

ACBL HANDBOOK

for

BRIDGE TEACHERS

American Contract Bridge League 2004



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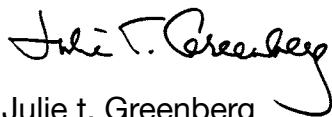
Note to ACBL Bridge Teachers

In this booklet you will find information of interest to you as you recruit students, teach classes, introduce your students to duplicate and ACBL membership and teach more classes.

The ACBL wants to thank the many teachers who have made this publication possible. Over the years we have collected many more than 100 tips from successful bridge teachers. We hope you will enjoy reading them and will use this valuable information to enhance your own classes. Some tips have come from many teachers and we have printed only one variation.

Please let us hear from you if you have a good tip to include in the next publication.

In the Appendix, you will find information that you should find useful in your pursuits. Most of this information can be found at ACBL's web site. Check the site for updates.



Julie t. Greenberg
Director of Education

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Tips on Getting Started as a Bridge Teacher

You have taken the Teacher Accreditation Program, you have practiced the lesson plans with a group of friends, and you are ready to teach your first class. How to begin? Here are a few thoughts to get you started. We also suggest checking out the “Identifying Your Goals” information sheet which can be found in the Appendix.

Make a plan.

Just like in bridge, some plan is better than no plan. Even a simple plan pays big returns. All you need is a one- or two-page written plan covering a full year. Write it down so that you are forced to gather your thoughts and make decisions. A written plan states where you want to go and how you expect to get there. It is also a constant benchmark for checking your progress. Here’s what to include in your plan:

A situation review: Where are you now?

Objectives: What do you want to accomplish by the end of the year?
 Number of courses?
 Number of students?
 Lesson site?

Strategy: Describe the general approach you will take to reach your objectives.

Budget: Base your budget on the actions you must take to reach your objectives.

Take advantage of ACBL’s Cooperative Advertising Program.

You need students. Take advantage of ACBL’s Cooperative Advertising Program to help pay for advertisements to recruit students. There are ad templates that you may use to create your ads. Go to www.acbl.org (Resources for Marketing and Advertising.) Remember you may apply more than once!

Find a place to teach.

Consider all of the places you can teach. From country clubs to community centers to adult education programs, there are numerous teaching opportunities in every community. Use your imagination and see what you can find.

Unit Education Liaisons.

Contact your Unit Education Liaison. All units have been asked to appoint a liaison to help establish ACBL education programs locally. In many units, the liaison will offer a book program for teachers (the unit buys the books and you get a lower price when buying from the unit), organize meetings and assist in finding places where you can teach.

Form a partnership with a local club.

If your classes are not affiliated with a club with sanctioned games, consider working with a local club manager. Many clubs like to have classes at their sites because it makes it easy to start newcomer games and to get students to play. If your students can practice what they learn, they will be more interested in taking new courses.

Be aware of the basic rules of promotion:

Take advantage of things that are free.

Tap underused resources.

Follow through on all ideas.

Recognize and thank those who have assisted you along the way.

Tips to Help Get the Word Out about Your Classes

The world's greatest teacher is worthless if prospective students don't know about available classes. Consequently, promotion makes things happen and produces fast results. Remember to look for opportunities that are free.

Promote what is special about your lessons.

Identify what is special about your lessons and advertise it. "Play bridge at your first lesson" is a good lead. Can your students earn a free lesson by bringing in a new student? Are your lessons held at a special place?

Get a listing in the yellow pages.

Although these listings are expensive, they are very effective and have two irresistible advantages: (1) most homes have this book, and (2) people who look in the yellow pages are ready to commit. Try a listing under "Bridge." Remember that you can apply to the ACBL Cooperative Advertising Program to help pay for a listing in the yellow pages of the telephone directory.

Advertise at tournaments.

Make certain you have flyers with your lesson information to put out at all local tournaments. Print your flyer on bright colors so your ad does not get lost in the sea of papers!

Advertise on neighborhood bulletin boards.

Bulletin boards are everywhere — once you start looking for them. Post flyers and brochures regarding your bridge classes in public areas such as supermarkets, bookstores and libraries.

Display your flyers at the public library.

Most libraries display information of interest to their patrons. Large public library systems have marketing directors who are usually located at the main branch of the library. The marketing director will distribute your material (notice of lessons) to other branches of the library so you only have to make one stop.

Work with realtors in your area.

Offer your lesson flyer to the realtors in your area. Real estate professionals are always looking for area information to add to their relocation packets for new residents. Add a coupon for a free lesson.

Contact Welcome Wagon.

A lesson flyer with a coupon for a free lesson is an attractive item for Welcome Wagon greeting committees who contact all people moving into the area. This is a good way to get new business.

Visit the mall.

Remember that malls have Customer Service Departments. Tell them about your lessons (they may have a display opportunity for your flyer). Ask about setting up a sample lesson in the mall — they may have an empty store or activity area.

Generate free news publicity.

News stories about your lessons can produce new students at the fraction of the cost of advertising – and you also gain credibility and respect. There are three basic steps for creating new publicity: (1) find a story idea that is unique; (2) prepare and send a short news release to a reporter; (3) follow up with a call or e-mail message. Can you give a lesson at an unusual site or combine it with a charity activity? Use your imagination!

Write a local bridge column.

Start a bridge column. Some smaller papers can't always attract enough news on their own to fill their pages. The column – a mini-lesson – could include your contact information.

Be a public speaker.

Offer to give a talk on the history of bridge or give a quick lesson as part of the program for organizations such as Welcome Wagon or Junior League. Bring lots of promotional material and offer discounts. You can demonstrate MiniBridge as part of your talk for a very successful presentation.

Contact local radio and TV stations.

Local stations are always looking for interesting programming topics. Call them and offer yourself as a guest. Look for a newsworthy angle in what you do. Consider having a friend make the call to avoid looking like a publicity seeker.

Explore every opportunity for free TV exposure.

Call public and independent stations, contact local access channels. Try to get on their talk and educational shows. Some schools, hospitals and military bases also operate closed-circuit TV channels. Offer a free lesson and you may attract students for a brush-up course or new lessons.

Work with local bookstores.

Contact local bookstores and offer information on what bridge books they should stock. In return, see if you may post your lesson information in the area where the bridge books are located or offer a free lesson at the store.

Don't forget your credentials.

Promote the fact that you are an ACBL Accredited Teacher. Edna Berti reminds us that having credentials is important when you are trying to make contacts within organizations.

Let your students sing your praises.

If your classes are upbeat and you treat your students with respect (never put anyone down), Alice Souder says that your best advertising will be through word of mouth.

Tips to Help You Create and Do Your Own Advertising

You need to advertise your classes, and you can use your computer to cut costs when making brochures, flyers and postcards. As you create your own advertising, remember to use lower case letters (they appear friendly) and print on very bright colored paper to attract attention.

Make the most of your computer.

Computers are almost a must these days. In the area of promotion, the computer can produce very effective sales literature. It can produce flyers, business cards, brochures, announcements and invitations at the best possible rate. In addition, computers perform these functions professionally and afford you a connection to the Internet.

Create a flyer to help get the word out.

When you design your flyer, be sure to include the following information: Key words – challenge, fun, meet people, BRIDGE and your name, logo, address, telephone number, e-mail address, map to lesson site.

Create and send postcards.

To get the word out quickly, invest in 1,000 labels for local players and a postcard mailing. You can generate the postcard on your computer and print on card stock. You can order the labels inexpensively through your unit from ACBL. Invite these players to introduce a non-playing friend to the game through your lessons.

Create and use business cards.

Business cards can be a miniature sales brochure and make a special offer, such as a free play. Business cards are cheap to print (use your computer) and may say anything you want. Include one in any publicity you send out.

Promotional ideas.

Try these ideas to attract new students:

- ♥ Advertise your lessons as a “Visual and Hands-on Bridge Experience.”
- ♥ Advertise brush-up lessons by reminding longtime players that they might have new bridge concepts to learn – hairstyles have changed in 30 years, and so has the game. (Lynn Berg)

Newspaper ads do work.

Use small local and neighborhood papers (start with shoppers, tabloids and other newspapers that are distributed free in your area), and remember that newspaper inserts may be cheaper than larger display ads. Take advantage of the ACBL’s Cooperative Advertising Program for reimbursements for advertising lessons, newcomer games and membership. You receive 75% of the cost of the ad for each program. The ACBL makes it even easier by providing templates to download. Visit the ACBL web site/Resources for Marketing (Advertising) for more.

Reprint favorable news stories.

A favorable newspaper story is valuable because studies show that people generally believe what they read, especially when they see it in a newspaper. The story only helps you once — unless you reprint it. Then it works forever. Make certain a copy gets into your club newsletter or unit/district publication.

Create a brochure or flyer.

“Bridge in Your Neighborhood” templates are available on the ACBL web site under Resources for Marketing. This format can be downloaded and filled in with your information. You can also create flyers from the advertising templates in Resources for Advertising. Or create your own on your computer.

Places where you can distribute flyers:

- ♥ Libraries
- ♥ Visitor centers or Chambers of Commerce
- ♥ Real estate offices
- ♥ Welcome Wagon or similar new resident organizations
- ♥ Senior centers
- ♥ College student unions
- ♥ Community centers
- ♥ Customer Service departments at shopping malls
- ♥ Tournaments
- ♥ Apartment complexes
- ♥ Supermarkets

Tips to Help You Recruit Students

There are many ways to recruit students other than by placing advertising in key spots. Here are some ideas that may work for you.

Donate a free set of lessons for the church bazaar.

Many churches have bridge groups as well as bingo. Consider donating a free set of beginning or brush-up lessons for the next bazaar rather than cash. You will get publicity and new business.

Become a country club bridge-pro.

Judy Lowe suggests hooking your local country club into offering bridge lessons and newcomer games by promoting the idea that they have a Tennis Pro and a Golf Pro and that you're just what they need — a Bridge Pro.

Use school publications to reach parents.

