

Afternoon Kent Bridge Teacher

I hope those of you who have attended the online teaching tutorials given by EBED every Tuesday have found them helpful. Just to remind you – if you missed any of them, you can find them still on the EBED website.

It's quite clear now that bridge clubs are a long way from reconvening. I suspect we will not meet again in the accepted sense in 2020. This would be very sad - but I for one would not want to risk being seated at a small table with 3 others, handling playing cards, bidding cards, bridge mates until I was totally confident that it really is safe to do so.

With this in mind online play set up by the EBU, the KCBA, Clubs and others assumes huge importance in this time of lockdown.

However, my concern, as Kent Education Secretary, is to try and get a picture of how many classes are still functioning in the County in any way, shape or form - and how many of you are managing to stay in contact with your students.

I, personally, began by sending out a weekly quiz to all mine – past and present - and even club members who requested them. A week later they all get the answers and the next quiz. Much useful material like this can be found in the teachers notes that accompanied Books 1 and 2 and also on No Fear bridge. I'm sure you all know that you have free membership of the latter and your students a trial membership for 3 months. I still send out these quizzes but have now become more ambitious and have started an online class once a week using the BBO site. I also set up a follow on lesson plan on No Fear Bridge which they are able to access afterwards - if members of NFB. My guinea pig students promised not to laugh at me as we all found our way round the BBO site last week – not always easy – but you can now use the hand banks from the Teachers Zone which means you can 'hit' a particular topic instead of relying on their own randomly dealt hands.. I do admit to becoming increasingly frustrated at the pitfalls I came across in this first lesson, but my students have made very encouraging noises for me not to give up and I learned a lot:-

Such as :-

- Have your class in the morning before America wakes up and the site gets overloaded
- It's difficult to type in 'chat' and watch the bidding and play at the same time. I tried to set up a Whats App group so we could chat that way instead instead – but you can only do that for 3 other people – I had 6 so that didn't work – something else I was trying to sort whilst watching the class!!
- The Voice facility on BBO is unreliable so you need another 'platform' for communication.

So you can understand why I was frustrated

But - - ever onward.....so.....

- More guinea pigs this week as I try Zoom /BBO at the same time. Watch this space !!

I wrote to you all a short while ago regarding online teaching but so far have had few replies – which is disappointing. A big thank you to those who have got back to me. If you haven't already, could you please drop me an e mail before the weekend, when we have an online KCBA Committee meeting courtesy of Zoom? I understand online teaching is not everyone's cup of tea – maybe too daunting -but I would like to know and be able to report back to the committee how many more of you are giving it a go - and if not – what other means you are employing, if any, to maintain contact with your students.

When we finally come out of this terrible situation in which we find ourselves I fear some Kent clubs will not have survived – some were already struggling – so teaching is going to assume even more importance. We badly need to hold on to the students we have and even find a way, if we can, of bringing more students into the game as beginners – NOW if possible.

I very much welcome your input so please give me a moment of your time – which we all have plenty of these days – to fire back a quick reply to me. I would be very grateful.

Kind regards

Chris

KCBA Adult Education Officer