Correlate your objectives with SOL's. Have clubs in your area save used cards for you, so you can give a deck to a student at each class. Show students different kinds of cards such as the following: Van Gogh cards, Redskin cards, round cards, etc. Emphasize vocabulary and decision making along with the basics. Make each class different. At the end of each class tell them what they have learned.

Unit 146, District 6 includes \$200 in its budget for Education. This has been used for additional supplies and bidding boxes. For some reason, the bidding boxes add interest for students. (See the next page for a promo letter from one of Earlye's resource teachers.)

From a Resource Teacher promoting school bridge programs.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to share with you the wonderful benefits of having a school bridge program. I am a gifted resource teacher in two elementary schools in an urban school district and have had the pleasure of working with Ms. Earlye Lee Miller for the past two years to bring bridge lessons to students in my schools. The bridge program has been well received by students, teachers and administrators alike.

At the beginning of the year, I ask the classroom teachers who work with the gifted students to identify a group of students who might benefit from the opportunity of learning to play bridge. The children that teachers choose are either gifted or high achieving students and they are all strong in math. In October or November, Ms. Miller begins meeting with the students

for one-hour sessions once a week and continues to work with them for the next four months. Ms. Miller begins with very basic information such as card values and basic card games such as war and gradually adds more complex information and practice. All of this is supplemented with reading and review of a bridge textbook. After months of instruction and practice, the students play in a bridge tournament and the winners receive a trophy.

In this age of high stakes testing and accountability, bright students are at risk of stagnating. Standards of Learning (SOLs) are minimum competencies on which the high stakes tests are based and they are taught, tested and re-taught. Many of our bridge students begin the school year already having mastered these standards or only requiring an introduction to or a single teaching of the material. There is very little challenge or excitement in many of the learning experiences these children have. Bridge, however, is complex and stimulating – it pushes these students just beyond their comfort zone while engaging them in an exciting activity. The beauty of bridge is that it does provide a higher level thinking challenge, but it can also be linked to several of the SOLs – everybody is happy!

In addition to providing a much needed challenge for many of our students, I have seen other positive benefits of bridge in the schools. It is when playing bridge that I have seen some of my underachieving gifted students come to life. I have one student in particular with a high IQ score for whom teachers question his ability – he doesn't perform in class and his grades are flat. I found it fascinating to watch him play bridge, however. I could see his mind working as he focused intently on the play and used planning and strategy that Ms. Miller had not yet taught him. When challenged by bridge, this child came to life.

A classroom teacher has told me that she saw an improvement in standardized test scores for students who participated in bridge. Students have told me that they have gone home and taught their family members to play bridge. I had a student who found a bridge game online and excitedly informed me that he was playing in an international bridge game online. I now even have younger students asking when they will get to begin bridge lessons. Since the bridge program was introduced to my elementary school students, it has expanded in my school system and has been taught in additional elementary schools as well as after school programs in middle and high school.

Amazingly, Ms. Miller has single-handedly provided the lessons on a volunteer basis for these students – at least thirteen groups over the past two years! Her expertise along with her tireless and selfless commitment to the bridge program has allowed students from diverse backgrounds to be introduced to the pleasure and the social and intellectual benefits of playing bridge. Of course, The American Contract Bridge League's generosity in providing excellent resources and incentives for this practice is also invaluable.

If your purpose for getting this information is to determine how you might make the School Bridge program even better, I have three suggestions: (1) Clone Earlye Lee Miller, (2) Provide more hands-on /visual reference items for students (*i.e.*, business card sized references or posters with essential information), (3) Create a how-to video or CD Rom that students can use between bridge classes to clarify or reinforce their understanding of key concepts and procedures.

I strongly support bridge lessons in the schools and I highly endorse Ms. Miller as a teacher of bridge. Students eagerly participate in this opportunity, and teachers have only reported positive results from the program. I feel that we are very fortunate to offer such a high quality program to students that is free of cost. It is my intention to continue to take advantage of this opportunity in the coming school years.

Sincerely,
Kim Biemann,
Gifted Resource Teacher
June 3, 2005

WASHINGTON

Contact Name: Kris Motoyoshi
Contact Info: e-mail: dkmoto@mindspring.com
Area: Spokane WA
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: After School and In School
Teaching Material: ACBL Bridge Series materials

For the past three to four years, I have been running youth classes through the West Valley School District in Spokane WA. I have used some of the students as student teachers, and they have earned scholarship funds through the program

The school has allowed me the opportunity to take the kids on a field trip and we have used the field trip in place of the mini tournament. I take the kids to a local club after giving them instructions on watching the adults play. I have them sit at the corner of the tables and I ask them to decide what they would bid and how they would play while looking at a hand. I ask them to determine if the adult did what they thought they would do???? The adults are wonderful, and the kids rise to the occasion with exemplary behavior!

After spending about one hour at the club, I take them to lunch at McDonalds, which Unit 448 helps pay for. During lunch, we have a question/answer period with the students. I am impressed by what sponges these kids are, and their comments on the adult bidding and play are amazing!!! Questions like why did the players announce the NT range, why did they use the 'stop' card, noticing that the adult got 'stranded' in the wrong hand because they forgot to play short hand high.

Taking the kids on a field trip is almost better than the mini tournament as they actually see how quiet it is in the game room. I keep telling them that their conversations in class should only be heard by their table as everyone is playing the same hand. These students are ages 10 to 12, and I have them five days a week for a six-week period.

After the 12th week, we do have a mini tournament with an individual movement, and all students get a necklace of beads and the trophy that ACBL supplies. I want to thank ACBL for the opportunity to teach the youth with the existing program. The school is always worried that we are NOT coming back, and I have been successful in mentoring a teacher to take over the program with very little help from me!!

Contact Name: Brenda Simpson
Contact Info: e-mail: BSBRIDGE@aol.com
Area: Spokane WA
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: After School and In School
Teaching Material: Just about everything including, ACBL Bridge Series materials, Kitty Cooper manual, "Teach Me To Play," Easybridge! Lite, "The Fun Way to Serious Bridge"

As I was a teacher in the area (retired now), I approached teachers, principals, my relatives, etc. that had a school or class where they would allow me to teach bridge. I have never been turned down, but I can only devote so much time to this project, as I run games and have adult classes. The problem is getting other bridge teachers to teach the kids. Some have said they would rather have their teeth pulled. Since I taught PE, I am used to noise and feel it shows the students are having fun. Others want the kids to be quiet and can't understand the attention span of the age of the child they are teaching.

I've been teaching bridge to students since 1994. As I am the Education Liaison for my unit, I have been able to get my unit and the school district to work with the ACBL program. ACBL furnishes the books, t-shirts and trophies. The school has furnished the transportation to bring the students to a club game or local tournament during the day. The unit furnishes them with lunch and drinks. The Education Budget for my unit includes \$200 for teachers to use when we teach school age students. I've used this to purchase file folders with pockets to hold their handouts and a deck of cards for each student to keep.

I plan to work with another teacher in Spokane to have her kids and mine meet and play sometime. Perhaps we can also play on the Internet with each other.

Here are a couple of tips: (1) One of the teaching items I have invested in is the magnetic board and cards. I can show the kids how to lay out the dummy hand or how a sorted hand should look. Before, if I called them over to look at a layout, they would love to push and show and act like kids. This method has saved me a lot of grey hairs. (2) A second idea that works well is to have a contest at the end of the lesson on bridge trivia. I've had boys vs. girls or tables vs. tables. I always have wrapped candy for all at the end. The students love this game and it is a good way to check for learning.

CANADA AND OTHER AREAS

Contact Name: Victor Lamoureux or Nola Lamoureux or Lynn Switzer
Contact Info (e-mail): victor.lamoureux@gmail.com or nola.lamoureux@gmail.com
or lynnlmacdonald@yahoo.ca
Area (City/County): Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: Lunch (grades 3-6) afterschool (grades primary-2)
Name of School: Astral Drive Elementary School
Grade Level of Class: Bridge Club grades 3-6, Mini-bridge club grades Primary-2.
Teaching Material Used: School Bridge Lesson Series by Kitty Cooper (grades 3-6) and Lessons by Donna Compton

This is the fourth year for our program. We first got into the school because Victor is a student there. This year we switched from one day a week to two days a week for the lunch time group. We find that we have to spend less time reviewing because there is a lot more retention from one class to the next. We teach the lesson and review what we've already covered while the children are eating and then play cards. We also get the more advanced players to help the newer players. We tried doing this group afterschool, but we had a lot less interest. We have decided to try to get the kids to use bidding boxes next!

For us it helps to have lots of other adults in the room, even if they don't play bridge. This is especially helpful for the mini-bridge class. We try to have one adult per table. We only keep the students for 30 minutes at a time because that's about all the time the little ones can handle. This group works well afterschool because a lot of them have siblings in higher grades that get out of school 30 minutes later. The parents were coming to pick up the younger ones and staying until the older ones were dismissed. The mini-bridge club gives them something to do while they wait :) It is easier to get parent help for this group at that time, too.

We use tinfoil boxes from the dollar store for the kids to use to hold their cards. We leave the foil in the box to keep it steady and remove any sharp bits from the box before we give it to the kids. It really works great for the little ones.

Contact Name: Kathie Macnab
Contact Info: e-mail: kmacnab@eastlink.ca, Phone: 902-443-4676
Area: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3M 2R1
Type of Area: Urban
Type of Class: In School
Teaching Material: Modified Bridge Basics 1

My programs ran in the school system during the lunch hour. I did one high school class and the other three were for grades 5 and 6. Presently I have not been able to get into the school system and would be delighted to assist anyone in my area who was interested in setting up a program. We do have one Bridge in Schools teacher, Lynn Switzer who this past year taught in an elementary school. I believe she had 40 or more participants.