ACBL has a funded school program. Teachers can earn \$350 for teaching 16 hours of bridge lessons at a school. The ACBL Education Department will send you a promotional packet to help you make a presentation to local schools. Try offering a free class to teachers who are in the school system to convince them of the value of the lessons. Ask, in return, for space for an ad about your adult lessons in the school newspaper. Parents do read school publications.

Explore unusual locations for exposure.

Think of non-traditional venues (e.g., common areas in malls, exercise clubs — stress mental fitness — and public libraries) for offering a free lesson and have your business cards and flyers on hand.

Start and start again.

Jerry Helms suggests starting a new course on one day and telling your students that you will teach the first lesson again several days later. Invite them to come again and bring a friend. It will be worth your while to repeat the first lesson because you will end up with more students for the class.

Summertime special.

Approach your local school district about teaching the beginning lesson of the ACBL Bidding course (*Club Series*) at each of the grade schools during summer session. It could be a promotion to try to convince the school to offer the full program in the fall. Barbara Parker suggests following the lesson with an early Saturday morning bridge game. The students will bring their moms and you may get a Saturday class from this.

Calling all math teachers.

Carol Mathews encourages teachers to invite math teachers to attend your classes to find out what *The Club Series* is all about. This could get you classes at the local grade schools in the area. (Remember to check out ACBL's funded school program and elementary lesson plans at www.acbl.org.)

Like mother/father, like daughter/son.

When teaching retirees, Cathryne Havrilla gives a free book to any student who brings a son or daughter to a class. This could easily lead to a class of young adults.

It's all in the name.

Mary Bell Moss advertises country club courses as "Refresher Bridge," even though it is for beginners. The players think they know bridge and this makes it easier for them to sign up.

More it's all in the name.

Don't name a class past the beginner level with a "stage" of learning. Nancy DeWeese reminds us that people don't know whether they are "intermediate" or "advanced" and you don't either. Name your classes by their purpose — "Applying the Basics," "Get Modern," "Play of the Hand," "Defense." Use your advertisement to promote the goal of the course and you will attract more students.

Bridge is healthy.

Betty Rapp provides local doctors with advertising regarding her courses. Bridge is an excellent activity for recently widowed people and chemotherapy patients. Doctors will send you referrals for classes and games.

Reward students for finding a future partner.

Cathy Lindholm offers a discount on the next course to students who bring in a new customer. She suggests they bring someone they would like to have for a partner.

Tips to Help You Retain Your Students

Once you have recruited some students, you want to keep them coming back for more. Here are some ideas to help you do just that.

Don't ignore the social side of class.

Snacks can add a social feeling to your class and name tags will help the students interact and get to know each other faster. Nancy Salassi has found that getting to know one another makes her students more comfortable.

Use the Internet.

Maintain class lists on your computer and use e-mail to inform your students about upcoming classes. It's quick and easy.

Build your own web site.

Consider having your own web site for your students — you can answer questions, pose problems and be a personal resource for your students. In addition, you can easily advertise upcoming classes. (Note: The ACBL will list the names, e-mail addresses, credentials and web sites of active bridge teachers who apply for a listing at the Find-a-Teacher site. Go to www.acbl.org, Resources for Teachers, Find a Student.)

Hold students' interest with e-mail.

Carolyn Weiser makes e-mail work for her between lessons by sending lesson previews and mini-quizzes. This keeps your students involved and ready when the next set of lessons is offered. She has her students e-mail her with questions ahead of class and this allows Carolyn to get more accomplished in class.

Use humor.

Make your sessions easygoing. Nancy DeWeese tells us that if your classes are cheerful and non-critical, they will come. If your classes are relaxed and fun, and you are funny, they will come back again and again. Call their outrageous bids “creative,” tell your students to “up their aggression” and give them excuses for bidding more (“well, I added in my two 10s and a point for my long suit,” or just as good — “your partner must have a sense of humor”).

Fill in and brush up.

Hans Jacobs uses former students to fill out classes. Most will enjoy taking the class a second time. Once you have them interested again, offer a discount on the next course.

Bridge gym.

Kitty Cooper promotes the idea that bridge is a “gym for the mind.” Bridge is a game where you never get to know everything and so it's a good way to exercise the brain.

Remember, it is not about you.

Art Herzberg reminds us that too many teachers talk over their students' heads trying to impress them with how smart they are. The result is always glazed eyes and a defeated attitude. Your students already think you are smart. That's why they enrolled in your class.

Guidelines for an excellent class.

Aaron Navarro uses the three i's and an e as a guideline for his classes. The i's are: interactive, interesting and informative. The e, of course, is entertaining.

Teachers need to be flexible.

Bruno Wolff Jr. encourages teachers to be flexible. He starts his classes by questioning the students to find out what each group wants and needs. Then he makes adjustments to his lesson plans to fit their goals and expectations. The best way to succeed is to give your students what they want and expect.

Tips to Help Build Your Students' Confidence

Your students will quickly realize that there is a lot to learn. They are often so overwhelmed and on information-overload that they lose heart. Help them build confidence with these tips.

Stress partnership communication.

Ruth Tabor stresses the idea of your partner being your best friend at the table and the importance of trusting and being nice to your partner.

Teacher has seen it all.

Most students are fearful of looking “stupid” at the bridge table. To put them at ease, Shirley Smith assures them that they can't possibly make a mistake that she hasn't already seen at least once since she has been playing the game.

We all make mistakes.

When students misplay hands, Betty Barr points out that if they knew all of the answers, she'd never have had the pleasure of meeting them.

Build students' confidence.

Help your students commit to higher level courses by allowing them to gain confidence with the basics. Betty Rapp suggests letting your *Bidding (Club Series)* students sit in for free with a new class until they are comfortable enough to go on.

Teach the three C's.

Throughout the course, John Wilson reminds his students to remember “The Three C's” — Counting, Communication, Concentration.

Fun is the name of the game.

Use a variety of techniques to liven up the class — singing and rapping the rules work well — especially for Mary Jane Von Moss.

Mantra magic.

Joan Macholl has adopted a Mantra that she stresses in all classes to help her students relax and have fun:

Your partner is a wonderful person. They are playing with you.

They are not deliberately going to make a mistake.

This is a game — It should be fun.

Remember: You may have a 15-second discussion about a hand,
If you are married, you may have 30 seconds. No more!

Use percentages to advantage.

Point out that Ted Williams didn't bat better than 40% in one baseball season he played in, but Virginia Melidosian tells her students that accurate bidding will arrive at the optimum contract better than 60% of the time.

More percentages.

Dean Kogut tells his students that bridge is a game of mistakes. For example, an average game is 50%, at 55% you have had a good game and at 60% you had a great game! That means your 60% game — a great game at bridge — was one where 40% of your bids and plays were errors.

Nothing is 100% all of the time.

Martha McGhee comforts her students when they make an error with this story: Bridge is not an exact science. There is a lot of black, a lot of white and a lot of gray. The gray is what makes the game fun; it allows our creativity to flourish; we look at a hand and think up ways to bid it. Some plans work and some don't. Nothing is 100% all of the time.

It is just a game.

Ruth Taber stresses partnership communication and relationships. She tells her students to trust and be nice to their partners. To keep everything in perspective, she uses this routine to make the class laugh and help everyone relax.

Ask the class: "If you don't make your contract — what happens?"

Teach the class to respond: "You don't get arrested, you don't go to jail and the opponents love you!"

Acknowledge students' accomplishments.

Make certain your students know it when you think they have done something well. Terry Terzian says if the students don't feel they are succeeding, you'll lose them.

Valuable tips for advancing students.

Dean Stow gives us these tips to encourage your advancing students:

- ♥ It is acceptable to be wrong. Once the pressure of trying to be perfect is gone, you find that it is easier to make the difficult decisions and you will enjoy the game more.
- ♥ Not all bidding situations are covered by your bidding system. Opt to make the bid your partner will understand even if it isn't the "perfect" bid.
- ♥ The best experts in the game are still learning, so don't feel bad when you don't know what to do.

Look how much you have learned.

Reassure your students that they are making progress by reminding them of what they have learned. Ellie Zepp feels that this helps to build their confidence.

Ask a question; give the answer.

Students need to feel good about themselves. If you ask a question, answer it immediately and explain the point. Joan Sigmier found that this way the students don't feel dumb or slow if they couldn't answer right away.

Teachers make bridge mistakes, too.

Le Anne Tefft encourages teachers to use personal stories about bridge mistakes they have made. These stories, especially if they are funny and relate to your own efforts to learn bridge, will boost your students' morale. Remind them you have made "every mistake in the book!"

Review your bridge vocabulary.

Arlene Lehman has her advancing students read *Bidding (The Club Series)* text for review because the introduction of vocabulary in this book is excellent.

Thought for the day.

Dee Gillis suggests using a thought for the day or a special idea at the top of a homework assignment that you pass out. Here are a few suggestions:

“Nobody can insult you without your permission.” — Eleanor Roosevelt

“Failure is the path of least persistence.” — James M. Barrie

“You’re on the road to success when you realize that failure is merely a detour.”
— C.W. Wendte

It’s like this ...

When introducing a new concept or idea, Ginny Schuett suggests hanging the new knowledge on to something the students are already familiar with. Compare bridge scoring with tennis scoring or bridge to bowling. In bowling the goal is to knock down 10 pins; sometimes you have to settle for less. In bridge, you can’t always bid a game; sometimes you have to settle for a partial.

Simplicity rules.

All of your students will benefit from having you explain terms as though you are talking to the lowest level player in the group. Ruth and Ben Taber remind us that many new players won’t speak up when they don’t understand.

Look at things in a different way.

If your students have developed some bad habits, it is difficult to get them to unlearn things. Explain that they need to look at things in a different way. Claudette Roush uses the technique Robin Williams used in the movie, *Dead Poets Society*. Get up on a desk or a chair and tell the class you are looking at things in a different way and invite them to join you. Everyone standing on a chair introduces an element of fun and will help you motivate your class.

Repetition is key.

