

Stakeholder Meeting Growing Bridge Players

1 February 2019 - Indianapolis

Attendance: Dallas Moore, Wayne Vance, Tricia Smaracko, Connie Latas, Liz Brown, Deb Vance, Maribeth Ransel, Sharon Austin, Mike Purcell, Joyce Pepple, Fana Holt, Sharon Winters, Mark Greenwell, Rick Kleinhecksel, Pete Outcalt, AJ Stephani, Bruce Ebanks, Annalis Ebanks, John Nichols, Steve Moese

General Population – the Bridge “Ladder”

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I like to play games b. I like to play cards c. I want to learn bridge d. I have fun playing bridge e. I want to learn duplicate f. I want to play in tournaments | | <p>Where we should focus</p> <p>Where we focus today...</p> |
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Sharing Best D11 Practices – How Do We Grow Bridge Players

The challenge to grow bridge starts well before someone is ready to play duplicate.

When do we interact with potential bridge players to learn then enjoy the game?

How do people learn bridge is fun?

Need to engage fun before people engage duplicate. How?

People learn differently and at different speeds.

How can we make classes, tables, and members grow?

Alan Graves – (paraphrasing) we should focus on rubber bridge. There's too much focus on duplicate bridge. We need easy way for people to learn bridge and play it for fun at home. We need to get back to the days when more than 25 million households

Connie Latas – How do people learn to play rubber bridge? Teachers introduce the game. People play rubber bridge for fun sometimes at clubs. Introducing new ways to learn bridge at home is important.

Osher Lifelong Institute - appealing to 50+ adults with a desire to continue learning. Cincinnati has partnered with the University of Cincinnati for 2 classes each semester. Bridge 101 and Bridge 102. Bridge 103 is pending. Based on the ACBL Club Series Books. Semesters cost the individual student \$90 plus \$5 for every class taken. Unit 124 pays the teacher team \$650 and the ACBL contributes \$350 for each class each semester.

Jeff Bayone, [A Taste of Bridge](#) (ABTA Book of the year)

We offer “Come and Play” – a friendly rubber bridge environment at the Cincinnati Bridge Center. We charge \$3 for 2-3 hours.

Supervised Play (Mike Purcell) – Saturday 9:30 AM – Noon and Tuesday 2:45 – 5:15 PM

Free talks based on published syllabus tuned to beginners.

Learn Bridge in a Day? got us ~200 people but only 2 continued playing. What gets in the way?

1. People are intimidated by what they don't know
2. People need partners, typically at a similar experience level.

We serve 0-99'er players.

1 volunteers per table (or two) up to 8-10 tables.

Relaxed play – their pace.
All questions may be asked at any time during the game.

Volunteers enjoy helping – we have more than we need. We run SP before or after open games so volunteers get to play too.

Volunteers prepare preset boards. Sometimes we've used boards already played. Having the hand records helps both volunteers and the students.

Some people are off put if there is an emphasis on gathering contact information before they are sure they want to continue

One Saturday every month we run a teaching game (12-18 boards) for masterpoints in lieu of supervised play. Asking questions still OK.

Likes:

- Play at my own pace
- Do not force a bidding style – multiple teachers play different styles
- Can ask questions at any times

What works:

- Match players with others at their skill level (critical)
- Compatible volunteers (avoid know-it-alls who push their own agenda)
- Avoid helping too much.
- Start with volunteers who are really, really patient. Not always get it right. Feedback to avoid giving too many lessons at the table. Friendly and engaging. Not condescending or toxic.
- Plan roster and schedule 2-3 months at a time.
- Important to have same best person to set the players at their table – know their skill level.

How do you get players to “leave the nest”. Don't worry about it! As long as one is not a Life Master, they should feel welcomed to learn at Supervised Play. Some people don't want duplicate bridge. Give them what they want.

Something ACBL offers:

- 1) Teaching Game (masterpoints) duplicate – 12-18 boards. Fun. Light. 2 hours.
- 2) Homestyle Bridge (Chicago scoring IMPed for Masterpoints).

Use the CARROT everywhere you can. Manage the socialization every step of the way.

Remember we are all duplicate bridge players. We are outnumbered by social bridge players. Social players seeing a tournament for the first time: “Why are all these people not smiling if they are having a good time?” Fun comes before accomplishment from competition.