Contact Name: Mel Hazell
Contact Info: e-mail: melbon@cogeco.ca
Area: Kingston ON
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: In school
Teaching Material: MiniBridge and The Bidding Series

I have found that the key to getting into the schools to teach bridge is to make direct contact with a teacher who is somewhat familiar with the game and knows the value of teaching those skills to students. Once you have established a year of teaching, it is much easier to expand to other classes if your experience has been positive for the students. The school principal will usually be on your side.

Always teach with a classroom teacher present during normal school hours. Teaching during lunch period or after school hours generates a lot of problems with missing students, lack of attention and/or commitment on the students' part. Also there will be potential discipline problems.

Don't hesitate to invite any interested parents or grandparents to join in the class during lessons and play. An adult presence at a table is a calming influence, and it's fun for everyone.

I have been teaching in the schools for about eight years. I use the slow approach in getting to the actual game of bridge. The first three weeks (6 hours) are used to teach Whist and then MiniBridge. By the fourth week, the students have learned to handle and play their cards, so they can focus on the idea of bidding a little better. (Note that if you can get agreement to do 4 hours a week, instead of 2 hours, the learning/retention is much improved.)

Be prepared to tolerate some noise, with the teacher's approval. I explain that there is a time to listen and then a time to have some fun. Make sure you have a method of getting their attention and getting them under control.

Be really explicit when teaching the idea of Doubles. It is not unusual for the bright students to come up with the idea of doubling their partner so two spades can become four spades, and therefore an easy game.

Always hold a tournament after the 16 hours of lessons. I often let the students pick a partner for this. The idea that they will be playing against different students (peer pressure) is often an incentive to try and learn something during the lessons. It's good if you can get the school, or the parents, to provide lunch or treats for the tournament. If you are teaching more than one class, an intra-class tournament can be a lot of fun, but hectic.

Contact Name: Mel Hazell
Contact Info (e-mail): melbon@cogeco.ca
Area (City/County): Kingston, Ontario, Canada
Type of Area: City
Type of Class: Class Time
Name of School: Lancaster Drive Public School
Grade Level of Class: Grade six
Teaching Material: Used: Pre-Club series

Our first contact was made with an individual teacher who played bridge herself and recognized the value to students to learn new skills that used mathematics, logic, ability to work with others, and enhanced thinking skills. This teacher has since retired, but some of other teachers have also seen the benefits. Unfortunately there are some members on the School Board in Kingston that are against the Bridge Program because it is not on the Provincial Teaching Curriculum, and as a result some School principals are offering resistance if they are not sure of themselves. A teacher has to push hard to get the program in their classroom.

Our program has been going on for 6 years, and we plan to continue with the program as long as the Teachers support it.

I have had several parents comment on how much their children enjoy the program, especially as it is different from the regular school subjects and they get a chance to learn new skills.

One parent told me that once a group of his mothers friends had met at his house to play Bridge, and one lady had to leave suddenly so they were stuck. His daughter (now in Grade 7) had been watching and said she knew how to play since she had learned in Grade 6. So she sat in and all the ladies were amazed how well she did. She also had a lot of fun playing with her Grandmother.

I have sometimes invited parents/grandparents to join the classes (with teachers permission) and this always works well. Usually the adults can sit at a table where some of the students need extra supervision.

I have tried noon-hour lessons and they are not as successful because students often fail to show up for various reasons. The time slot available is always shorter, and eating Lunch and playing is a bit of a problem with sticky cards.

Contact Name: Peter Schwartz
Contact Info: farouk@vdm.ca
Area (City/County): Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: During Math class (Bishop Whelan) & lunch (others)
Type of School: Elementary
Grade Level: 5th and 6th Grades
Teaching Material Used: Bidding and Play of the Hand text books with supplementary material.

I made my first contact through the School Board two years ago. Nancy Hain, Asst. Director, Lester B. Pearson School Board and principals and/or designated contacts at the individual schools are the people I work with.

We plan to keep the bridge program going. Right now our major emphasis during the initial 16 hours is on MiniBridge. We introduce bidding and basic card play during the second 16 week session.

Contact Name: Carol Bongard
Contact Info: e-mail: carol_bongard@hotmail.org
Area: Toronto, Ontario
Type of Area: City
Type of Class: Lunchtime
Name of School: Maurice Cody Public School
Grade Level: Grades 4, 5, 6
Teaching Material: ACBL's elementary school lesson plans and modified Bidding text materials

Our first contact with the school came from a parent to the principal who then contacted Barbara Seagram. She contacted the Unit 166 Educational Advisor who contacted me. I am also a unit board member.

Our program has been running since January, 2009. Twenty-one of my students, having had only seven lessons, participated in one of Unit 166 large tournaments (500 total students). Two of the partnerships won trophies. They enjoyed the experience and are keen to learn more and to participate in more tournaments.

I plan to continue next year with Advanced Novice and to start a new beginner class.

Contact Name: Joel Shapiro
Contact Info: e-mail: joel_shapiro@sympatico.ca, Phone: (416) 485-8748,
Area: Toronto, Ontario
Type of Area: Urban, midtown, very multi-cultural group of students
Type of Class: In School – first and second periods every Friday
Name of School: Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute
Grade Level: Grades 9 and 10
Teaching Material: ACBL’s updated texts supplemented with problems and hands from Mike Lawrence software (Counting at Bridge)

This school, an academic-oriented high school with most students continuing on to university, wanted a program. It’s interesting to note that I did not make the initial contact with the high school. The principal found me on the ACBL “Find a Teacher” web site. He called and e-mailed me based on the information there. This is my fourth year. My program is for “gifted” grade nines and tens at a local high school. It is held for one 70-minute period in class time, once a week. Grade 9s start the program in late January or early February and continue until early June, then continue as grade 10s from September to December. Then, next January, a new grade 9 class starts. There are typically about 56 students in all, 28 in each of two classes (periods one and two of their school day). I intend to continue to maintain this program starting each year with a new group of students.

I start my students off with the very basic information, as few have played bridge before – some have played euchre, hearts, etc. The first eight lessons cover hand evaluation, opening the bidding, 1NT openers and responses including basic Stayman and transfers, responses and rebids in suit auctions, basic pre-empts including weak twos, simple strong hand bidding (2C then 2D waiting) and basic Blackwood/Gerber, and also various types of doubles (takeout/negative/responsive) and overcalls. This sounds like quite a lot in just eight hours but these kids have consistently proved that they can handle it. Once they have this much information, they participate in a special Student Day at our Toronto Regional (Easter week). They also have a tournament during their final class every June and December, and they are encouraged to play in local sectionals.

In our second semester (September to December), we do a lot of bridge problem-solving using hands from Mike Lawrence’s “Counting at Bridge” software. The students are also introduced to more advanced conventions such as Michaels/Unusual Notrump, Jacoby 2NT and splinters, Drury, Jordan, and key-card Blackwood. All lessons include pointers on declarer play and defense. Standard signaling is taught and special emphasis is given to opening leads.

My students enjoy participating in the School Bridge League's tournaments. This past October, five of my student pairs finished in the top 25 overall, including first and third places. They were certainly thrilled about that! Results of the December tournament have not yet been received. I will not be participating in their February tournament as I will just be starting with a brand new group and they will not be ready - but I'll get them ready for April!

My wife and I have a website which details our lesson offerings - you can find us at www.bridge101.net .

Contact Name: Flo Belford
Contact Info: e-mail: fbelford@sympatico.ca
Area: Toronto Ontario area
Type of Area: Communities in and outside of Toronto
Type of Class: During class time (in gifted and regular classes) and as an extra-curricular program at lunch.
Teaching Material: ACBL *Bidding Series*

In Mississauga, Brampton, Oakville, Burlington and Toronto, we have approximately 20 schools teaching School Bridge. Classes are offered from grade 4 to secondary school.

These classes are taught either during math classes, gifted classes, or as an extra-curricular activity. We basically use *The Bidding Series* book and adapt the lessons each week to the individual classes and students.

To get started in a school, I contact the principal or vice principal, explain the program, mail out some literature and follow up with calls or e-mails. I suggest they contact other schools who have run the program to get some feed back from them. Word of mouth is a big help with recruiting new schools. I have developed a leaflet outlining how bridge ties in with the Ontario math curriculum which the staff have found informative.

I am the school bridge coordinator for Unit 166. It is helpful that I am a teacher with one of the school boards because it gives me more credibility when contacting schools. I would recommend finding teachers or school staff who play bridge to help you get into new schools or to make presentations to school boards.

The response from the students, school staff, and bridge teachers has been very positive. Each year we have a special student game during the Toronto Regional. This year there were 400 students playing in this event.

We have also offered lessons to the teachers and that has been very successful as well. One school had a teacher tournament after school. Another school had a student/teacher tournament during the school day with each teacher pairing up with a student.

This year we have added a few gifted classes to our bridge program, both in elementary and secondary schools. This means we are offering the lessons during class time, which gives more time each week for the program. The students are really enjoying the challenge of the game, and the staff is impressed with the program.

My program has been going on for 14 years. Our plans are to involve more schools, particularly secondary schools, in the program.