Al Merion uses constant repetition and a three-point system (understand, learn, apply) displayed on a poster to instill confidence in his students. He encourages questions without fear of feeling dumb or foolish. Al explains the poster like this:

Step 1 — Understanding is the first requirement. Let me know if you didn’t understand anything and I will be happy to review it. Only after understanding will you be ready for

Step 2 — Learning. After you get Step 1 and Step 2, it doesn’t mean you are automatically ready for

Step 3 — Apply. Step #3 requires practice and not being able to apply a principle immediately doesn’t indicate an inability to learn the basics of the game of bridge.

Tips to Motivate Your Students

The atmosphere of your class is an important factor in learning. Get your students in the right mood with these ideas.

Dance fever.

Ann Bellamy gets Seniors warmed up before starting the bridge lesson by having everyone get up and dance for about five minutes. She says it's a great icebreaker.

Use games to teach.

When the students arrive early, David Weir seats them at a table to play Bid-N-Tell. The dealer makes his or her bid. The next player describes what the bid means and then makes a bid. The next person does the same until the bidding is complete. This exercise accomplishes three things:

- (1) The students develop the habit of analyzing their hands;
- (2) The bidder gets feedback;
- (3) The students get to play with different groups of students.

Practice with icebreakers.

Charlotte Davidson uses this exercise as an icebreaker to enhance the social side of her classes while making the students more comfortable with the material. The students enjoy working together. Take a general bridge term and ask each table to write another bridge reference for each letter in the "Main" word, like this ...

P laying the hand	B idding
L earning to plan	R ating points
A dding up points	I n game
Y our ACBL number	D ouble
	G aining goals
	E very hand a challenge

Communicate in the language of bridge.

At the start of the first class, Gloria Freer puts her hands together as if making a bridge. She tells her students that each person is trying to communicate with his partner to attempt to cross the bridge. In order to do this, she will teach them to speak "bridgenese" (rhymes with Japanese).

Entertain while teaching whenever possible.

When discussing how to bid a hand with students, Marjorie Thien asks for their ideas and, as they throw out suggestions, chants like an auctioneer. "I have a two club response to one no trump, now I have three hearts, over there is a bid of three no trump. Do I have other takers? Does anyone want to go higher? etc.

Bridge is a game for a lifetime.

Keep the enthusiasm of your students alive! Every student begins with it, but they often "get down" because there is so much to learn. Le Anne Tefft reminds them that bridge is a game for a lifetime and they will always be learning new things about the game just like "the big guys playing in tournaments."

Come early or stay late to Play “Bridge Bingo.”

Bridge players love to play bingo — especially “Bridge Bingo.” Charlotte Blaiss of Memphis, TN found it can be an incentive to get students to class on time. You can also play “Bridge Bingo” at the end of a club game to keep your players busy until the scores are posted. Giving the winner a prize only adds to the fun and excitement. Here’s how Bridge Bingo works.

Each player gets a hand of 13 cards (in a game it would be the last hand of the session). One person goes to the mike with a full deck of cards and calls them out one at a time. As they are called, the players turn down the cards they have in their hands. The first person to turn all 13 cards is the winner.

Tips to Get Your Students Playing

All teachers know that students who practice what they are learning will be more interested in taking more courses and improving their games. Here are some ideas to get your students playing bridge.

Practice at home with the ACBL “Play” courses.

Encourage your students to play at home using any of ACBL’s six “play” course booklets and E-Z Deal cards (*Club, Diamond, Heart, Advancing Student I, Advancing Student II* and *Modern NT Bidding*). A deck of E-Z Deal cards allows the students to set up each of the 36 deals presented in the booklet and the booklet gives an analysis of each deal, a way to compare the students’ results to actual duplicate scores and suggested ideas on bidding, play and defense. Buy these courses from Baron Barclay Bridge Supplies and see the Appendix for more information.

Organize your students’ first club game experience.

Amy Nellissen wants her students’ first game at her club to be a great experience. She announces at the very first beginner class the date when the class will come to play at the club, and she tells her students to mark the day on their calendars. Amy announces the upcoming play date each week. This works better for her than giving them a free play to use whenever. Once the students realize that their friends from the class will be there, they are more likely to come. There’s safety in numbers. All you have to do is make sure the game you invite them to is a friendly, low-key beginner game.

Special courses.

Offer your students a course on tournament play to emphasize the fun in playing the game at a new level. You can use the two “play” Courses for Advancing Students and combine the sessions with bits of information on tournaments and duplicate (see *The ACBL from A to Z* mini-encyclopedia online under Resources for Members and *The Exciting World of Bridge, An Introduction to Duplicate* online under Play). Some of the original *Duplicate – Spade Series* teacher manuals are still available from the ACBL Education Department. These are excellent lesson plans for this type of course.

Try stationary duplicate for first-time duplicate players. You can work with your local club manager to allow one table of students to play stationary duplicate at the club. Patti McCallum feels this is a great way to let them try duplicate without any stress.

Field trips.

Consider taking your advancing students to a tournament as a field trip. You can coordinate this activity with your unit’s Intermediate-Newcomer (IN) Coordinator. The unit can offer a 0–5 or Bridge Plus+ game for your students.

Encourage practice.

Motivate your students to play by reminding them as Floneta Gilmore does, “Practice may not make perfect but it sure does improve your game!”

Offer a Bridge Plus+ game for your students.

Cathy Lindholm calls her former students and invites them to bring their non-duplicate bridge-playing friends to a Bridge Plus+ game. This reminds the students to play and gets her extra customers. These short games will help them get started playing on a regular basis. Start with a mini-lesson to both reinforce what they have learned and arouse their interest in learning more. (Accredited teachers can get free sanctions for Bridge Plus+ games from the ACBL Club and Member Services Department.)

Wacky is fun.

Amy Nellissen reminds us that wacky hands are part of what makes bridge so much fun. She doesn't shelter her students from random deals but rather teaches them how to keep these deals in perspective. Amy feels that this attitude has succeeded in getting a lot of her students to try duplicate. Her advice is to get beginners playing some random deals from the very first lesson. Some lesson deals are fine but some should be random and however they bid them is okay. Resist the urge to teach too much. Just say, "We haven't come to that yet, so just try something and see how it works" and walk away from the table. The wacky deals are part of what makes bridge so much fun — so don't deny your students that pleasure.

Create a duplicate game class for your students.

Jerry Helms builds confidence in his students by letting them play a set of duplicate boards from a regular club session in class. Adding their scores to those from the regular game creates the effect of playing in a real duplicate game and encourages the students to play more.

Teach your classes at the local duplicate club.

If you don't run a club yourself, try to work in partnership with a local club manager. It's a good deal for both of you. The students will be eager to play in the games that are being held at the site they are familiar with and they will be interested in taking more courses and learning more from you once they start playing. They will want to improve.

Start with MiniBridge to increase dexterity.

Use MiniBridge for the first couple of weeks with your absolute beginners. This simplified version of bridge gives the students a chance to learn to take tricks and understand the format of the game before learning too many rules. (See the Appendix for more information.)

Practice in an Easybridge! game.

Easybridge! is an alternative way of getting new people started playing duplicate. But, for your *Club Series* graduates, playing in an Easybridge! game might be an excellent way to get more practice before going on to more lessons. (Visit www.easybridge.com.)

Play of the hand classes.

Kris Motoyoshi has a 0–50 game every other week that coincides with a regularly sanctioned game that starts at 6:30 p.m. She has a weekly "Play of the Hand" class using boards from the ACBL Bridge Series courses as well as the Advanced Play booklets that starts at 4 p.m. and goes to 5:30 p.m. During the 0–50 game, the students pick about four boards that they had difficulty with. Kris enters the hands on the computer (using the Dealmaster program, see Shop Online at www.acbl.org) and gives them suggested bidding and play hints. AND they play those boards the following week at the "Play of the Hand" class. Two things happen with this class. On the second and fourth weeks, the students stay for the 0–50 game, and on the first and third weeks some stay for the regular game.

Get your students excited about masterpoints.

Plant this idea from Jerry Helms, “When you earn any money, you just go out and spend it. When you earn masterpoints, you have them forever.”

Bid, play, learn.

Mel Hazell tells us that he has had great success with a “Play of the Hand” series. The students play 10 prepared deals in a 2 1/2- to 3 hour period each week for eight weeks. Each week the deals stress a different theme (e.g., should you finesse or not, keeping control of the hand, which suit should you develop first in notrump). There is no teaching as such. The students learn by bidding and playing, and after 10 deals, they get the idea. The students are encouraged to plan and play with both the dummy and the declarer hand exposed so all four players can see what develops.

Ease your students into duplicate.

A good way to get your new students started playing is to run a bridge clinic like Ruth DeMore does right after they have finished their first set of lessons. Start each week with a review, play the workshop deals from the appropriate *Club Series* lesson, and after each deal, discuss the hands — was the bidding correct, why that opening lead, review the plan, analyze the result. Play some random deals and increase the number as the weeks go on. You can do this with other teachers, combining your students and taking turns running the workshop.

You have to play to learn the game.

Remind students that they can’t really learn the game without getting into the thick of things and shuffling. Charles Stinnett encourages his students to find some friends and practice. If possible provide extra time after class for the students to stay and play a few deals.

Remember the Final Contract Card.

You can help your students practice on their own by introducing them to the Final Contract Card. This gimmick was created by Audrey Grant to help students cope with random deals. See the Appendix.

Tips for Teaching Basic Bridge

Reinforce the KISS system.

The KISS system (keep it simple) worked for you; worked for me; worked for millions of bridge players. “Don’t teach artificial bids to students,” says Sam Hankin.

Cut the stress.

Since there are so many rules for beginners to learn, Sue Lordi tells her class not to memorize anything. Each week she gives them a new “cheat sheet” with all of the rules for that week on it. Sue lets the students look at the cheat sheet while bidding, because it’s much easier for them to learn without the stress of having to remember what’s been covered.

Help your students contact each other.

A week or two into a beginner class, pass around a pad and ask for names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses to be included on a class list. Type it up and distribute it the next week. Everyone loves the “contact sheet,” and your students are more likely to call each other and get together to practice if you’ve talked about it in class and passed out the list.

Handling various levels of students.

