**3.2 INSTRUCTIONS – JUNIOR COURSE PLAY**

It is great that you have chosen to get involved in one of the World Bridge Federation’s junior projects. To succeed, we will need a large portion of commitment and lots of patience. We will not turn the recruitment of new players overnight, but with a systematic approach, we believe that we will succeed in the end. If there are backlashes (and there will be), we will learn from these and turn this knowledge into future success.

No matter whether you have played bridge all of your life and are very skilled, or you a fresh beginner yourself, you will have a very nice pedagogical challenge.

What is the goal of the project?

* To get more juniors to play bridge

How do we succeed with this?

By letting the students:

* Feel joy in the game
* Become curious about the game and the next chapter
* Feel challenged in a positive way

How do we reach the goal?

One basis of making students feel happy is to make them feel safe in the classroom. This can be done by keeping a *proper order* in the class. Be observant of what happens. *Eye contact and body language* is more important than any number of words. You have to win confidence of both the group and the individuals. *Learning all students’ names* often gives a good effect. A student whose name you know, feels seen.

Speak clearly and use words that the students understand. This is very important when you talk about bridge, which does have a language of its own. You will need to be *overly clear* when you explains certain things in bridge. Terms that are obvious to you, are not at all obvious to your students. If you can teach using humor, it is very good.

You may start with a short story about how you yourself started to play bridge. The most important thing to mention is that you learn new things every time you play bridge, and that this is both a challenge and the really fun part. Also feel free to tell about your own lack of knowledge and skill, for example, by saying that “I don’t understand everything myself, but the more I train, the more I learn.” Bridge is a game of mistakes, and you, the teacher, must be seen as a human capable of mistakes. This will make the students less afraid of failure. Let the classroom be a place where you are allowed to be wrong, and learn from it.

Use Help from Assistant Teachers

It is very difficult to manage a full class by your own, especially when teaching younger students. We strongly recommend that you bring assistants, preferably one per table. It may seem a lot, but you will see that it is needed. This is extra important the first times, when the students are no familiar with the basic concepts. The sooner they learn who does what at the table, how to mark won and lost tricks, etc., the better the play and course will flow.

Planning the Junior Course Play

The disposition of the material is ready for you, and we strongly recommend that you start with Chapter 1, continue with Chapter 2, and so on. How much you will be able to cover every time depends on how long your lessons are and the group you are teaching. In the beginning, new students typically play one deal in around 15 minutes, but this varies very much. As the course goes on, the time per deal becomes shorter and shorter, and you will be able to cover more deals. You must adapt your teaching after how much time you have. In two hours, you will probably be able to cover one chapter in the compendium, if everyone will have time to play all the deals. This is not the idea, and normally, 1.5 hours should be enough per lesson. Note that there will be large differences between low years (1-3), higher years (7-9), and grownup students. It is not only a question of age, but also of how used your students are in playing cards.

A Typical Lesson

Start with a short repetition of the last lesson. This is important to make the knowledge stick, especially in bridge, since earlier problems and solutions usually come back in a refined format.

Then go over today’s chapter. This should not take longer than 10-15 minutes, especially when you teach younger students. They want to get to the card play as soon as the can.

Let the students ask questions. No question is too silly. Many question sis a sign of a good classroom “climate.”

Below is a list of what to mention during each of the lessons.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

* Tell how the game works and about the rules
* Explain the roles – declarer, dummy, and defenders
* Show the deck with suits and card values
* Explain what a trick is, and how you mark won and lost tricks
* Show a score sheet and how to fill it in

Most important is that when the students leave the first lesson, they should be able to go home and play Minibridge. A good idea is to give each students a deck of cards. Also tell about the app KIDA (see Technical Aids).

Chapter 2 – High-Card Points and Trumps

* High-card points and the values of the cards
* Notrump and trumps, explain how trumps works
* Bidding, who starts, who wins the bidding?
* Choosing trumps or notrump

The goal is the same as after the first lesson, but now the students should be able to choose whether to play with trumps or notrump, when they play Minibridge at home.