Contact Name: Stephen Cooper
Contact Info: stephen.e.cooper@gmail.com
Area: Toronto - suburb (Brampton)
Type of Area: Suburb
Type of Class: During class hours with home-room teacher present.
Name of School: Terry Fox Public School
Grade Level of Class: mostly grade 5 & 6 (some split Grade 4/5)
Teaching Material Used: ACBL materials and Audrey Grant materials

Flo Belford told me that the school was open to the idea of a bridge program. All I had to do was show up. We've been running the program for three years now and I'm considering doing it again next year.

Teaching Bridge at Summer Camps

In the spirit of making bridge lessons and playing opportunities available year-round, summer camps play an important role. There are many types of camps that you can offer. Some of these programs are featured here.

Atlanta Junior Bridge Summer Camp Program

Atlanta Junior Bridge (AJB) holds Summer Camps each year for area children. All of our camps are free to the participants and are held two hours a day for one week. Students learn the mechanics of the game, opening the bidding, responding to the opening bid and overcalls. At the conclusion of the camp, we attempt to feed the participants into weekly classes at the same (or a geographically close) location.

The following is a description of how our camps are conceived and the reasoning behind the decisions we made concerning cost, duration and content.

- 1) **Location and Cost** – Many parents of school age children do not play bridge. We felt that if we charged for the lessons, parents would choose another activity that they felt their child would enjoy more. Also if the classes are free, there are more locations where you can hold your lessons without charge: libraries, churches, recreation centers, YMCA's are all looking for activities for children during the summer and "free" made us very attractive.
- 2) **Advertising** – Once you find a location, create a flyer to advertise your classes and put them up wherever possible. Most chains will not allow you to hang posters in the windows, but many private businesses will. We also had 100's of postcard-size flyers made, and we encouraged the players in our local games to take a few with them everywhere they went (manicurist, barber, orthodontist, hairdresser, coffee shop, Chinese and Mexican restaurants, church, etc.) and to leave several of the flyers in the various waiting areas, hoping that people might pick them up and hand them out to neighbors, friends and relatives with children. **You don't want to do all of the advertising yourself – it's exhausting...enlist your membership to help.** Also see if your local schools will let you put a poster in their media center or on a bulletin board to let the kids know about your classes. If you follow the ACBL co-operative advertising guidelines, you can get up to 75% of your costs (up to \$750) reimbursed by the ACBL. Be sure to get prior approval before you have the flyers printed to make sure you meet their requirements.
- 3) **Duration of Classes** - Many children have full summer schedules. Parents start booking activities in February for the summer and make vacation plans in March/April. It is almost impossible to find three or four weeks in a row that the kids will be in town. By holding the camps daily during one week, you are much more likely to find participants who are able to commit to the class. Two hours is a long

time for kids to concentrate and pay attention, some of our teachers even prefer 1 ½ hour classes. After the camp is over, try to hold weekly classes so that the interested kids can continue to play and learn. If you teach them one week and have no follow-up available for the kids to play with other kids, you'll lose them. AJB actually ran 10 summer camps all over Metro Atlanta the first summer we were in existence, so that we would create a large base of kids playing bridge. We found that we lost kids when the camp was over to vacation, other camps and sports, plus some just didn't want to continue to play. Since we had created a large base, the kids that did stay interested and did continue to attend classes always had some other kids to play with.

- 4) **Supplies** – We used bidding boxes, duplicate boards and directional table mats from the very first day. The kids were intrigued by the boards and bidding boxes, and they had no trouble at all using them when we got to the point in the lessons where we began bidding.

You will need card holders for the younger kids. The cheapest thing to do is to take aluminum foil boxes, remove the cutting strip and tape the ends. The kids can put their cards between the front and the lip. Baron Barclay has straight flat plastic card holders for around \$10.95. Do not get the hand-held card holders or the tall, blue, plastic ones, as they are too cumbersome for the kid's hands.

On the *Bridge Teacher for Youth* web site (www.btfy.org), there is a registration form you may use for your summer camp information and a combination registration form/publicity release, which is 'best,' if you plan on building a program and are going to want to publicize your class.

AJB created certificates for the kids who completed the class and created AJB t-shirts which were handed out. We did this to make the kids feel part of the group we had created for Atlanta-area children.

The ACBL has a stipend available for summer camps, but their policy is different for summer camps than the regular School Bridge Lesson Program. Call or e-mail Education@acbl.org to get details on how the ACBL can help with supplies and a stipend for your summer camp. If you need additional help with funding or supplies, talk to your local unit and district officials to see if they have funds available to help get your programs in place. Your membership may also be willing to help when they discover what you have planned. You have resources, tap into them.

- 5) **Content/Teaching of the Class** – Marty Nathan wrote a great article called 'Kids Can Play Bridge Too' which is on the Bridge Teachers for Youth web site www.btfy.org under Teaching>Methodology. It has great tips about the differences in teaching kids and teaching adults for you to consider.

Also under Teaching>Lessons>#3 is a Summer Camp Curriculum which gives a suggested lesson plan you might follow as well as some notes to consider if you would like to adjust to a different style. Your best bet is to teach something you are comfortable with and to stick closely to the Fred Gittelman 'Learn to Play Bridge' programs found on the ACBL web site, as many of your students will download that software as a practice tool.

One of our teachers tried to use Easybridge! and found that it was not a successful method (too fast paced for kids with little or no card game experience). The ACBL web site offers simplified lesson plans for all ages (Donna Compton for Pre-k to 2nd; Kitty Cooper for 4th grade up). Jude Goodwin's book 'Teach Me to Play' is good for

elementary-age children and has some nice chapter-end quizzes the kids can do to check their understanding of what they learned. We copied (with permission) the end-of-chapter quizzes and sent them home with the kids (not requiring them to do the work), and for the kids that brought the quizzes back the next day, we gave them a small prize☺ Every one brought the quizzes back after the first time. The last day of class was a party with a game. We used bidding boxes, duplicate boards, table mats etc. from the very first day.

- 6) **Publicity** – You must have all of the parents sign a *Consent and Release for Minor Child* form. This is on the BTfY web site and also available from the ACBL. This form allows you to take and publish pictures of your class and post them.

Write an article about the camp. Send it to your unit and district for their web site, to the ACBL and to your local newspapers. Make a poster of the pictures and hang them at your local clubs. Let everyone see what you did, where their money went and get them excited about the idea of these youngsters playing bridge.

See if there is an area tournament during the summer that you can ask to hold a special game for the kids. Contact all of the kids that attended the camp and invite them to a ‘tournament’, making sure the game is held in a location where your membership can see them playing.

Contact Name:	Georgia Ringo
Contact Info (e-mail):	ringoesky@yahoo.com
Area (City/County):	Lexington, KY
Type of Area:	City
Type of Class:	Summer Camp, Tues/Thurs 7 - 9 pm for 5 weeks
Name of School:	many county schools (Fayette, Madison, Jessamine, Woodford)
Grade Level of Class:	12 th grade
Teaching Material Used:	Easybridge!

We joined the public library reading program and held the camp at the public library for the first two years. Then we moved to a local club site. Our program lasted for four years. I will not be teaching at camp this year and am unaware of any plans for the future.

Contact Name: Carla Burke
Contact Info: burkeartmanager@msn.com (850-261-2657)
Area (City/State) Pensacola FL
Type of Area: Mid-size town
Type of Class: Unit 219's Youth Bridge Camp
Teaching Materials: Notebook from Carolyn Eckert's bridge camp; posters; bidding boxes, guidecards, duplicate boards, hand records obtained from Dan Plato and the ACBL.

Unit 219's first youth bridge camp was great fun! Thirteen campers showed up Monday morning, and off we went on a great adventure together. It was held June 1-5, 2009, with campers ranging in ages from 10 to 19 years. One of the 19-year olds had volunteered twice before camp started to help if needed, so we had three full tables with him assisting. Also assisting were **Nancy Roberts and Murray Hall**. Nancy took care of registration and preparing food for the campers. Murray was our director during the final day's game. **Carolyn Hall** came three days to take pictures. All three of the adults positioned themselves at a table each day to assist with questions from the campers. Realizing the importance of food to tweens and teens, **Carolyn Wolf** baked dozens and dozens of cookies for the campers to enjoy after the lessons every day.

Thanks to **Carolyn Eckert's** guidance (Atlanta Jr. Bridge teacher) and notes, I was careful to instruct for five minutes and give an activity for five or 10 minutes. Then back to instructing for five or 10 minutes and an activity again.

The first day was spent learning about suits, their rank, the difference between a major and a minor, the magic of the number 13, the importance of count, and how to take tricks. We talked about the guide card and the importance of partnership in bridge. After several hands of No Trump, the concept of a super suit was introduced which led to a discussion of ruffing.

Next came introduction of the duplicate board and placing a value on the honor cards. They were told they had two decisions to make: No Trump or a suit, and how high to bid. The concept of "book" was introduced. Scoring was begun at this point and from then on, every single hand they played was scored by the campers on the blackboard. By the end of the first few days, they were all doing their own scoring and understood the difference between a top, bottom, or average board.

On the second day, the bidding box was introduced, along with a review of the first day's lessons. Responding to a major suit opening and learning how to get to game was emphasized.

Day three brought minor suit openings and golden fits. One of our 16-year-olds, during the bidding, asked her partner (out loud) how many points she had. Partner told her. She called me over and asked about slam. I said, "You've wanted to bid slam since yesterday; go for it!" It made. Then when the scores went up on the board, one of the campers (19) at another table asked how they got to the slam. This particular young man plays in open games and knows the rules. I said, "Declarer asked her partner how many points she had by talking across the table." He laughed and we used that as a humorous lesson to the whole group about the reason for bidding boxes. They were all in the process of transitioning from mini-

bridge (talking about what's in their hands) to real bridge (using the bidding boxes). The concept had temporarily gotten away from the slam bidder!