Connie DeLisle teaches full time and her students range from newcomers to Life Masters. She advertises her beginners program as a 24 week course, 8 + 8 + 8 lessons — with the students paying for eight sessions at a time. Connie tells them there are three parts to learning bridge and the game can not be taught in less time. They usually sign up for the whole set. She runs a supervised play game every Friday morning so all of her students can practice, with the stronger players helping the beginners. By teaching, her students reinforce what they have learned. (She is always nearby to make sure the information given is correct.) Connie insists that her students play at least once a week after the first eight lessons, and she asks her students to exchange phone numbers so they can make partnerships.

Your body and the pips.

Teach the order in which the suits are ranked by using your body. Joann McDonald tells her students, “You have clubs for feet, diamonds on your fingers, then your heart and your head, which is pointed a bit like a spade!” The students will laugh and remember.

Start beginners with two sessions of classes.

Colleen Palmer teaches her beginning classes in two sessions. The first session consists of four lessons, an introduction to the game, and they are free. The second session consists of six lessons, starting with the bidding. She finds that the free lessons give the players a chance to see if they are really interested and it helps her recruit new students. When the four introductory lessons are over, the students have an idea of what they are trying to learn.

Tips for Teaching *Bidding (The Club Series)*

Over the years, ACBL Accredited Teachers have sent in lots of tips for teaching the ACBL Bridge Series courses that add fun and excitement to the classes. Here are some for teaching the first course, *Bidding*, many of which have been published in *The Bridge Teacher* newsletter. Give them a try!

Make the first lesson free.

Offer the first lesson of *Bidding (The Club Series)* for free. This lesson was designed primarily as a marketing tool. The free lesson will allow you the opportunity to get a large group of potential students to attend and most will sign up for the course.

Take your tricks and run.

Here are some fun ideas to try that will liven up your class:

- Virginia Melidosian hangs a banner at the start of Lesson 2 with large, colorful letters – **TAKYRTRXNRN** – and ask the students to decipher the message. They will learn to “Take Your Tricks and Run.”
- Kathleen Grover holds a raw egg in her hand and tells the students as she cracks it, “If you don’t cash your winners, you’ll end up with egg on your face!”

Throughout the course.

Add some zip to your delivery with these innovative ideas:

- Judy Lowe uses a variety of hats during the Bidding course. For “Opening Leads against NT,” you can wear a captain’s hat. For “Competitive Auctions,” use a pirate’s hat. At graduation, wear a mortar board, of course!
- Use the E-Z Deal cards for all of the courses. Anna Digerness feels they are an excellent time management tool for a bridge teacher.
- When using the E-Z Deal cards, Arlette Schutte spells out NEWS as the cards are dealt. She says it is easier for a student to think NEWS rather than North, South, East, West. Have each student sort and deal the 13 cards in each hand and then pass the piles to each of the other three players at the table.
- Use a poster with velcro dots like Virginia Melidosian, so you can add bridge maxims as they occur, then refer to them anytime they are pertinent.

Rank of the suits.

Kathleen Grover uses four attractive pots. She makes long-stemmed Club, Diamond, Heart and Spade symbols for each suit and puts them in the four pots of varying size, with Clubs the smallest, of course. The pots and symbols make colorful displays and help the students learn the ranks of the suits in a unique way.

Make the basics fun.

Alcide Dupuis helps students memorize when to count distribution points for shortness by singing a song in French “No fit, No shortness,” which in French is “Pas de fit, Pas de courtes.”

Set your priorities.

When assessing the hand for openings at the one-level, Alcide Dupuis has his students start with this question:

Can I open in a major? Followed by — If not, can I open in NT? And, lastly — Can I open in a minor? and which one?

The students earn a gold medal for finding a contract and/or game in a major (the first priority), a silver medal for a contract and/or game in NT (the second priority) or a bronze medal for a contract and/or game in a minor suit, the last priority!

Golden ideas.

Here are a couple of golden ideas to use to perk up your class:

- When introducing the idea of the Golden Fit and the Golden Games, Steve Presnell says, “Don’t forget the ‘Golden Silence’ ... PASS.”
- Mary Poplawski received an interesting definition of a Golden Fit from a student: “Why, that’s what you have when your partner blows a hand!”

The bidding ladder.

A bidding ladder can be made in many ways:

- Use 3x5 index cards and hook them together with small, colorful, plastic rings. Add levels to the ladder as you go. (Virginia Melidosian)
- Use remnants of window shades. The bids can be written on the shade with magic marker. (Aime Deitchman)

Strength of the hand.

Try these ideas when teaching your students about strength:

- Mabel Edmondson passes out M&M candies to her students when she teaches Minimum, Medium and Maximum. The students love the idea and it helps them remember the lesson.
- Use a visual of a spotlight. Add on the left the points that Opener will have for a minimum, medium and maximum hand. Add on the right the points that Responder needs to make a bid at each level. Add at the bottom the combined points and the level at which each deal should be played. The students can color these cards and Arlette Schutte has the students use them as bookmarks to remind them of this information during the course.

Making a PLAN.

Wear a blazer and a large, concealing scarf over your outfit like Virginia Melidosian when you come to class. Tell the class your objective is to make a lasting impression. Take off the coat and scarf to reveal a black T-shirt with the message — The 4-D’s. It’s easy to go from there into a discussion of the four steps in making a plan before declarer plays the hand.

Bid boxes in class.

Carol Phillips helps her students adapt to bid boxes while still in the classroom. Whenever she teaches a series at a duplicate club, she introduces the bid boxes during week six and uses them for the rest of the class. That way, when the students go into Bridge Plus+ games, they are already comfortable with them. Even if the students never play more than socially, it doesn't hurt them to be exposed to the bid boxes, and if they do try duplicate, they won't find them intimidating.

Amy Nellissen brings bid boxes to the last class or two. She suggests that if you don't teach in a location with bid boxes, you should borrow some from a club and use them at the last class. Introducing bid boxes "with a smile" is one less hurdle for your students to face when they get up their courage to come to a club game.

Takeout doubles.

Search in your newspaper for advertisements. Mabel Edmondson found that dress shops sometimes have "Three-for-One" sales. Use the ad to make a colorful poster to display when you begin discussing takeout doubles. The poster will help the students understand the concept of one bid that asks for three suits.

Opening notrump bids.

Kay Henry has put her own slant on one of the TAP exercises. Have each table set up a hand with the cards face-down in as "perfect" a distribution as possible. Call the 4-3-3-3 hand — "perfection." Then have one student move one card from a "3" column to another "3" column to create the 4-4-3-2 hand, noting that only one card has been moved. Ask the student to move the card back to re-form the original hand and proceed to have the student create the final pattern of 5-3-3-2 by again moving only one card. Point out that the two variations of the perfect hand must be considered balanced because they are only one card away from perfection. Remind the students that they can test any pattern when considering opening 1NT by seeing if they can return to 4-3-3-3 by moving only one card.

Use tents as a reminder.

Audrey Grant created her own form of the old Charles Goren bridge tablecloths to give her students visual reminders of the lessons. See "Tents, Not Tablecloths" in the Appendix.

Betty Thomas uses a colored cardboard sign with C A P T A I N printed on it to emphasize the role of responder as captain. Knotted at the corner of each end of the sign is yarn long enough to pull over the head. When partner opens the bidding with 1NT, the responder (captain) puts on the sign. Should he forget his "role," the other students remind him. (This is easier on the hair than a captain's hat.)

Overcalls.

Add a little fun to the class when teaching overcalls with this visual aid. Pass out candy kisses with a colored dot on the bottom where the proper bid has been written.

Take a break.

Kathy Hicks-Lank gives her students a break before starting the play part of the lesson. While they are standing and stretching, Kathy announces that there is a quiz and she throws out just one basic question such as "How many cards are needed in a suit to overcall?" That stimulates and tests the students. Kathy never picks a question that would put any pressure on the students.

Opening leads.

Colleen Palmer suggests using this tip to help your students lead:

When the dummy's on the right,
Lead the weakest thing in sight —
WIMPY! WIMPY! WIMPY!

When the dummy's on the left,
Lead through the heft —
HEFTY! HEFTY! HEFTY!

Mrs. Opener and Mr. Responder.

Alcide Dupuis has put a cute twist on teaching students to memorize the categories of opener and responder. He tells this story —

Opener and responder are like a married couple. In their bedroom, they have their own

dressers with three drawers each:

Mrs. Opener's first drawer has 13–16 points (for light clothing!).

Her second drawer has 17–18 points (working outfits!).

Her third drawer has 19–21 points (evening outfits!).

Mr. Responder's first drawer has 6–10 points (for light clothing!).

His second drawer has 11–12 points (working outfits!).

His third drawer has 13–15 points (evening outfits!).

Opening Bids.

Use Audrey Grant's "Papa Bear, Momma Bear and Baby Bear" charts to teach responses to opening bids. You can make computer drawings of the bears, add the point count for opener and responder to each chart and color the borders "green for go," "yellow for invitational," "red for stop."

W. C. Fields to the rescue.

Joe Shineller uses W.C. Fields' expression, "Never give a sucker an even break," in teaching the likely distribution of the outstanding cards when declaring. He tells his students that in bridge, this means that the odds are heavily against an EVEN number of outstanding cards in the suit dividing evenly, whereas for an odd number you ARE most likely to get as even a break as possible. Use this both in the *Bidding (Club Series)* course, (Chapter 4) where the subject is introduced, and the *Play of the Hand (Diamond Series)* course, (Chapter 2) where it is reviewed.

Bridge Brush-up.

Jerry Helms offers a "Bridge Brush-up Course" for students who have some knowledge and have been playing bridge but need more in-depth understanding of the game. He uses Lessons 2 through 8 of the *Bidding (The Club Series)* course.

Introduce bonus levels visually.

