



EBU Club Teaching survey

2023



Why a teaching survey?

- Bridge players are getting older and too few young players are learning the game
- In order for the game to continue to flourish, we as the English Bridge Union must do all we can to promote the game to new players
- We understand that people join bridge clubs to play, not to teach
- Marketing alone will not bring new members into our clubs. Bridge is a challenging game and must be taught
- We wanted to understand better what is happening in our clubs regarding teaching so that we can learn from one another and improve what we do

A fantastic response – thank you!



We invited responses by email to all our clubs



We received 244 reponses – more then one third of our clubs



Detailed comments show a high level of engagement



You care about this issue, as we do!



Some comments deserved an individual response – please give us time

How many clubs teach bridge?

- That is about 52% with an **active** teaching programme. We think that our more active clubs were more likely to complete the survey so probably a bit less overall.
- It can be hard for enquirers to find a club nearby that teaches, and it is often not possible to join a course midway.

3. Does your club teach bridge, either directly or with the help of a teacher who is not part of the club?

[More Details](#)

- Yes and we have students curre... 126
- Yes but no active teaching at th... 19
- No we do not teach bridge and ... 76 **have no plans**
- We do not teach bridge currentl... 23 **but would like to in future**



How many students?

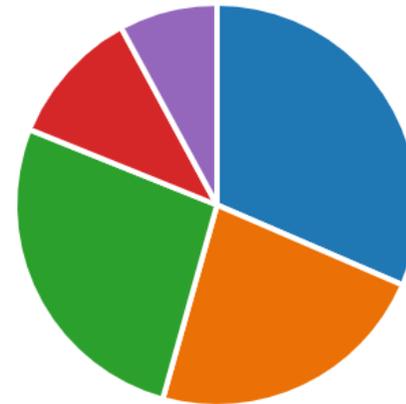
- Clubs have huge variation. Average (of those teaching) is about 24 per year, which sounds a lot! But a few large clubs with 60-100 students distort the figures
- If all those being taught became club members, our clubs would remain healthy. But ...

How many students end up in club sessions?

8. If you have a sense of how many students have gone on to become active members of your club, what is the approximate percentage?

[More Details](#)

 20% or fewer	40
 21-40%	29
 41-60%	34
 61-80%	14
 Almost all of them	10

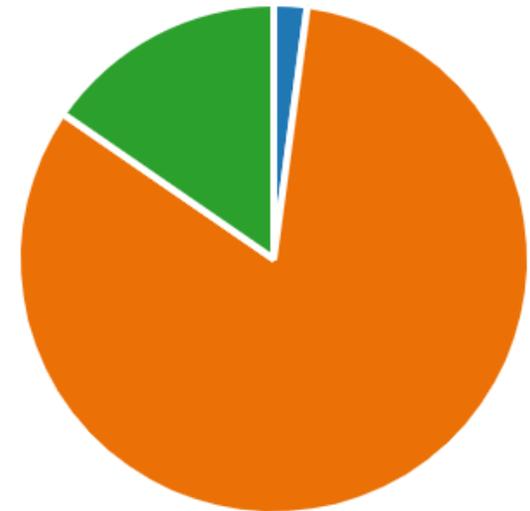
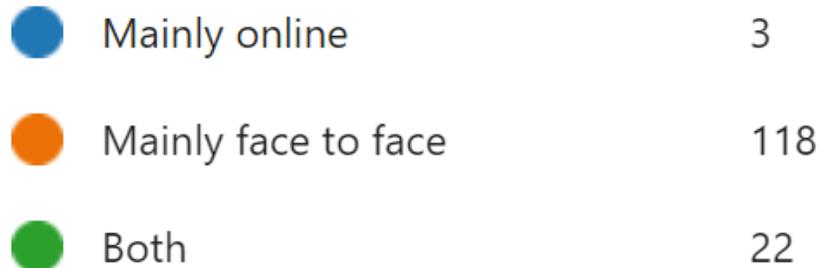


The biggest group is 20% or fewer. Over half of clubs report that under 40% become active members.

Most clubs only teach face to face

7. If you teach bridge, is it mainly online or face to face?

[More Details](#)



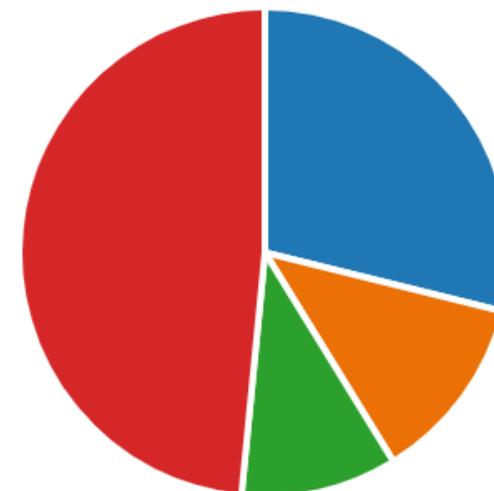
Teaching face to face is brilliant – but it is also possible that more clubs could take advantage of online to reach more people

What are the blockers for clubs not teaching?

5. If you do not teach bridge, what are the main reasons?

[More Details](#)

● We do not have any teachers	28
● We think it would be difficult to ...	12 ... find students
● No suitable premises	10
● Other (please state reason in co...	47



People join bridge clubs to play, not to teach, and we understand that! Clubs had a lot to say in the comments as our three options did not capture all the issues.

Other reasons for not teaching

- Nearby clubs or teachers do a great job
- “Members come to the club to play bridge. Teaching has never been considered as far as I know”
- All the reasons apply: no teachers, no students, no premises
- “Our membership is full and we have a waiting list”
- “A few years ago we ran the fast track ebu course ... of the 16 attendees, only one pair joined the club, and they have since stopped”

The three top requests from clubs

- Help with recruiting students
- Better course material
- Funding towards premises
etc

- We also got many comments with more details about how it is going and what would help. These comments are challenging to present but coming up!

A small selection of comments

- “Retention rate is higher naturally if the learning group can continue seamlessly as a playing group at the same place and preferably at the same time.”
- “Raising the profile of bridge nationally, so more people recognise it as a great way to make friends, keep the mind active, and have a lot of enjoyment, would help enormously..”
- “The average age of our members is 75 - 80 plus. No one has ever volunteered to teach.”
- “Our teacher is very enthusiastic . Unfortunately hardly any of the students join the main drive”

And more...

- “We only play one evening a week, renting the Village Hall. It would be impracticable, and too expensive, to rent it on another day just for teaching.”
- “Most of my students are mature adults, memory and learning at this time of life is not easy!”
- “Of the current 200 members well over half have come from our beginners course.”
- “We just need more students”
- “The biggest problem is the difference in standard between players, and encouraging new players to take the plunge into joining Bridge Games - once there - there is still an enormous Gulf between levels.”

Conclusions?

- More teachers would be good
- Help with recruitment is important
- Imaginative new ways to promote interest in bridge would help
- Simply starting lessons often does not work. It might be necessary to re-orient the club to accommodate novices: gentle duplicate, shorter and more social sessions?
- We **know** that in the right circumstances bridge teaching works fantastically well, bringing people a lot of joy as well as filling new sessions in clubs. **We are here to learn more about how to do it well.**
- If the problem is mainly funding, talk to us, we may be able to help!