A lesson on leads ensued as they began to play hands more and more on their own.

The fourth day we talked about opening No Trump bids and the responses thereto. They learned about voids, singletons, and doubletons.

Friday was their big day. They played six hands in 1-1/2 hours, two boards per round. Murray put the scores in the computer. We had trophies for first place N/S, and first place E/W. Pizza was ordered, a veggie tray appeared, and two of the campers baked a "We love bridge" cake. ACBL provided certificates and t-shirts for each camper. They all stayed and talked and visited so long, the adults were arriving for their regularly scheduled game.

These young people were focused, enthusiastic, bright, charming, and patient with each other (and their teacher). They asked great questions and took part in all activities. It was a joy to meet and get to know them, and we are looking forward to watching them continue their long, wonderful careers in this fabulous game.

Our thanks to all the clubs in Unit 219 who helped fund this camp. Our projects continue, so please don't forget us! Lessons continue every Saturday from 10-12, with a youth game the second Saturday of every month at 1:00 p.m.

Contact Name:	Sandy Stevens, Natalie Wernet
Contact Info:	dabblers885@aol.com (Sandy)
Area (City/State)	Houston TX
Type of Area:	Spring Branch suburb
Type of Class:	Winter Bridge Camp
Camp Site:	Westchester Academy for International Studies
Teaching Materials:	Better Bridge 1, MiniBridge, handouts, puzzle and quiz sheets

The first week of January 2009, Natalie Wernet, school bridge coordinator for Unit 174 and Sandy Stevens, ACBL Star Teacher, had the unique opportunity of conducting a bridge class for middle-schoolers in a camp-like atmosphere. Bonnie Watt and Kim Montgomery are sixth grade teachers at the Westchester Academy for International Studies (WAIS). WAIS is a charter school in the Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston, Texas. Bonnie and Kim team up to teach language arts/social studies and math, science and computers, respectively. At the beginning of the second semester each year, WAIS teachers put together a group of classes designed to allow mixed level classes of students to pursue investigations in international topics. Students are allowed to choose their class.

Bonnie, a bridge player, came up with the bridge instruction idea, "After hearing about Bill Gates and his program to get bridge into the schools, I thought this would be a great time to try to teach enough students who would maybe be interested enough to carry the game on into a club setting." And bridge is the world's most popular card game! During the preliminary registration, twenty students signed up for the class on "bridges." After some of

the students, who thought they would be building bridges, dropped out, more signed up, and there were still 20 in the final count. Now Bonnie and Kim needed a bridge teacher.

Texas Unit 174 has an active program promoting bridge in schools. Bonnie contacted the ACBL and was directed to Natalie. While Natalie had been teaching bridge to middle school students at The Kipp Academy in Houston, the format was different. She contacted Sandy, a bridge teacher experienced with different formats and materials available for youth. Taking a lead from Bonnie and Kim, they decided to team-teach the class. After touring the facility and meeting with Bonnie and Kim to get a good idea of the type of students expected and resources available, Sandy decided to use *Better Bridge 1* by Audrey Grant as the foundation for the class but to mix in *MiniBridge*, handouts, and puzzle and quiz sheets similar to those in Jude Godwin's book, *Teach Me to Play*. The materials available on the internet from ACBL, Kitty Cooper, Patty Tucker, and Donna Compton, as well as The School Bridge League, were invaluable. The goal was to create something fun and fast-paced, but also instructive. Because the class would be taught in the computer lab at card tables, the computers would also be available.

The classes met Tuesday through Friday from 12 to 3 and then from 9 to 3 on the following Monday for a total of 18 hours. WAIS purchased cards for each student, and the ACBL supplied *MiniBridge* and *Learn to Play Bridge* CD's. Sandy and Natalie shared the ACBL stipend. While books are also available free to the students from the ACBL, Bonnie and Kim did not want the students to feel that this class was going to be a textbook type class. Sandy was able to supply the class with bidding boxes which were very popular with the students.

The first class started with the cards on the table and everyone was playing whist by the end of the first hour. Due to the current popularity of poker, all the students knew the suits and had an idea of how to shuffle. With a few private lessons, everyone was able to hold and sort their cards.

After the first break, the class watched a video with Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, and they were introduced to the ACBL youth bridge site and *Bridge Base Online (BBO)*. They watched part of an International Team Trials match in Turkey on vugraph. One young man in the class shared that his father was from Turkey. It was thrilling to all of them to watch a game being played halfway across the world. The international connection had certainly been made.

Back at the tables, they started *MiniBridge*. At the end of the first class, all the students were given *MiniBridge* CD's to take home and try out. Natalie and Sandy had been a little concerned that the students would have a problem sitting for three hours at the card table. This wasn't a problem. In fact, making the students take breaks was harder. They just wanted to play.

The next day started with a worksheet terms review and a *MiniBridge* warm up. As the lessons progressed, after a group instruction time with cards and bidding boxes on the table, students were allowed to choose whether they wanted to practice at the tables or on the computers with the *MiniBridge* disk with teachers filling in at the tables as needed. A few students preferred to play *MiniBridge* with their classmates, but the majority practiced the actual bridge bidding and play they were learning.

In sessions two through four, notrump bidding and responses as well as major suit openings and responses were introduced. The morning of the last day, students signed up to play at BBO to practice bridge or MiniBridge. In the afternoon, a final bridge tournament was held with prizes for the winners and certificates and pizza for all. The students and teachers agreed heartily that Bridge Camp was a success.

Natalie and Sandy had had problems in the past with discipline in classes for children. In Natalie's words, "The help of two teachers..... contributed greatly to the stability of the class. It was a real pleasure working with them and their terrific kids." Sandy felt Kim and Bonnie were wonderfully supportive in all ways—from providing printed copies to filling in at tables and especially in contributing to the relaxed atmosphere so important for learning. "We made a good team, and that spirit carried over to our students."

Kim and Bonnie expressed their satisfaction with the class in a letter to the ACBL Education Dept.:

"We had a wonderful week with Sandy and Natalie. We were proud of the students' progress. They did very well. We were especially pleased with the instruction and the step by step method that was used to explain the reasoning of particular bids and play. The students not only played with each other but they each were able to receive a disc to use at home and they were introduced to playing online. Although we were skeptical about keeping twenty students engaged for an entire week, these concerns never came to fruition. Our 6th-8th graders were actively involved throughout the session. Hopefully this will be a session that we can repeat next year."

Holding a Youth Game

You've been teaching your students, they finally can bid and play a hand and you want a treat for them...a game!

When should you introduce them to a game?

As soon as your students understand the mechanics of the game and know how to open the bidding and make their first response, it's time to show them how a duplicate bridge game works. One of the things we do as bridge players and teachers is make the mistake of thinking the kids 'aren't ready yet.' We know how much needs to be learned before you can be even moderately proficient at the game, and we know that our kids still forget that you need five of a major to open half the time. As responder, they pass 10-point hands because they don't have 13. They don't get to game because they think they're 'high enough' (even though they may have 30 points between their two hands).

It doesn't matter. Taking class after class after class does not engender in the kids the competition and thrill of bridge that comes from playing in a game. You can also use the hand records for the game in your classes for the next two weeks or so to show them how a hand should have been bid.

I think one of the reasons teachers delay participation in games is because we get so involved with 'our kids' that we don't want them to lose, or show up badly with the other kids. Kids understand winning and losing. It happens to them constantly in sports, computer games and in lessons at school. The kids are ready to play, it's us holding them back because of our hang-ups and worries.

Running a Youth Game at a Tournament

Pre-event work:

- 1) Look at the tournament schedule for your area a least a month ahead of time and see what sectional or regional tournaments are being held.
- 2) Contact the Educational Liaison or Youth Program Committee in your Unit (if you are looking at a sectional tournament) or in your District (if you are looking at a regional tournament). Tell them you are interested in holding a game at the tournament for your students and any other students in the area who would like to play. Tell them if you are thinking of a 'field trip' where the students would be leaving school to come and play or a game on the weekend.
- 3) It is best if the Educational Liaison/Youth Program Committee person be your contact. That person can interact with the tournament chairman, directors and Unit/District Board in order to arrange the playing space, trophies and any refreshments for the kids. (This is not to say that you can't help supply some of the above items, but there should be someone in charge that you and other teachers can recognize as the authority in case you have conflicts.)
- 4) With unit approval, you can apply for a sectional sanction for a game for young players. As long as the players do not pay a fee, there would be no per table sanction charge. The game can be run by a local director.
- 5) You can make small half-page flyers that you can send home with your students and e-mail to past students letting them know the details of the game: time, place, age

- restrictions (*i.e.*, under age 19), cost (if any) and an expected time for the game to end. Give yourself a little extra time; if you expect to be done at 1...tell them 1:15, things always take longer to 'wrap up' than you think. Ask the players to try and get to the game 15 minutes before game time so you have time to match up partners.
- 6) Have the event posted on the Unit/District web site.
 - 7) Have a few tables set up close to the playing site for parents and teachers to wait for their children to finish playing ...but not too close☺

Game Supplies:

- 1) Have plenty of card holders for the players to use – if teachers are bringing their own for the kids to use, make sure names are clearly marked.
- 2) A snack for the players at half time is a good idea as their concentration and energy begins to lag a little after the first hour or so – try to stay away from snacks that are sticky or that contain a lot of sugar.
- 3) Make sure you have trophies or ribbons for the winners – usually 1st thru 3rd place in both directions.
- 4) Pencils and score cards will be available from the tournament supplies.
- 5) Use hand records – teachers will be able to go back over hands in later weeks and talk about the bidding and play if they have a reference. They can turn the playing experience into a class with hand records.
- 6) Be sure that you have the \$5 ACBL Student Membership forms with you. The parents of the children who win will probably want to sign them up with the ACBL so they can record their points.
- 7) Have every parent who comes to the event sign an *ACBL Consent and Release for Minor Child* form for their child (you can download this from www.btfy.org). This will allow you to take pictures and publicize the event.