Audrey Grant introduces the bonus levels early with a “prize” so students understand why they want to bid to one of the golden games. Bring an ordinary box beautifully wrapped as a gift with a big bow on top to class. Present it in a very businesslike manner to the class. On the sides put the bonus levels and the number of tricks and points required for these levels. Put 5 and 5 on the same side since there are only four sides to the box. One side of the box would have: 3NT, 9 Tricks, 26 Combined Points. Tell the students:

“The rulemakers decided that if you bid and make one of the contracts on the side of the box, you get this prize. (Take the lid of the box off, look inside and put the lid back on.) It really is a delightful prize and I know you will love it. I’m not going to show you what it is yet (in fact you may want to keep it as a surprise for all eight of your lessons; it doesn’t matter). What is important is that you know that if you bid and make one of these contracts, it is good for your side. If you want to know what the prize is, come up after class and I’ll show you.”

Some students come up and ask to see what’s in the box, but most after one or two lessons are content with the idea of scoring. Inside the box, place duplicate scoring slips and a reference to the section in the text where they can find more details on scoring (the end of the first chapter and the Appendix of the *Bidding (The Club Series)* course. The prize is a prop for humor. Remember, the students are there to be entertained.

Tips for Teaching *Play of the Hand (Diamond Series)*

Here are some tips from ACBL Accredited Teachers to help you make your *Play of the Hand (Diamond Series)* courses both successful and fun.

Getting the students ready to take the course.

Often students sign up for the *Play of the Hand (Diamond)* course to encourage his/her spouse to learn more about the game, not because they “need” it. Others may enroll because they haven’t played much bridge recently and don’t want to start with the most basic course. These people need a review in order for you to avoid long delays during the lessons. George Emerson runs a one-hour review of the *Bidding (Club Series)* course and insists that they take it. He welcomes other former *Club Series* students to sit in if they like. After the review, he starts the *Play of the Hand* course.

Counting losers.

Pat Harrington feels that students are better able to keep track of their losers if, while planning the play, they turn the losing cards face-up sideways as they do when they lose a trick.

Reinforce by singing.

Connie DeLisle teaches with “ditties” that her students can sing to themselves to make the lessons easier to remember. For example: When teaching them to PLAN when declaring a hand in a suit contract, she sings to the tune of Ghostbusters, “Whatcha going to do with your losers? You’re going to ruff”em, sluff ‘em, set up a side suit.” So, what happens? When the students start to play the hand, they locate the losers in their hand, sing the song and soon find a place to put them.

The Stayman convention.

When teaching the Stayman Convention, Carol Mathews tells her students that Mrs. Stayman doesn’t let Mr. Stayman stay out past 8 o’clock. The students find it easy to remember that they need 8 points to use this convention.

More Stayman, plus Jacoby.

Alcide Dupuis helps his students remember that Stayman requires 8 points by telling them that Mrs. Stayman does not want to see Mr. Stayman before 8 o’clock. And that he must bring her 4 roses (stressing the fact that with 4 and 5 in the majors, Stayman is the one to use).

Alcide adds that Mrs. Jacoby (for transfers) doesn’t care what time Mr. Jacoby comes to see her, as long as he brings her 5 roses.

Responses to notrump.

When her students are having problems remembering when to use Stayman and when to transfer, Colleen Palmer tells them, “Stayman with four, Transfer with more.”

The PLAN.

Try these tips for teaching your students to make a PLAN:

- Edna Berti uses this visual aid to remind students not to play too quickly and to make a PLAN. Cut a large key out of heavy paper and print “KEY” on one side and “ANALYZE” on the other. Explain that it is the key to good bridge. When a student plays too quickly, produce the key to remind him that he must make a plan — “Analyze the alternatives” — before trying to make the contract.
- PLAN with all four hands exposed. To teach the students not to tell partner how to play the hand, Dee Berry creates a “kitty.” Anyone who gives advice to partner must contribute \$.25 to \$1. Proceeds go to Charity.

The dangerous opponent.

Pat Harrington comes to class wearing one green and one red mitten. The students will look at you strangely but don't acknowledge that anything is unusual. When you mention the Dangerous Hand, hold up the red mitten. The green mitten symbolizes the Safe Hand. With the matching mittens to the pair you wore, there are enough mittens to toss one on each of four tables to remind declarer which hand is safe or dangerous.

Counting winners or losers.

Lesson One of *Play of the Hand (The Diamond Series)* introduces the PLAN. The first step in the PLAN is to “Pause and consider our objective.” Considering the objective is as simple as reminding ourselves how many tricks we need to make the contract. There is a different focus depending on whether we are playing in a suit contract or in notrump. Students often find it a challenge to count losers. They might even seem to have the idea that the cards have changed when we focus on losers rather than winners. Audrey Grant suggests using a visual aid of a vase. The student will see either a vase or two profiles, depending on the focus. The lines have not changed. In a similar way, when we consider a hand by counting winners or counting losers, she tells her students that the cards have not changed, only our way of thinking about the cards. So, whether we count winners or losers depends on what we choose to focus on.

Preempts.

Try these tips when teaching your students about preempts:

- Ruth and Ben Tabor tell this story: “A famous bridge teacher was staying in Charles Goren's New York apartment. He saw a book on the shelf titled, ‘Rebids by the Preemptive Bidder.’ Curious, he took the book off the shelf. When he opened it, the book was full of blank pages.”
- Colleen Palmer uses this analogy: “A preempt is like driving your Volkswagon bug into a parking place in front of a Lincoln — you may get the parking place but you could also get smashed. Use the rule of down 2 vulnerable or down 3 non-vulnerable so the insurance will cover the accident.”

Communication.

Add some interest to your lessons on how we communicate in bridge:

- In Lesson 3, add “communication” to the list as spelled out in Exercise 6. Explain to the class that bridge communication is like a two-way radio — we “tell” our partner about our hand, and we “listen” to what he has to say about it. Use a cartoon to make a bookmark. It will remind the students that communication is a big part of the game of bridge. Ruth Baum
- Use this to introduce the language of bidding. “We are going to tell our partner something about our hand, using a specific language.” Have one student (a volunteer who doesn’t mind being in the spotlight) leave the room. Show the class a simple drawing of a cat. Explain that it is the task of the group to get the student who left the room to draw this diagram on the board — but there’s a catch. They can use only words to describe shapes (circle, triangle, dot, line) and position (to the left, in the middle, etc.). Students and teacher alike will have fun with this. Any new way of communicating is a challenge, and the unfamiliar may bring a feeling of new accomplishment. In bridge, we communicate with our partner in a new way, through the cards we play rather than by what we say. (See page 30 for using this idea to teach the concept of defensive signals in the *Defense (Heart Series)* course.

Introduce bidding boxes in class.

Myrna Anderson Camp introduces bidding boxes about mid-way in the *Play of the Hand (The Diamond Series)* course so the students are completely comfortable with them when they take *The Heart Series*. On the same day she introduces the bidding boxes, she runs a supervised bridge game complete with learning how to keep the private score and she scores the session. Myrna presents a mini lesson at each game and uses any randomly dealt hands that come up to reinforce the lessons they have studied. Class members are invited to attend these sessions, either to play or to observe.

Tips for Teaching *Defense (The Heart Series)*

Many teachers feel that the defense course is the most interesting to teach. Remember, it's the first time your students, as declarers, won't be making all of their contracts against proper defense. It will be a challenge to hold their interest.

Count, attitude, suit preference.

Dee Berry suggests that teachers divide Lesson 5 of *Defense (The Heart Series)* into three lessons. To expect beginners — or even intermediates — to grasp attitude, count and suit preference all at once is overwhelming.

The teacher manual can still be used for the introductory material as well as the lessons on attitude, count and suit preference. All you need to do is supplement this material with more example deals. Here are some deals from the Heart “play” course you can use as a starting point. There are enough example deals for the attitude lesson but you need to find more on count and suit preference or create them (use Dealmaster Pro or the online hand creation system found on Bridge Base).

It will make the lesson clearer if you say at some point to your students, “We show ‘continue’ or ‘discontinue’ in suits partner leads; we show count in suits declarer leads.”

Attitude Sample Deals (Heart “Play” booklet):

Session 1, deal 6

Session 2, deal 1

Session 2, deal 3

Session 2, deal 5

Session 3, deal 3

Session 3, deal 4

Session 3, deal 6

Session 3, deal 8

Session 4, deal 7

Count Sample Deals (Heart “Play” booklet)

Session 4, deal 1

Session 4, deal 6

Session 4, deal 8

Suit Preference Sample Deals: (Heart “Play” booklet)

Session 3, deal 5

Session 4, deal 4

Bridge can be fun with “bad” cards.

When promoting the *Defense (The Heart Series)* course lessons, Ingrid Nargi says it's a good selling point to tell your students that it will teach them to enjoy bridge even when they don't hold good cards.

It's all in how you look at it.

Audrey Grant uses this exercise to introduce the concept of defensive signals. “We are going to tell our partner something about our hand, using a specific language.” Have one student (a volunteer who doesn't mind being in the spotlight) leave the room. Show the class a simple drawing of a cat. Explain that it is the task of the group to get the student who left the room to draw this diagram on the board — but there's a catch. They can use only words to describe shapes (circle, triangle, dot, line) and position (to the left, in the middle, etc.). Students and teacher alike will have fun with this. Any new way of communicating is a challenge, and the unfamiliar may bring a feeling of new accomplishment. In bridge, we communicate with our partner in a new way, through the cards we play rather than by what we say. You also can use this idea to introduce the concept of communicating with partner in a new way in the *Play of the Hand (Diamond Series)* course.

The finesse.

When teaching her students to finesse, Eliza Hofmeister says, “A finesse is something you do when you have to” (quote from her first duplicate teacher). She emphasizes that leading a queen to try to bring out the king will always lose the queen. Don't do it unless you have the jack! (Yes, says Eliza, they do need to hear it.)

Each deal presents a challenge.

Although the *Defense (The Heart Series)* deals are designed for declarer to go down with the proper defense, they don't allow for the degree of personal creativity some teachers will witness. Remember, says Val Covalciuc, that your students are amassing a lot of information in a very short time and only practice and repetition will allow them to master new concepts. As Val marvels at some of their plays, she tells her students that what keeps people playing bridge, aside from the chance to socialize, is that every hand presents a different challenge.