Chapter 3 – A Competition

* Explain who you compete with and against
* Explain how you win points
* Start with a pairs competition

The most important thing in this lesson is that the students should realize that there is no such thing as good cards or bad cards. You do the best you can with the resources you have been given. It is difficult to realize that the “real opponents” sit in the same direction as you, but at other tables.

Chapter 4 – Opening Lead and Methods

* Lead the first, third, or fifth card *from the top*
* Leading the top card from a sequence
* Leading against notrump or trump
* Declarer’s strategy in notrump and in trumps

In this chapter there are several difficult concepts: sequence, short hand, and to establish. You will need to explain and give examples, especially for the last two.

Be careful to tell that different techniques work in trumps and in notrump.

Chapter 5 – Bridge Scoring

* Show how the scoring table works
* Failed contracts
* Extended bidding
* Use the stair

This is an opportunity to teach math. With older students you can write down equations for the points for different results. Show the stair and make sure the students understands the concept of the game bonus.

Chapter 6 – Finessing and Playing Low or High

* Finessing
* Second hand low
* Third hand high

Finessing is difficult, both as a concept and as a practical method. As a teacher, you must be prepared that some students will not want to finesse, but win the ace instead. Try to explain that the finesse is not a gamble, it is an extra possibility. The finesse can be very difficult for younger students, especially reasoning about “if West had had the king,” when East actually has it. Do not become desperate. It is perfectly normal that this part is difficult.

Chapter 7 – Signals and Declarer Strategy

* Return partner’s suit
* Attitude signals
* Ruffing in the short hand
* Declarer’s ABC analysis: Recall, Count, Analyze, and Do it!

Point one and two are very important. Bridge is all about cooperation, and these points make that clear. It is not only about bridge, it is about friendship. Cooperate!

The ABC part is important, because planning is part of the success. Tell the students that no matter how good they are in bridge, it does not help, if they do not think before they play. Most mistakes are made at trick one.

Chapter 8 – Short Hand and the Holdup

* Play the short hand honors first
* Blocking a suit
* Cover honor with honor

Make sure that the students understand the language in this lesson. Explain that the short hand means in a specific suit.

We do recommend that you deal out cards to explain all these concepts and follow through, card by card.

Chapter 9 – Crossruff, Drop, or Finesse

* Crossruff
* Draw trumps with a finesse
* Dropping an honor

Like in the previous lesson, you have some concepts to explain.

A crossruff can be explained as ruffing back and forth on both hands

To try a drop is to play high cards first

Note that here we combine finessing with drawing trumps. Many know how to draw trumps, and many know how to finesse, but the combination makes it difficult. Take some cards and show how it is done.

Chapter 10 – Final Competition

The competition looks the same as previous competitions. Since this is the final lesson, it is nice to have prizes. It is important that everyone receives prizes. The aim is not to eliminate anyone, but to inspire people to continue.

Competitions in General

Not everyone likes to compete. You should not force anyone to participate if they do not want to. Those who abstain play the same boards but are not counted in the competition. If you are using a scoring program on a computer, you can use fictive aliases instead of names for the lower half, which will make the competition less dramatic.

Technical Aids

Let technology be your friend in teaching bridge. There are lots of advantages. One is that the students can train outside of the school an d bridge club hours.

KIDA

Kida is a new app for smartphones. It allows the students to train their card play from the first lesson. It demands very little knowledge to get started.

Search for KIDA – Logic Puzzle. Free in AppStore and on Google Play.

**Funbridge, BBO and Synrey**

Perfect for training, but difficult before you know how to bid. It is worth to note that Synrey has Minibridge, where you can train playing as soon as you have learnt Minibridge.  
  
See 3.8 Play bridge on your smartphone, which tells more about this educational tool.