Pre-Game Announcements and During Game Activities:

- 1) You will need one helper per every two tables at the first few games you run.
- 2) The people who are helping should know that they are allowed to help the children with scoring a hand, but they are not allowed to help them bid.
- 3) It takes new players two or three minutes per hand to sort the cards. If you play 12 hands, you have just added ½ hour to your playing time. Helpers should sort the cards in the boards after each board is played, so that the new players get pre-sorted hands.
- 4) Helpers can assist at slow tables by reminding the players whose bid or play it is and by trying to keep the players focused on the game, but remember bidding for them is prohibited.
- 5) Parents/teachers are allowed to take pictures during the first round of the game or in-between rounds, but not during the game, unless they can do so from a distance.
- 6) Teachers, parents and kibitzers are not allowed to stand behind the backs of the players, nor should parents sit at their child's table to help – though they may assist at another table.
- 7) The director should make the proper announcements to start the game, including gently telling the players that they are in a 'real' game and cannot talk to their partner about their points, what they want them to lead, etc. A very abbreviated introduction covering being nice to partners and opponents, playing in a timely fashion, etc. is appropriate, but realize that the kids are excited and raring to go! Stress that they are

- there to have a good time – but let them know that they are expected to follow the rules.
- 8) If irregularities happen during the game, the director should be called to handle them. Be sure that the directors-in-charge of the tournament are responsive to the extra work this game will entail. If not, perhaps you can find a local director that would be willing to volunteer to run the game and move the boards for you.
 - 9) Do not let the kids move the boards, and make sure after every round that the kids and the boards are at the correct table.
 - 10) If you have one table that just can't keep up, moving everyone for the next round before the late pair starts the last board of the current round is appropriate. The director will award an average result on the board they skip.
 - 11) It will take new players approximately 10 to 15 minutes to play each board. You will find that two hours of play is going to be more than enough playing time for most of them. With late plays, a break, general excitement...you should plan on being able to play only 10 to 12 boards in your first tournament.
 - 12) Do not run a Howell movement unless you have fewer than three tables.
 - 13) Have parents and teachers available to escort the children to the rest rooms, wait for them and escort them back to the playing site. These children are in your care and should not be out of your sight. In Georgia the legal age for children to be left unattended in a public area is 13 – this probably varies from state to state. The biggest thing to remember is that these youngsters will be in an unfamiliar place with a lot of unfamiliar people in the halls, restrooms and playing rooms. It will be easy for them to lose their way and become nervous or frightened.
 - 14) Do not let any child leave the playing area except with their parent, teacher or designated guardian for the event.
 - 15) If the children are being dropped off by their parent at the playing site, make sure you have a cell-phone number in case of emergency.

Post Event Activities:

- 1) Post the game results, pictures of the kids playing (if you obtained a publicity consent form), pictures of the winners with trophies and a short write-up on your unit, district and school web site **and on a wall at the tournament.**
- 2) Send this information to the ACBL for posting on the Youth4Bridge web site.
- 3) Send this information to your local newspapers within a few days of the event.
- 4) Make posters with the pictures and results for local clubs in your area, so that your local membership can see the kids.
- 5) Send a follow-up flyer home to the parents, so they can see what happened on 'bridge game day.'
- 6) Ask the director for a print-out of the game file. If you had hand records, try and find a good score that each of your students had on some hand and congratulate them on that good result. You will usually find that everyone had at least one good result.

School Surveys

Statistics

**School Bridge League
Tournaments**

Results of Survey done by John Gillespie and Carole Berry of Canada in 2005

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Students (Grades 4–7) were asked to rate the following 10 statements on a scale from 1 to 5:

1. The game of bridge is enjoyable and challenging.
2. The game of bridge is something that can be enjoyed for life.
3. The t-shirts were well designed for students in my age group.
4. Opportunities should be provided for kids to play outside the classroom in a Community Centre or Bridge club.
5. The game of bridge is worth while to teach to friends and other family members.
6. I have enjoyed playing the game of bridge on the Internet.
7. I tried to improve my bridge skills by reading my Bidding Series textbook.
8. I tried to improve by reading the summaries at the end of the chapters.
9. The Bidding Series textbook was appropriate to my needs.
10. Prizes offered at the tournament were acceptable.

The first set of responses comes from a selected group of 58 students after taking the bridge lessons for one Term, 16 hours of instruction. The second set comes from a selected group of 238 students who have taken the lessons for two Terms and the difference is in some areas, quite remarkable. There is a huge learning curve involved in the mechanics of the game and play of the cards that doesn't take hold very well in one Term of lessons. Partly due to the age of the kids, many who have not played cards before and the size of our classes which can run as high as 7 or 8 tables.

In our opinion, getting through this learning curve is unimpressive to High School math teachers, but in our Elementary Schools, we get great mileage out of the concentration, teamwork and social benefits of the game before the actual math becomes apparent.

We attempted a similar survey of the teachers and it was a waste of time for the best of all reasons. Every response was 100% enthusiastic on all counts.

SURVEY RESULTS

1. The game of Bridge is enjoyable and challenging.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students						
	21%		27%	12%	40%	
2-Term Students						
	10%		10%	32%	48%	
Positive response differential in 2nd Term				+ 28%		

2. The game of Bridge is something that can be enjoyed for life.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	31%		26%	10%	33%	
2-Term Students	14%		19%	26%	41%	
Positive response differential in 2 nd Term				+ 24%		

Note: The large jump in the number of 2-Term students who think that Bridge play is rewarding and a game for life indicates that too many of the 1-Term students may be lost by simply not getting over that initial learning curve and into the Tournament world.

3. The T-shirts were well designed for students in my age group.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	14%		10%	12%	64%	
2-Term Students	19%		14%	25%	42%	

Note: Positive opinions of the T-Shirts based, we believe, on the fact that the kids simply love getting things.

4. Prizes offered at the tournaments were acceptable.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	7%		15%	10%	68%	
2-Term Students	5%		8%	20%	67%	

Note: Better, we found out that they absolutely love winning things. Our prize tables are assembled from the Dollar store and we award first pick to the winners then down the line to approximately 25% of the field.

5. Opportunities should be provided for kids to play outside the classroom in a Community Centre or Bridge club.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	33%		19%	19%	29%	
2-Term Students	14%		18%	20%	48%	
Positive response differential in 2nd Term				+ 20%		

Note: This year in the 2nd Term, we provided as close as possible, the whole tournament experience. A number of special events combining different schools, scoring the events on ACBLscore and providing a one-page explanation of matchpoints and how it turns Bridge into a game of skill.

Almost every participant wanted to see their detailed score, percentage and overall placing no matter how poorly they did. Tournament play was a big hit. They will be paying \$5 per session to play in our Sectional from July 7-9 and eventually kids only sections will be financially viable at tournaments as well as in clubs.

6. The game of bridge is worth while to teach to friends and other family members.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	20%		16%	24%	40%	
2-Term Students	11%		11%	24%	54%	
Positive response differential in 2nd Term				+ 14%		

Note: This may be the most important measurement and we are encouraged that the 14% more favorable response from the 2-Term students appears in the “Most Enthusiastic” column. Some teachers tell us that kids playing bridge with adults is considered somewhat uncool at the upper end of our age ranges and hopelessly so in High School. We have had a small number of Grandparent-Grandchild and Parent-Child partnerships try Duplicate Bridge and every one of the Adults was a social (non-ACBL Member) player.

7. I have enjoyed playing the game of bridge on the internet.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	67%	5%	9%	5%	14%	
2-Term Students	56%	5%	8%	11%	20%	
Positive response differential in 2nd Term				+ 12%		

Note: Fairly strong enthusiasm from those that have, and a large number have not played yet but intend to try it. We plan to add a “Guided Tour” lesson on Internet play as most of our classes have a suitable Computer Lab available. This is a prime example of where we could have improved the form by first asking “Have you played on the Internet.” We have combined the forms with no response with the ones that circled the 1 and can only assume that they mean they have not tried it rather than tried it but didn’t like it.

8. I tried to improve my bridge skills by reading my Bidding Series textbook.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	59%		8%	16%	17%	
2-Term Students	38%		19%	19%	23%	
Positive response differential in 2nd Term				+ 9%		

9. I tried to improve by reading the summaries at the end of the chapters.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	50%		21%	8%	21%	
2-Term Students	43%		21%	15%	20%	
Positive response differential in 2nd Term				+ 6%		

10. The Bidding series textbook was appropriate to my needs.						
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree
1-Term Students	54%		18%	10%	18%	
2-Term Students	33%		23%	20%	24%	
Positive response differential in 2 nd Term				+ 16%		

Note: The responses to these three questions support the notion that the Bidding Series text is not reaching this age group, especially those who take Bridge for 1-Term.