Ease your students into good defense.

By the time your students are ready for the Defense class, they have experienced the “play” portion of the other courses. Betty Starzec doesn't like going through play deals with her students that they will bid and play correctly but will not make due to good defense. So, she lets them bid and play first and then takes them through proper defense. Most often the students can then “see” the magic of good defense even better.

Tips for Teaching Conventions

ACBL's two courses on conventions, *Commonly Used Conventions (CUC)* and *More Commonly Used Conventions (MCUC)*, offer lessons for advancing students. Here are some tips from teachers who have been using the material in both traditional and unique ways.

Ease students into conventions.

Students can't go from Stayman to transfers to weak twos to strong twos in four weeks. After each of the first four lessons in CUC, Joann Humphrey inserts a practice session. She prepares 10 deals that review what was taught the week before for the students to play. She reviews for about 10 minutes before they start to play. Joann teaches CUC in 12 weeks, instead of eight. She has five tables and puts two boards on each table and they play a Mitchell movement. The students are more willing to read/study the lesson the week before the practice and they are learning the material this way. The students are encouraged to talk at the table and to ask questions. They keep score but Joann doesn't declare a winner.

Ease into conventions.

Liz Randall is teaching conventions to a senior citizen bridge group in one-hour lessons. She does the same convention for about four weeks. Liz teaches the convention the first week and does one deal. She reviews for the next three weeks and does one deal a week. This works well in the time allotted and increases the comfort level of using the convention.

Alternate format for convention courses.

Ed Stoever has tried a new format for his courses on conventions that works well for him. He offers a four-session, 2 1/2 hour per session course in which each session covers just one subject (e.g., Stayman, Jacoby transfer bids, preempts, minor-suit bidding, etc.). The course emphasizes what the students are most interested in learning. Ed polls the students at the start of the class to find out their preferences.

Ed gives the students a single sheet summary of what will be covered in each session and eight practice deals on separate 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 sheets, all of which they get to keep. He spends 20 to 30 minutes discussing and answering questions on the summary sheet, and then the class plays all eight of the practice deals. (Eight deals allow Ed to give examples of nearly every variation of the topic of the day.) Some deals they bid and play and then the class discusses them; for other deals, they work out the suggested bidding individually on the handout sheet, and then the class discusses. At the end of the session the students get another sheet giving the suggested bidding and play of all eight deals. The students really like this approach!

Ed can easily give individual lessons on single topics using these materials, and he can also bundle the topics in a variety of ways. He gets his sample deals from randomly dealt boards at the weekly duplicate learning game or he makes them up.

Use the convention card.

At the beginning of a series of classes on conventions, Kris Motoyoshi gives each student a convention card and asks them to bring it with them for every class. An enlarged and laminated convention card sits in the front of the room. At the beginning of each lesson, Kris shows the students how to mark the new convention they are learning. At the end of the series, Kris gives them a computer-generated convention card with all the conventions they have studied already filled in. This exercise helps them to become familiar with the card and it lets them know where to look when they want to see if their opponents are playing a certain convention.

Take your pick of conventions.

Kris Motoyoshi makes a schedule of conventions and dates so students can attend all of the classes or pick and choose. If they take all of the lessons, she charges the going rate for eight lessons in her area. If they take the menu approach, she charges about \$1 more per lesson. They must pre-register.

Transfers.

Two tips from Cliff Rhein for players who are learning to manage a dummy:

- Suppose you open 1NT and your partner makes a transfer bid leaving you as declarer in a suit contract. Stop and inspect dummy for ANY suit that may be longer than a side suit in your hand. If a longer card in that dummy suit can be safely ruffed in your hand — with the shorter trump holding — maybe even before you draw trumps — you will almost always collect an extra trick.
- If your opponents have opened 1NT on your right and then transferred to a suit, do not be afraid to lead trumps — even into declarer's hand. You may effect the short trump holding in declarer's hand — and deprive declarer of a vital short-suit ruff in the closed hand.

Think before overcalling 1NT!

If your opponent (RHO) opens the bidding in your best suit, Ken Monzingo tells his students that it is almost always right to pass. Even if you're holding the point count to overcall 1NT. "Why should you get in trouble when they already are?"

Key to successful finesses.

In teaching how a finesse works, Mel Hazell stresses that the card you hope to make a winner (king, queen, etc.) must be the THIRD card played in that trick. This gets the students leading from the correct hand.

Workshop magic.

Lugina Dzenutis uses material from the More Commonly Used Conventions course for a workshop with all seasoned players, and her students love it. She stayed on the first chapter — "doubles" — for five weeks!! She covered all kinds of doubles: penalty, cooperative-optional, negative, takeout, balancing. Lugina says it was great fun for all.

Watch your shape with takeout doubles.

Ken Monzingo tells his students that making takeout doubles without the correct shape (support for all unbid suits) is like going to the prom in the wrong dress. It may work, but you'll be sorely embarrassed if it doesn't. He reminds them, "Think of your partner who has to dance with what you brought to the party!"

Negative doubles.

"Repeat after me," says Colleen Palmer. "A double is takeout when your opponents open and negative when partner opens."

Remembering the basics.

When teaching "Rebids and Responses," Marlene Koerner found that her beginning students have a tendency to want to show other suits (such as rebidding a five-card minor) rather than raise partner's major. She uses this reminder, "Don't create a wardrobe when you have a suit."

Lesson 8 before 7.

When Delma Murray teaches the *Commonly Used Conventions* course, she teaches Lesson 8 before Lesson 7. This way the students have a way to deal with strong hands before she introduces weak twos.

Improve and expand your knowledge.

Judith Murray focuses on classes for people who want to improve their games and learn some new things. She stresses the value of good defense and why it is important to place the points around the table as she teaches a certain theme (Jacoby 2NT, new minor forcing, etc.) each week. The students duplicate the hands, bid them using bidding boxes, Judith reviews the bids by asking and explaining what each bid that was made means, the deals are played and then the class discusses why some declarers made their contract and others didn't. Judith uses some deals that will go down if the declarer hasn't planned the play.

Tips for Continuing Your Teacher Education

Even the best teacher in the world can learn something new. Anyone can look at a subject in a different way or “borrow” a good idea from someone else.

Using The BridgeTeacher newsletter.

Continue your teacher education by trying new ideas and taking advantage of ACBL programs as presented in The Bridge Teacher newsletter. This publication is mailed to all ACBL bridge teachers three times a year. The latest edition is always available at the ACBL web site.

ABTA's annual conference.

Each summer before the NABCs, the ABTA (American Bridge Teachers' Association) sponsors a convention for teachers. A star-studded group of bridge experts and teachers participate in lectures. New teaching materials and teaching tips are introduced and there are outstanding social and networking opportunities. Harry Lampert reminded us that this is a great resource for continuing education for bridge teachers. (Visit the ABTA home page — www.abtahome.com — for more information.)

Hone your skills.

Consider teaching free to hone your skills. Community centers often operate on a cost basis and can charge for materials but not teacher time — or practice on your friends.

Use ACBL's videos.

Watch Audrey Grant teach the Bidding (The Club Series) course in a three-tape composite called “The Bridge Players' Home Video Library” to keep your presentations fresh for your students. (Visit Baron Barclay at www.baronbarclay.com to purchase.)

Team teaching.

Consider team teaching. This practice will give you and another teacher an opportunity to improve each other's teaching skills.

Consider your credentials.

Your students want to be proud of you. Frame your TAP certificate and add to your credentials as you can. This makes a nice display.

TAP, TAP, TAP again.

ACBL Accredited Teachers can retake the TAP (Teacher Accreditation Program) at any time for no additional fee. Reinforce what you have learned and find out what's new.

In your own backyard.

Sit in on a lesson taught by another bridge teacher in your area. You may learn some new tricks, or says Mark Cohen, “Tape one of your classes and evaluate yourself.”

APPENDIX

IDENTIFYING YOUR GOALS

This checklist was created to help teachers identify their goals when starting classes.

1. Number of Classes

A. How much time does each class take?

1. Pre-class preparation
2. Transportation
3. Clean-up
4. Actual class time

B. How much time do you have to give to this endeavor?

2. Number of Students Per Class

A. Take into consideration the amount of time it takes to prepare the material for a class. The larger the class, the more hands you must pre-deal. (E-Z Deal Cards can be used but consider the initial cost.)

B. How many students do you need to make the amount of money you want to earn?

3. Hourly Rate of Pay

A. All of the time you will spend on each class, as identified in question #1, must be considered.

B. What expenses will you have?

1. Advertising
2. Site Rental Fee
3. Books
4. Refreshments
5. Mailing Costs
6. Graduation Party
7. Transportation

4. Age Range of Students

A. Have you had any experience teaching the age group you are interested in?

B. Are you free at the time of day best suited for the age group you are interested in? (For example, Senior classes are generally offered during the day.)

5. Bridge Knowledge of Students

A. Consider that some students may never have played any card games.

B. Consider that the language of bridge may be a foreign language to beginning students.

C. What do you expect?

6. Time Your Students Are Expected to Spend on Bridge Between Classes

- A. How much time do you expect them to spend?
- B. How much available time do they have?
- C. Are they willing to spend more time than class time on bridge?

7. Team-Teaching or Alone

- A. If you teach with a partner —
 - 1. Division of responsibilities?
 - 2. Sharing of Profits?
- B. If you should teach alone —
 - 1. How will you arrange for a substitute if an emergency keeps you from teaching a class?
 - 2. How will you handle make-up lessons for students?

Let's Get Our Students Playing

by Audrey Grant

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

If, after taking only the *Bidding (Club Series)* course, our students play in a Newcomer game and play only 16 boards, they will be playing four times the number of hands they are used to playing at one time.

At the end of the first set of lessons, many students will have been declarer on only seven hands in their entire bridge-playing career.

OVERVIEW

Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to gradually increase their stamina for playing. Teachers should try to provide playing opportunities that will bridge the gap between the students' beginning bridge lessons and the duplicate games the students will find at the local club. The stationary duplicate does just this.