Growing membership requires we grow bridge first. Be evangelists for bridge in all its forms. Uncle Leo has nephews. Maybe we reach them and not Leo. Think about how to expand the network by asking people to bring their friends too!

Don't be afraid to repeat lessons. They will still love it.

People learning want immediate feedback – so give it to them!

What do you do today if someone contacts you and says “I want to learn bridge”

How do you match the prospect’s needs with the best local service to help engage their interest?

We must be able to do this in real time!!

If no teachers are immediately available, perhaps a group of 2-4 volunteers can help get a prospect started on their own learning journey. Could/should be the teachers. We do not want to take income away from teachers. Possible a 1 month onboarding interaction leads to better engagement with teachers. Connecting volunteers must be expert at marketing and helping people engage and commit. We want to increase the number of students that seek out and engage teachers, the number of tables at clubs and tournaments. Need for low financial risk for the prospect.

Joyce Peple - Indiana Foundation to Grow Bridge (501c3) for finding and supporting bridge teachers.

June 3 & 4 ACBL Best Practices Teacher Workshop - details coming soon. Certification requires passing a review session plus \$25. Cost will be \$100 in advance. Come to learn then stay to play at the Regional! For teachers who have their TAP certification, the fee is \$50, supported by the ACBL Education Foundation. Requires passing a short admission exam. BPTW teaches “HOW TO TEACH” and not what to teach. Certification requires an oral exam and an additional \$25.

Mentoring games help people overcome the fear of playing in the open games against experienced pairs. Helps with socialization in your clubs.

Source of Prospects:

- Existing members and their friends and families
- Community outreach – community centers, senior living, churches/synagogues, etc.
- Rubber Bridge Tournaments
- Facebook
- MeetUp

Face it – we are not the demographic to attract young adult bridge players. We need to identify young adult envoys that can attract their peers. Help them help us grow.

Eli Lilly 30+ professionals and retirees – fliers to attract interest. 4 floors and 6 break rooms. Can we get a teacher to Lilly? Really hard – security. Companies have retiree groups.

Is there anything being done reaching out to middle schools.

- Stem programs Indianapolis – PTO is a possible portal
- Public Schools are difficult. Children are over scheduled and barriers to entry are high.
- BoyScouts and Girl Scouts meet.
- 4 largest youth programs are not associated with a school. The largest in Canada is associated with a school (unique). ACBL resources available. College is more of a priority. ACBL Education Foundation (501c3) is looking for funding requests.
- Level 3 background check (police department) paid for every 2 years.
- Mike & Steve: Cincinnati area required a teacher sponsor for a bridge club, and teachers wanted income equivalent to a coach’s salary.
- Directors have to have these background checks.

John Nichols – Rubber Bridge Tournaments at Hospitals Networks as part of Senior Outreach. 10-15 tables 4 time per year. How to get some of those people to visit the bridge center. Do you have friends who would like to learn?

Running a duplicate game at a retirement home got 4-5 tables.

Hard to recruit players with a small club.

Bridge players are readers – look to your public library to introduce bridge or your bridge club.

Would having access to contact information or people who want to learn how to play bridge, what would you do?

What if we could equip members with easy ways to teach the rudiments of bridge so that they engage and seek out Teachers and clubs to learn and to play more.

Mini-bridge

HOOL

People can engage these entry games at no cost.

Euchre doesn't seem to help – not fast enough; not close enough to bridge.

Euchre Tournaments abound. How can we engage this? Have you thought o hosting a Euchre Night at the Club.

Tricia Smaracko – designer of “Bidittle” – a bridge-based board game that has had success in middle schools and high schools. NKy Bridge Club. Can help get bridge into schools. Played with 7 cards each (28 total) Games moves quickly.

Links to topics mentioned in this summary are on the Stakeholder Page. Check them out!

Video taped lessons available. Middle school students need socialization experiences. Other teachers can teach this easily. BiDittle Clubs after school create social opportunities. This spring promoting the classroom starter kit. 10 schools in Northern Kentucky. Transition from 7 card BiDittle to 13 card BiDittle (we call that bridge).

How can we recruit and support teachers who already teach at high schools. The fact that BiDittle is fully supported for the teacher makes it appealing for teachers to use as a after school activity. Offered through Baron Barclay. Bundled with Teach Me to Play Bridge book.

How to get young players to move to the game of bridge easily.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steve Moese