The more positive response from 2-Term students to this last question may indicate a genuine desire to play into the future and use this as a reference towards improving their game. It may also indicate the approval of the parents who are being newly exposed to the game itself or duplicate through their child's enthusiasm.

In our opinion, the *Teach Me To Play* book is excellent for this age group, but even it becomes too complicated towards the last third. Also, it is exercise/activity oriented and not really a textbook. Material directed specifically to this demographic for the most part does not exist. For example, the *Bridge Biddles* puzzles in the Grapevine are way beyond these kids.

Carole and I are in the process of writing a textbook based largely on these survey responses.

Other Comments

We received very few *Other Comments* responses but samples of those we did and our interpretation of them follow.

Comments From 1-Term Students

- *Make Bridge optional. Give E/W better cards. (2 responses)*

Our 2-Term students are introduced to Matchpoints and only then start to realize how we turn this into a game of skill that you can win even with poor cards.

As for making it optional, our classes are part of the regular Math program so that their choice is bridge or some very boring math homework. Maintaining enthusiasm is a key component in our approach. Competition as often as possible in a duplicate setting works wonders.

- *If you play more than 10 games it gets boring.*

Stamina issues. One reason we want to carefully set the pace and order of the curriculum to this age group.

Comments From 2-Term Students

- *Fun to pick your partner. (2 responses)*

We asked our classes by a show of hands what they would prefer for their end of course tournament, an Individual or Pairs. The preference to play as pairs was unanimous.

Our theory is that the partnership and teamwork aspects of the game are the major selling points to our teachers. We follow the *Easybridge!* approach in that we get them started, interrupt many times with coaching tips but basically, they teach each other.

Early in the course, the teacher gets full control of setting the groups for the lessons. Typically, a group of four hot-shot players gets to play amongst themselves for one week and are dispersed by their teacher to act as assistant coaches for the next two weeks. The dynamics involving social skills and teamwork are most impressive and the teacher becomes fully involved.

- *You should have Bridge in High Schools*

It can't be done directly in our opinion, at least not as an official part of the Math curriculum. The Math skills during the learning curve of counting up to 13 are singularly unimpressive. As for the social and teamwork skills, too many teenagers do not even become human again until they turn 21.

Our age group is much more involved in family activities and we are starting to see them get their parents and grandparents interested in the game. In the case of a parent who does play a bit of bridge, they are almost all social players who are now becoming interested in duplicate. A number of non bridge playing parents are starting to show interest as well and they are the ones reading the Club Series book we send home with the kids.

That seems like a good investment and we intend to keep an eye on the fact that any materials we come up with for the kids have the rest of the family as an audience too.

We should have a reasonable number of bridge players entering High School in 1-2 years that will then drive demand at that level. Step by step, we may eventually have them learning card combinations, probabilities and percentages that will be impressive enough mathematically to get a foothold in the High School classroom.

A robust Elementary School program is what we hope to use to drive that demand.

- *Teach for a longer time.*

Compare this comment with the stamina issues from our 1-Term class. There are no negative comments on this issue at all and it indicates the value of following through with the students past the initial learning curve.

- *Play against other classes more.*
- *More Tournaments.*
- *More Prizes.*
- *More opportunities to play.*
- *More games.*
- *End of course tournament off site.*

The competitive bug has bitten. The kids will have off days when they simply don't focus and progress is impossible. The lure of an upcoming tournament and the need to become tournament sharp limits these days to an amazing degree.

The classroom is a captive setting in which we have qualms about pushing ACBL memberships but as we are able to attract them to outside tournaments, we expect to do exactly that.

- *Internet Bridge is gambling!*

Perhaps the most intriguing comment of the lot.

We noted a local newspaper article about a group in British Columbia that held a weekend seminar on *Hold-Em Poker*, free for children and using a subset of the mathematical and social advantages from ACBL literature. The reaction was outrage!

While Bridge may benefit from the popularity of poker, we consider it competition too and are on the lookout for the means to promote Bridge as the character game it is with an attractive code of conduct from active ethics to fair play. Compare that to poker where deceit and outright fraud are rewarded and necessary.

2007 Survey Responses

Atlanta Junior Bridge recently sent a survey to their players, parents and teachers requesting them to express what bridge has meant to them. Below are the results of the survey and some additional responses that were received from parents and students. Enjoy!

Questions to Students:

1) Why do you like Bridge?

- I like it because it is fun...Arjun
- It's challenging, fun, and you make many friends...Zandy
- I like bridge because I have a lot of fun....Sarah
- It's fun and makes me want to think really hard....Maya
- I like bridge because it's a fun way to exercise your mind's muscles and you also get to hang out with your friends...
- My friends play...Robbie

2) What part of Bridge do you like best?

- I like everything....Arjun
- You get to hang out with friends and solve challenging puzzles together...Zandy
- I like to play the cards the most...Sarah
- I like classes, and I like to play against people better than me so that I can learn while playing. I also like talking about bridge to my grandparents in India...Maya
- It is fun to win...like war card games... Robbie
- I like defending because you get to try and set people's contract

3) Do you think bridge has made a change in your life?

- Yes, I am being better in school...Arjun
- Yes....Zandy
- Yes, because I learn to count and make a plan....Sarah
- Yes, I think that bridge has helped to improve my social skills and I have made some friends...Maya
- Bridge has given me something fun to do during the week and on weekends. It has also helped my math grade

4) Complete this sentence. I would rather play bridge than...

- Basketball...Arjun
- Anything but tennis and soccer...Zandy
- Football...Sarah
- Watch TV, play video games, sit around doing nothing...Maya
- Do Homework....Robbie
- Smoke, do drugs

Questions to Parents:

- 1) **Why do you want your child to learn bridge?**
 - So he will be able to play for many, many years; camaraderie with grandparents, parents and friends
 - Why would anyone not want them to learn?! I am excited because it is not MY wanting Zandy to play it is HIS wanting to play. Playing bridge involves so much good; using intelligence and always striving to learn more, working together as a pair or on a team, controlling the competitive spirit and being courteous even if the cards do not go your way, social etiquette, and so much more. All that and it is “playing a game” to the children – it is FUN!....Annie

- 2) **Do you think bridge has helped your child with life leaning skills such as leadership, sportsmanship, cooperation, communication, etc? Or academically?**
 - Better at problem solving
 - His self-confidence has grown immensely. He is happy and proud to be known as a smart student. He knows that being smart can help you win the game of bridge and the game of life....Annie

- 3) **What is different about bridge than other activities your child engages in?**
 - Intellectual vs physical pursuit
 - Bridge uses your mind a lot more than other activities. Zandy is very competitive and enjoys many active sports, and he loves being competitive with his intelligence and brain power...Annie

- 4) **What do you expect AJB Teachers to teach your child?**
 - Good sportsmanship; rules of the game
 - I hope the teachers continue to share their love of this wonderful, challenging game. It is obviously contagious...Annie

Questions to Teachers:

- 1) **Why did you decide to teach bridge to children?**
 - I learned at a young age and have been playing bridge off and on for 50 years. There is no other game like it. Some of my children learned when they were 9 and 10 as well. I wanted to give boys and girls an opportunity to the game of bridge and arranged with the TAG teacher to have it become part of the school program...Peggy
 - In reflecting on the benefits that Bridge has shown for me as an adult, I realized the impact that the game can have on younger minds. Bridge is an entertaining way to enhance important life skills such as critical thinking and teamwork. Providing children with this edge motivates me and I am provided with a sense of giving back as a result....Barbara
 - I love the game. We need more players. Learning bridge enhances many skills and they'll love it....Bill

Why did you decide to teach bridge to children? (continued)

- My decision to teach bridge to children was based on the fact that I wanted Afro American Children in South Atlanta to become apart of the Atlanta Junior Bridge Program. I believe it to be a beneficial activity, in that, it helps children to think and problem-solve. Therefore, I wanted Afro American Children to avail themselves with the opportunities that are provided by this program...Evelyn
- I started to teach my grandson, Hunter, the game of bridge. After several lessons he said it would be more fun to play bridge if there were kid to play with. With that, I went to his school and asked his teachers if I could work with two other kids. I did and both the kids and the school administration liked what I was doing. ...Carolyn
- Bridge has been a major part of my life since I learned at 11. It has helped me through some tough times, made me some wonderful friends and has given me social and personal opportunities that I might never have found. I wanted to make those same experiences available to other children...Patty
- I was excited to teach the children what will become a life-long hobby...Maggie
- I always wanted to be a teacher and became a teacher. I don't know what it is that makes one want to be a teacher, but it was a natural thing to combine teaching with the game of bridge, something else I love. Perhaps I enjoy watching a child all of a sudden "get something" - I guess that aha moment has something to do with it....Karen

2) What have you experienced teaching children that you didn't expect?

- Catching bits of conversation, youngsters speaking the same 'bridge talk' as adults, and so soon.....Maggie
- While I expected to see progress in the children's bridge playing skills I was amazed to see the growth in other areas as well. I was also surprised by the children's motivation and interest...Barbara
- Just how much they love to compete... Bill
- The one that I really didn't expect was for them to grasp the bridge concepts and actually play bridge in one week. All of the students in the camp were able to play bridge after only one week. The ability levels varied but all of them could play...Evelyn
- I was amazed at the variety of reasons that people wanted their children to learn...for me it was bridge for the sake of bridge...but for a variety of children and parents it was the social and academic aspects that meant the most to them...Patty
- My experience teaching many kids over the past couple years is that they really want a game that emphasizes playing with other kids as opposed to playing more computer games. Bridge is a reflection of life and the kids learn many skills they will use now and throughout their life. In addition to learning math, they also learn such skills as trust, communication, dependency, respect for others, problem solving and analysis of data...Carolyn

What have you experienced teaching children that you didn't expect?
(continued)

- I love the unique way kids look at bridge and their own language that they develop for it. A finesse is a "leap of faith" - the kind of violent way they describe an ace taking an opponents king. A real challenge is eliminating the "take a chance" attitude in kids and replacing with rational reason. e.g. bidding a reasonable game rather than taking a chance and bidding game...Karen

3) What is your role as a bridge teacher?