In this article we have entitled three types of stationary duplicate games for you to try. Whichever method you choose, stationary duplicate is a fun and easy way for your students to practice playing the game. It gives them the opportunity to develop speed and confidence in a pleasant and controlled environment. Stationary duplicate affords your students the opportunity to compete against more advanced players without the obvious disadvantages.

Since the basic approach to the learning process is to provide students with an opportunity to play and practice whenever possible, a series of supervised play sessions are part of ACBL's lesson program. There are six "play" courses available through the ACBL Sales Department.

When you feel your students are ready for a "controlled" duplicate game, try Bridge Plus+. These games are run in a similar fashion to regular duplicate games except that they are still part of the educational process. They are shorter, run by teachers, award masterpoints, and offer a low-key atmosphere where the students are free to discuss the hands with the teacher/director after play has been completed.

Newcomer Games come next. This is usually the transition point from student to "bridge player." If your students aren't interested in collecting masterpoints, consider an E-Z Going Game.

STATIONARY DUPLICATE

Type I — Jerry Helms, one of our TAP Teacher-Trainers from Charlotte NC, has devised one type of stationary duplicate game. He reuses selected boards kept intact from one of the regular duplicate games he runs locally. The matchpointed traveler remains with each board.

A group of four students can play these boards and experience a type of duplicate bridge. They can see what other players have done on a deal and they can see the number of matchpoints awarded for a particular score. The students enter their result on the traveller and see whether the result is above or below average. When Jerry has several tables, he re-matchpoints the students' scores in with the results from the regular game. This gives them a total score which can be compared with the results of the players from the original game.

The number of boards played can vary with the experience level of the players. They should, however, be encouraged to move toward playing a deal every 10 minutes before they can be comfortable in a Novice game.

Type II — A second way of playing stationary duplicate is to attach a table of students to a regular duplicate game in progress at the local club. The students relay a board or two each round with one of the tables in the regular duplicate game. (Choose a N/S pair with the temperament to enjoy relaying with beginners.)

The names of the students will not show up on the recap sheet. They can start a half-hour later than the regular game and finish after about two hours (or whenever they become weary). The students will see the scores of the other players and will be able to compare their results, but they will at no point play against any players from the regular duplicate game. The students' scores do not appear on the official score slip. The students play among themselves and stay at one table.

Type III — A third way to implement a stationary duplicate game is available by using *The Spade Series* (Duplicate, the original Spade Series) E-Z Deal cards and text. Each lesson contains at least eight deals which have been matchpointed so the students can compare their results to those of other players. Each lesson in this series focuses on a particular aspect of playing duplicate bridge. For example, the advantages of opening light in third seat and playing a more aggressive style are demonstrated. (Note: These same hands are now used in two of ACBL's "Play" courses — Play course for the Advancing Student I & II.)

SUPERVISED PLAY

Six sets of "Play" cards and analyses for sets of 32 deals have been developed to help students practice what they have learned. The "Club Play" set is used between the *Bidding (The Club Series)* and the *Play of the Hand (The Diamond Series)* courses. The "Diamond Play" set is used between the *Play of the Hand (The Diamond Series)* and *Defense (The Heart Series)* courses, and the "Heart Play" set is used after the *Defense (The Heart Series)* course. The "Play Course for Advancing Students — 1" and the "Play Course for Advancing Students — II" are used before the *Commonly Used Conventions (The Spade Series)* course. The Modern NoTrump Bidding "Play" Course works with the two convention courses, Commonly Used Conventions and More Commonly Used Conventions.

All six sets are available through the ACBL Sales Department and each provides everything the teacher needs to offer a four-week course where the students can practice what they have learned in a duplicate-style game.

BRIDGE PLUS+ GAMES

General Format: Bridge Plus+ games provide a social duplicate game for our players. The deals are not normally pre-dealt. Random deals are used. The players move as in a regular Newcomer (IN) or Open game. The games should never run longer than two hours ... shorter is better than longer.

The games can be run as part of a lesson program or as part of the regular activities at a bridge club or tournament. The ideal situation is to have games available for the students on a weekly basis.

- Bridge Plus+ is normally divided into two segments:
- Bridge Tip – Starts 30 minutes before the game for 20 minutes.
- Bridge Plus+ Game – Two-hour duplicate with 12 to 16 deals.

Bridge Plus+ Sanctions: Bridge Plus+ games can award masterpoints. Sanctions are issued free through the Club Member Services Department to Accredited Teachers.

NEWCOMER (NOVICE) GAMES

Newcomer games are usually run on a regular basis by an experienced director/teacher in a club-type atmosphere. The main difference between a newcomer game and an open game is the level of experience of the players and the number of boards played. The laws of the game start to be enforced more stringently at this level, although still with some leeway for the level of experience of the participant. Regular masterpoints are awarded in a Newcomer game.

ACBL runs a full Newcomer Program at all NABCs. A handbook for IN Coordinators is available online in the Resources for Units section of the ACBL web site (www.acbl.org). It provides the details of an IN Program and tells you how to offer it at clubs, local tournaments and even at the regional level.

E-Z GOING BRIDGE GAMES

This game works for new players who aren't interested in masterpoints, social players who want more, students new to duplicate and passengers on cruise ships, although these principles can be applied in any type game. Remember that the key to running a successful student game is to offer what the players want and not what you (the director) want to give them. Here's how it works:

Post only the winners and runners-up. Respect the players' privacy and never post all the results. No one wants it known that they didn't do well.

Don't let the same person win the prize each time. Sometimes give a prize for overall; vary this with a prize for the person with the best result on a randomly drawn travelling scoreslip.

There are no MP restrictions. New players and LMs are welcome.

There are no conventions except Stayman and Blackwood. The format is to basically "Bid What You See."

The Mitchell movement is always used. There are no relays and bystands and no Howell movements for any reason.

No more than 16 boards are played and there are no formal rulings. If there is an infraction such as a lead out of turn, the director restores order without penalty or choice. (Return the card/play from the right hand.)

Declarer is not expected to play dummy's cards if the person who puts down the dummy has to leave the table. The Director should be ready to sit in to avoid that situation.

This game cannot be held at the same time as an open game. There is no situation that qualifies as an exception.

The game always starts on time. No reservations and no entries sold in advance. Train the players to know that the game will begin promptly.

The game is never stopped to adjust the movement for a late table. A new table and boards are simply added at the end.

Gear the game for success by cherishing the tables you get rather than hungering for more by looking longingly toward the door. Disguise the room to look like you expect half the number of tables that could show up. Put books, flowers, plants and newspapers out. Make extra tables available if needed — but not “empty” if not needed.

Give the same ten basic bridge tips over and over and over. Promote players who ask advanced questions. Don't raise the level of the game.

Let the players know they are slow. If the first deal isn't finished in 7 minutes, quietly sort the second board into suits. After 8 1/2 minutes, tell the players there may not be time to play the second board.

MiniBridge

MiniBridge is the route into bridge recommended by the English Bridge Union, the national governing body for bridge in England. MiniBridge was first developed in France and the Netherlands as an introduction to bridge for school children and was soon acknowledged as an excellent game in its own right. It is widely used as a precursor to learning bridge for all ages and is universally found to be both effective and enjoyable. The English have adapted the program to simplify the progression from MiniBridge to the full game. Here is a reprint from the English MiniBridge teacher manual to show you how it works:

The Rules

BIDDING: The cards are dealt as in regular bridge, with 13 cards per player and the North and South players are partners and the East and West players are partners. MiniBridge is distinguished from whist (and other similar games) by the existence of a “declarer” who decides the contract — that is, the choice of trump suit and a target number of tricks to be won by the partnership.

The contract must always be for at least seven of the 13 tricks available, but a higher target, a game, may be set.

Every player counts his points (A=4, K=3, Q=2 and J=1) and in turn moving clockwise and starting with the dealer, mentions his pointcount. The pair that together holds the most points will play (in case both pairs hold 20 points, cards should be redealt).

Declarer becomes the player with the most points of the two. If the partners each have the same number of points, the one announcing points first is declarer.

Declarer’s partner becomes dummy and displays his cards. The declarer calculates how many tricks might be won in the combined hands and

- a. Whether to play a notrump or trump contract and
- b. Whether to be in game or partscore.

In a notrump game, declarer has to win nine tricks,

In a suit contract where spades or hearts are trumps, it means 10 tricks,

In a suit contract where diamonds or clubs are trumps, it means 11 tricks,

In part score, declarer must win at least seven tricks.

In no trumps, declarer must win nine tricks or more.

PLAY

The player to the left of the declarer starts by playing the first card (the opening lead), after which the procedure is the same as in regular bridge.

SCORING

Whatever the contract, the first six tricks won do not count toward the score. The seventh trick is the first scoring trick, and for each scoring trick, points are won depending on the contract chosen, as follows:

No trumps contracts 40 for the first scoring trick 30 for each subsequent trick

Spade or Heart contracts 30 for each scoring trick

Diamond or Club contracts 20 for each scoring trick

Examples: With C/D as trumps, the trick score for eight tricks is 40 points.

With H/S as trumps, the trick score for 10 tricks is 120 points.

In no trumps, the trick score for nine tricks is 100 points.

Game Contracts

Game contracts are those where the trick score totals 100 or more.

Game in no trumps requires nine tricks, i.e., $40 + (2 \times 30) = 100$ points.

A game bonus of 300 is then added, so the total points earned are 400.

If more than nine tricks are won, each overtrick scores an extra 30.

(When calculating the score for a no trump contract, it is often easier to multiply each trick won by 30, then add 10 points at the end.)

Game in spades or hearts requires 10 tricks, i.e., $30 \times 4 = 120$ points.

A game bonus of 300 is then added, so the total points earned are 400.

If more than 11 tricks are won, each overtrick scores an extra 30.

Game in diamonds or clubs requires 11 tricks, i.e., $20 \times 5 = 100$ points.

A game bonus of 300 is then added, so the total points earned are 400.

If more than 11 tricks are won, each overtrick scores an extra 20.