- I wanted to create an environment so that the children would have a thirst for the game of bridge. A game that they would continue with over their lifetime, just as I have experienced....Peggy
- As a bridge teacher I act as a role model and facilitator of learning. The lessons and activities form the foundation for students to expand their knowledge and make necessary connections to help with developing skills..Barbara
- Teacher/friend...Bill
- I served as a motivator and a dispenser of information. However, I spent a great deal of time as a facilitator...Evelyn
- My role as a bridge teacher is to impart to my students my love of the game, the passion to do their best and the realization that the friends they make along the way are more important than if they win or lose...Patty
- My role as a teacher is to find what motivates kids to learn and to help their self confidence....Carolyn
- I guess my role is mainly helping the kids love bridge, sometimes if it means letting them bid the way they want and play the way they want. Then gradually and gently guide them towards more skilled playing. Kids don't like set up hands or lesson hands, so I try to let them play some "warm up hands" and then we do a few lesson hands. Then if there is time, they can play another random hand. But I have to admit, that sometimes random hands have been set up....Karen
- Sharpening my own skills of patience, and understanding

BRIDGE AND TEST SCORES

A Research Report Presented to the

CARLINVILLE LIONS CLUB

January 23, 2007

PARTICIPANTS: Lion Chris Shaw, Lion George Banziger, Lion Bill Werner, Bobbie Klaus, Terry Levan, and Peter Genta.

BACKGROUND: While I was in North Dakota on a Visiting Professor appointment during the Fall of 2001, Lion Bill Werner taught Bobbie Klaus the basics of how to play bridge. Bobbie set up short bridge lessons as part of her 5th grade class math instruction. The students liked the game so well, that they started asking if they could stay in from recess to keep playing.

The “No Child Left Behind” education act was passed by Congress in 2001. It required extensive reporting on test scores. So, Terry Levan was appointed “the data guy” for the Carlinville Community School District. He immediately recognized that the scope of the reporting required the creation of a database and the use of a computer.

Three years later, in 2004, I learned that Terry Levan had written a series of computer programs which allowed for the tracking of student test scores over their entire time in the Carlinville school system. He wrote these programs in his spare time without any financial support from the school district. I asked Terry if we could track the changes in student test scores of the kids who learned to play bridge in Bobbie Klaus’s 2001 5th grade class and compare them to the changes of the non-bridge playing kids. He said we could track each student by using student number and could easily compute their changes in test scores in an Excel spread sheet. And, he created the data base to do that.

It turns out that the standardized testing schedule in the Carlinville schools has the kids taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skill, the ITBS, in September of 5th grade, April of 6th grade and April of 7th grade. Thus, the entire 5th grade in 2001-02 had been tested before one class of the six classes that year started to learn how to play bridge. They were all tested 20 months later as 6th graders and again 32 months later as 7th graders.

The 5th grade class of 2002-03 did not have the opportunity to learn to play bridge because a new “Everyday Math” math program was started. Bobbie Klaus resumed using bridge as part of her math instruction with the 2003-04 5th grade class. This change allowed the tracking of the students of the same teacher over a three year period with the middle year students not learning how to play bridge. This arrangement removed the teacher as a variable in the results to be analyzed.

The happening of all these events in Carlinville created a “researcher’s serendipity.” There was pre-testing of all the students in the 5th grade and post-testing at the 20th and 30th month intervals. There was a large control group that did not learn how to play bridge. There was an experimental group who did learn how to play bridge. There was a standardized testing program in which the same scoring scale was used for all three tests.

In fact, the ITBS has five separate subject areas scored separately. This test structure and scoring scale allowed a comparison of the performance of five non-bridge groups of students to one test group of bridge playing students on all five subjects. And, there was a database that could track the scores over the three years to see how much gain the two groups would make.

Putting all of this together, Lion George Banziger, Terry Levan and I put together a grant application and sent it to the Board of Trustees of the Educational Foundation of the American Contract Bridge League. As a member of the Board of Trustees, I was able to present the application, but did not vote on it to avoid a conflict of interest. The grant was approved at the Fall 2004 North American Bridge Championships and the research began in 2005. It continued in 2006 and is scheduled to finish sometime in 2007. A follow-on grant application may be submitted sometime this year.

METHOD: The first step in building the data base was to link the student to the teacher by using student number. Six files were constructed using the teacher’s name with the student numbers for each teacher. Students who moved or repeated 5th grade had to be deleted from the data base. Thus, the six classes which started with 18 to 20 students in the 5th grade ended up with 15 to 20 students who took all three tests over 32 months.

The starting average test scores in the five subjects of the ITBS of each of the six sections and the average score of all 101 students in the six sections of the 2001 5th grade class are shown in Table 1 below. The fact that the principal had assigned the students to the six sections to provide about equal ability in each section is reflected in the small spread of average scores. These results provided a solid starting point from which to measure the progress of all of the students and then compare the progress of the bridge playing students to the progress of the students who did not learn to play bridge.

When the students entered 6th grade, they were given individual class schedules. This mixing of the experimental and the control groups actually strengthened the validity of the study. Table 2 contains the average scores of the ITBS administered in April 2003 taken by these 6th graders using their original 5th section assignments. Table 3 shows the 20-month average test score gains by the original 5th grade sections.

The same procedures applied to the group when they were 7th graders. They also had individual class schedules and took the ITBS exams in April 2004. Table 4 contains the 32-month average ITBS scores. Table 6 contains the 32-month gains by original 5th grade sections.

RESULTS: Table 1 shows the starting point average test scores for each of the six sections of the 2001-02 5th grade class. Table 2 shows the average test scores 20 months later. Table 3 is produced by subtracting Table 1 scores from Table 2 scores and it shows the average 20 month gain in each subject area. Table 4 contains the average test scores 32 months later. Table 5 is produced by subtracting Table 1 scores from Table 4 scores and it shows the average 32 month gain in each subject area.

TABLE 1
Section Average Standard Test Scores
September 2001 ITBS (Before Bridge)

SECTION(#)	READING	LANGUAGE MATH	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
BRIDGE (15)	217.07	206.47	211.07	214.47
NB-1 (18)	210.94	211.06	207.06	214.22
NB-2 (17)	215.94	211.53	209.59	223.12
NB-3 (15)	211.87	207.40	208.93	219.13
NB-4 (16)	220.75	221.75	216.63	230.50
NB-5 (20)	214.85	213.00	216.30	219.65
NB AVE (86)	214.83	212.95	211.81	222.70
CLASS AVE. (101)	215	212	212	221

TABLE 2
Section Average Standard Test Scores
April 2003 ITBS (20 Month Later)

SECTION (#)	READING	LANGUAGE MATH	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
BRIDGE(15)	238.53	231.53	236.27	264.13
NB-1 (18)	230.67	236.44	227.94	245.11
NB-2 (17)	241.35	242.06	243.29	250.00
NB-3 (15)	234.26	224.33	229.00	246.80
NB-4 (16)	239.94	241.25	239.25	265.06
NB-5 (20)	239.30	240.40	234.65	248.00
NB AVE (86)	237.14	237.26	234.83	250.76
CLASS AVE. (101)	237	236	235	253

TABLE 3
20 Month Average Gain by Section

SECTION(#)	READING	LANGUAGE	MATH	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
BRIDGE (15)	21.46	25.06	25.20	40.26	42.40
NB-1 (18)	19.73	25.38	20.88	34.83	30.89
NB-2 (17)	25.41	30.53	33.70	34.41	26.88
NB-3 (15)	22.39	16.93	20.07	27.20	27.67
NB-4 (16)	19.19	19.50	22.62	37.06	34.56
NB-5 (20)	24.45	27.40	18.35	28.20	28.35
NB AVE (86)	22.32	24.30	23.00	32.29	29.63
AVE (101)	22	24	23	34	32

TABLE 4
Section Average Standard Test Scores
April 2004 (32 months later)

SECTION(#)	READING	LANGUAGE	MATH	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
BRIDGE(15)	257.93	257.53	262.60	266.73	266.87
5 NB AVE (86)	248.70	258.61	253.30	260.21	245.89
NB-1 (18)	243.50	257.11	243.50	257.67	254.11
NB-2 (17)	252.11	263.35	261.65	262.47	261.53
NB-3 (15)	245.20	248.60	249.40	254.93	249.93
NB-4 (16)	252.81	262.56	259.06	269.69	269.63
NB-5 (20)	249.80	260.30	253.35	256.95	254.80
Average (101)	250	258	255	261	259

TABLE 5
32 Month Average Gain by Section

SECTION(#)	READING	LANGUAGE	MATH	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
BRIDGE(15)	40.86	51.06	51.53	52.26	45.14
5 NB AVE (86)	33.87	45.04	41.48	37.52	36.77
DIFFERENCE	6.99	6.02	10.05	14.74	8.37
NB-1 (18)	32.56	46.05	36.44	43.39	39.89
NB-2(17)	36.17	51.82	52.06	38.47	38.14
NB-3(15)	33.33	41.20	40.47	35.60	30.80
NB-4(16)	32.06	40.81	42.43	38.94	39.13
NB-5(20)	34.95	47.30	37.05	31.65	35.15
Average(101)	35	46	43	40	38

DISCUSSION: The 20-month average test score gains show that the bridge playing students did slightly better than their classmates in Math; much better in Science, and very much better in Social Studies, which was the only subject area to be a statistically significant difference. See Table 6.

The 32-month average test score gains show that the bridge playing students were higher in all five subject areas. Language was the only one that was not statistically significant.

Since bridge is a quantitative game, better scores in Math and Science were expected. The higher gains in Reading, Language, and Social Science may be caused by the faster development of inferential reasoning skills. Further research is needed in this area.

Table 6
Summary of Statistical Analysis of Comparison of Fifth Grade Bridge-Playing and Non-Bridge-Playing Groups on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

	Bridge-Playing Class (1) Average Scores	Non-Bridge-Playing Class (5) Average Scores	One-tailed t-test of Significance³	Probability of Difference (Level of Significance)
Math				
20-month	25.2	23.0	0.455	0.327
32-month	51.5	41.5	-1.805	0.043*
Science				
20-month	40.3	30.3	1.29	0.107
32-month	52.3	37.5	-1.999	0.030*
Reading				
20-month	21.5	27.2	0.195	0.424
32-month	40.9	33.9	-2.177	0.020*
Language				
20-month	25.1	26.2	0.227	0.411
32-month	51.1	45.1	0.947	0.178
Social Studies				
20-month	42.4	29.6	2.063	0.026*
32-month	45.1	36.8	-1.012	0.163

³ A one-tailed t-test of significance was used to test the null hypothesis that the bridge-playing group did not score significantly higher on the Iowa tests than the non-bridge-playing group.

**AN ANALYSIS OF STANDARDIZED TEST SCORE GAINS
FOR THREE 5TH GRADE CLASSES OF THE SAME TEACHER**

Christopher C. Shaw, Jr. Ph.D.

This report contains the class average gains on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for three consecutive 5th grade classes taught by the same teacher at the Carlinville, Illinois Intermediate School for the years 2001-2003. The students were tested in September of 5th grade, May of 6th grade, and May of 7th grade. The gains in test scores are shown for both the 20-month interval and the 32-month interval between tests. The 2002 5th grade class did not receive bridge lessons as part of their math instruction in the classroom. The 2001 and the 2003 classes learned how to play bridge. The average ability of all three classes was approximately the same when they started 5th grade. Thus, the test score gains appear to reflect the impact that learning bridge has on the student's ability to learn in both 6th and 7th grades. Learning bridge helped student's develop their inferential reasoning skills. These skills were used in all five subject areas of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

20-MONTH AVERAGE TEST SCORE GAINS

YEAR	READING	MATH	SOCIAL STUDIES	LAN- GUAGE	SCIENCE	
2001-02	21.47	25.20	42.40	25.06	40.27	Bridge
2002-03	17.43	24.26	14.31	30.52	29.79	No Br.
2003-04	28.50	34.95	24.17	32.11	24.67	Bridge

32-MONTH AVERAGE TEST SCORE GAINS

2001-02	40.87	51.53	45.13	51.07	52.27	Bridge
2002-03	23.37	36.42	25.15	30.05	36.05	No Br.
2003-04	39.72	45.67	32.50	37.17	45.11	Bridge

The 2001 bridge students had higher test score gains than the 2002 students at the end of 20 months and 32 months in 4 of the 5 subjects. The average Language gain of the 2001 class was lower than the 2002 class and the 2003 class gain was slightly better than 2002.

The 2003 bridge students out gained the 2002 class with the exception of Science at the end of 20 months. Note that they exceeded the gain of the 2002 students by the end of 30 months.

The game of bridge helps to develop inferential skills in both the bidding and the playing of a contract. It is possible that these inferential reasoning skills developed by learning to play bridge are needed more in the 7th grade curriculum to perform well on standardized tests. Students who learn how to play bridge start developing inferential reasoning skills. These skills are very difficult to teach to elementary students. They appear to be used in all five subject areas in middle school.



Introducing Bridge and the School Bridge League

How Bridge Can Benefit Students

School Bridge League Educational Curriculum

Meeting State Standards

The lessons found on the website and included in the “Bridge in a Box” are correlated to academic curriculum standards for all states and provinces. For the most part, the lessons address standards in Math, Language arts and Social Studies.

To access the standards for a specific state:

1. Visit our curriculum website at www.LearningToGive.org.
2. Select “Lesson Search” from the top menu on the Homepage.
3. Select “Keyword Search”
4. On the Keyword Search tab, select “All” for all grade spans, then select the letter span “A-B”
5. Scroll to “Bridge LEAGUE” in the alphabetical list and select a lesson.
6. Once you have called up the lesson, scroll to the bottom and look for “State Standards”. Choose a state and click on “View Standards.” All of the state academic standards that apply to that particular lesson and grade span will appear.

Meeting NCLB Requirements

The Bridge lesson have also been designed to meet the character education traits as outlined in the government mandated public school requirements of No Child Left Behind – Title V. These Character Education Traits are listed as: Caring, Civic Virtue and Citizenship, Justice and Fairness, Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness and Giving.

Innovative Teaching Strategies

School Bridge League curriculum is designed to use highly successful instructional strategies, including:

- 1) Co-operative Learning
- 2) Addressing Multiple Intelligences such as Visual/Spatial Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence, and Logical/Mathematical Intelligence
- 3) Service Learning

The Game of Bridge

Bridge is a game full of strategy and tactics. It's part science, part math, part logic, part reason. Bridge embodies cooperation, logic, problemsolving and has even been linked to higher test scores among children (see accompanying study for supporting documentation). Bridge is also a partnership game. Trust, communication and patience are the essential attributes of winning at bridge.

Mental and Social Skills

- Partnership
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Logic
- Inferential Reasoning
- Problem Solving
- Social Interaction

Mathematical Applications

- Numbers and Operations
- Data Analysis
- Probability
- Algebra
- Problem Solving
- Reasoning and Proof

MATHEMATICAL APPLICATIONS OF BRIDGE

Duplicate Bridge is a game of mathematics. The game is a vehicle for introducing concepts such as probability, percentages, data analysis, reasoning and proof, assessing value and applying this assessment to problem solving, and practicing inferential reasoning skills.

Numbers and Operations: Students incorporate multiple evaluation methods to assess the value of their hand as well as their partner's and how to weigh these values.

Data Analysis and Probability: Students confront situations in each hand (game) which require them to assess the probability of certain outcomes and make decisions accordingly.

Algebra: Players reason from the communication skills learned in the bidding (auction), the value of their hand (a), plus the value of their partner's hand (b), must equal a specific total (c). Therefore, decisions are then made to achieve their goals.

Problem Solving: Each hand (game) amounts to a set of problems that must be evaluated and re-evaluated in the span of a few minutes

Reasoning and Proof: Based upon communications skills learned during the teaching process, students reason that they can achieve a stated goal (contract), which they set out to prove. Flaws in the proof result in scoring adjustments

Communications: Students are taught the 'language' of bridge which they use to communicate the value of their cards, formulate a goal (contract) and set out to prove.



School Bridge LEAGUE Tournaments

The School Bridge LEAGUE, created through the generosity of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, has developed curriculum to further the effort of getting bridge into schools and attracting students to the game. The curriculum, K-12 lessons coded to every state's standards, is designed for use by teachers to incorporate bridge into existing academic studies, programs and activities.

One of the benefits of School Bridge LEAGUE (www.schoolbridgeleague.org) is its six annual tournaments open to any students taking bridge lessons in a school environment.. The tournaments held during the school year are: Fall Kick-off Tournament, Halloween Tournament, Holiday Tournament, King Day Tournament, Winter Tournament and Earth Day Tournament. Teachers with students interested in participating should register with School Bridge LEAGUE at www.schoolbridgeleague.org. For additional information contact paula@schoolbridgeleague.org. For specifics on the tournaments, contact Alvin Daigle, School Bridge LEAGUE Tournament Director, at tournamentdirector@schoolbridgeleague.org.

For each game, teachers will be given the hand records for six boards. Teachers are responsible for duplicating the hands for the students, creating a roster and recording the scores. The event is "flighted" so that the students can compete against players with comparable experience. Two weeks are allowed for the teachers to arrange for their students to play the hands.

The scores and rosters are reported to the Tournament Director who matchpoints the scores across the field and determines the winners. School Bridge LEAGUE tournaments are now a sanctioned ACBL event, and masterpoints will be awarded at the end of the year to the overall winners of the tournament series. The top winners receive trophies and recognition on the School Bridge LEAGUE web site and e-newsletter. Registered participants receive a lanyard and tournament pin. Additionally, top pairs are eligible for School Bridge LEAGUE to sponsor them in the annual Youth North American Bridge Championships.

At the end of each school year, every student's two best games are tallied and "tournament winners" are declared. The School Bridge LEAGUE "tournament winners," who have also participated in a LEAGUE "Wildcard" event, are eligible for an invitation to The LEAGUE National Award and Recognition Luncheon held annually in June in New York City.

School Bridge LEAGUE tournaments are an easy way to reward your students by giving them the excitement of a competition and making them aware of the other children learning bridge along with them. [Get your students in the game!](#)