Examples: A part score contract in hearts, nine tricks are made:

scores 30 for the scoring trick in hearts = 30

plus 60 for the two overtricks @ 30 points each = 90

plus the bonus of 50 = 140

Unsuccessful Contracts

If declarer doesn't win the number of tricks required to make the contract, the declaring side gets no score and the defending side earn 50 points for every undertrick. For example, if the contract was game in spades and declarer took only eight tricks, the defending side would score 100 points.

Examples: A partscore in no trumps makes five tricks; the defenders get 100 points. A game contract in hearts makes nine tricks. The defenders get 50 points.

Six PLAY Courses with E-Z Deal Cards & Booklets* Club, Diamond, Heart, Advancing Students 1 and 2, Modern Notrump Bidding

The ACBL has produced six play courses (E-Z Deal “Play” cards and booklets) that supplement the original ACBL Bridge Series courses. Each play course offers enough material for a teacher to present a four-week supervised play course with eight deals a week.

The “Play” E-Z Deal cards offer an assortment of deals with contracts where the key to the problem will be something studied in the course the students have just completed. In the Club “Play” course, the deals are arranged by topic to provide a structured review session of the material learned in the *Bidding (Club Series)* course. The first eight deals cover bidding over a 1NT opening; the next 16 deals involve suit opening bids; the last eight deals cover competitive bidding. Pointers for bidding and play reinforce rules presented in the Bidding course.

In the Diamond “Play” and the Heart “Play” courses, the bidding, play and defense topics are randomly ordered for these more experienced students. The “Play” Course for the Advancing Student – I” and the “Play” Course for the Advancing Student – II” offer more practice for students prior to a course on conventions. The Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course provides practice on 15 to 17 Notrumps and a 20–21 2NT Opening, Jacoby Transfers, using Stayman with transfers and slam bidding.

The spiral-bound booklets that come with each of the “Play” courses contain a discussion of the suggested bidding and play for each of the 32 deals. For each deal, there is a traveler showing the results when the deal was played in an actual duplicate game. The students will discover how interesting it is to see the various results possible on each deal. Since many students don’t think they are good enough to play anywhere in public, they will be pleased to find that they sometimes get the best result.

A teacher may present one of the “Play” courses as a four-week supervised play program or the deals may be played as a game, selecting a winning pair in each direction. The students may also use the cards and booklets to practice on their own.

ACBL’s Bridge Series works like this...

Students may learn bidding and the basics of play in the *Bidding (Club Series)* course, Review it in the *Club* “Play” course, examine declarer play in the *Play of the Hand (Diamond Series)* course, review it in the *Diamond* “Play” course, look at defense in the *Defense (Heart Series)* course, practice what was learned in the *Heart* “Play” course, review everything learned with the two “Play” Courses for Advancing Students, begin conventions in the *Commonly Used Conventions* course and practice using conventions with the Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course.

Homework – The Final Contract Card

Below you will find instructions for your students to follow to help them get to the best contract when they practice on their own. The Final Contract Card is a bidding tool developed by Canadian author and educator, Audrey Grant.

- Step 1 – Randomly deal the cards and turn them face up on the table dummy-style.
- Step 2 – Count the number of combined points in the N/S and then in the E/W hands and select the side with the greater number of points.
- Step 3 – Determine how high on the chart you want to be. If there are more than 26 combined points, you want to be in a game. If there are fewer than 26 points, you want to be in a partial game.
- Step 4 – Decide where you want to play. Look for your longest combined suit. If you have eight or more cards in a suit, play in that denomination ... except, play in 3NT rather than 5♣ or 5♦.
- Step 5 – Write your decision for the final contract at the bottom of the sheet.
- Step 6 – Try to use your bidding rules to get to that final contract.

THE FINAL CONTRACT CARD

N/S combined points_____.

E/W combined points_____.

Side with greater number of points is_____.

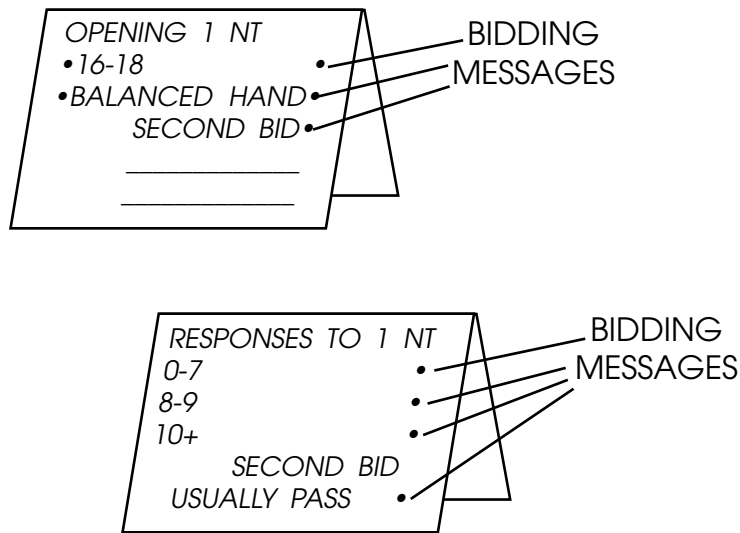
HOW HIGH?	Game—WHERE?	3	Notrump
		4	Spades
		4	Hearts
		5	Diamonds
		5	Clubs
			} Rare
	26 or more Fewer than 26		
	Part game—WHERE?	1 or 2	Notrump
		1-2-3	Spades
		1-2-3	Hearts
1-2-3		Diamonds	
1-2-3		Clubs	

FINAL CONTRACT_____

Tents, not Tablecloths

The bridge tablecloths made popular by Charles Goren worked well because a beginner could have bidding problems answered immediately without the plea: "Please come look at my hand and tell me what you would bid." Audrey Grant suggests using bidding tents that will work in the same way. Her students named them tents because, with a lot of imagination, that's what they look like. They are pieces of cardboard (half of an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet) folded so that they can sit beside the student.

Suppose the lesson is 1NT responses (*Club Series*, Lesson 3). On one side of the tent would be what to do when you open 1NT. On the other side would be responses to 1NT opening bids.



This is all the student would need since the hands are pre-dealt and this is all they will encounter in Lesson 3.

BIDDING MESSAGE: The message of each bid can be shown with a small dot to the right of the bid. You can buy sheets of these small round circles. The red indicates sign-off, the yellow is invitational and the green is forcing.

For the next lesson, responses to opening bids of one-in-a-suit, use a different color cardboard. The tents will fit over one another. At the end of *The Club Series* the students could have five summaries: 1NT and responses; opening bids and responses; rebids by opener and responder; overcalls; takeout doubles.

Making the tents is a good homework assignment. You can do during the class or after the lesson as a review for the next week. The tents are best used when the student understands the ideas behind them, so use them in conjunction with the text.

Going camping should be fun for your class.

Write a News Release and Get it Printed Free

How to get free news publicity:

Go to www.acbl.org and click on Resources for “Marketing and Advertising,” and then on “Publicity” for publicity tips and sample press releases. Direct questions to the ACBL Marketing Department at marketing@acbl.org.

Here are three basic steps for creating new publicity:

1. Find a story idea. Media people want things that will interest their audiences. This includes many seemingly common occurrences because they are positive, upbeat, and somehow out-of-the-ordinary. Good subjects include: anything new, achievements, milestones, seasonal tie-ins, current events, human interest, one-time happenings. You need to find a “hook.” Hosting a game for seniors at their own facility can reflect back on your regular club. Host a “free” class for interested people (newspapers print this type of information for free as a community service).

2. Tell it to the media. Compile names of reporters or announcers, local talk show hosts and others who cover stories like yours. Media directories are available at most libraries and chambers of commerce or online. Sometimes a visit or call to your local media will get your story publicized, especially by smaller publications or broadcast stations. Just introduce yourself and ask whom you should see about a possible story idea. Reporters will ask you to send a news release, now preferably via e-mail. Don’t panic; it’s easy.

3. Prepare a short news release. A news release should be submitted on paper in double-spaced, easily readable type on letterhead stationery containing your organization’s full mailing address. Single space online submissions. The date of the release, or the date the information is to be released, should be written at the top of the page. Your club’s managers or the name of a contact person should be listed along with office and home phone numbers. Press releases can be written on one or both sides of the paper. The most suitable writing style for a release is the “inverted pyramid” style with the most important facts in the first paragraph. Those facts should include the five Ws and the one H — who, what, when, where, why and how your story is newsworthy or of interest to the community.

On The Internet

A wealth of information is available to teachers at the ACBL web site. Go to www.acbl.org and click on Resources for Teachers on the home page.

Find a Student — You can recruit students by applying for an online listing if you are not represented on the Find a Teacher site. With a listing, you can display your credentials and get a link to your personal web site.

Find a Teacher — Check here to make certain you are listed correctly within your state of residence in the ACBL Teacher Directory.

Find a Network — Click here to get more information on the ABTA (American Bridge Teachers' Association). This organization is dedicated to networking and continuing education for teachers.

Tools for Teaching — This page provides current information of interest to all teachers and a link to the latest issue of The Bridge Teacher newsletter.

Teaching Materials — This page provides links to all of the teaching materials ACBL has made available for teachers such as The Bridge Series text and manuals and lesson plans for teaching in schools.

Teacher Accreditation Program — Check here for information on the teacher-training programs endorsed by the ACBL and the benefits of becoming an ACBL Accredited Teacher.

School Bridge Program — If you are interested in teaching bridge in schools, check out the program funded jointly by the ACBL and the ACBL Educational Foundation. It's an excellent opportunity to be paid for a good cause – bringing more young people into the game.

Bridge Links for Teachers — Some of the links of particular interest to teachers have been added here for your convenience. Check out: World Bridge Federation — www.worldbridge.org/ — Find out the latest bridge news on the world level.

English Bridge Union — www.ebu.co.uk/ — The EBU has an extensive teaching site with information on their National Teaching Program with MiniBridge. You may find some of this material helpful in planning your classes.

Great Bridge Links — www.greatbridgelinks.com/ — You won't believe there are so many bridge links that teachers will find interesting. This site is a real eye-opener.