



Bridge: A MindSport For All

Connects People, Challenges Minds

Summary Report Session 4A – New Approaches to Teaching and Recruitment

The *Bridge: A MindSport for All* (BAMSA) Conference 2021 was attended by academics, administrators, and bridge players from 62 countries across the world. Session 4A of the conference focused on New Approaches to Teaching and Recruitment. The presentations and the recording of the panel discussions can be accessed [here](#).

Dr Terrie-Lynn Thompson introduced the session and spoke about the pedagogies of technology and the pedagogies of bridge. She spoke about the concept of 'situated learning' and ideas of pedagogy as a 'situated activity'.

Panel 1 discussed learning and teaching in bridge and answered key questions in relation to ways to attract new learners online and for face-to-face bridge for different age groups. They considered whether there are specific obstacles and opportunities. Relating to effective ways to attract new players, Mary Sharp said that we need to think about how people learn. She continued to talk about the 'growth mindset' which is found in teaching more generally and is about building students' resilience and resourcefulness. Milan Macura next argues that there is no 'best way' of doing anything, there are multiple ways and for everyone a different kind of way might work. He speaks about the different motivations for different age groups of players and that we might need different approaches for teaching. Akiko Yanagisawa speaks about the challenges for promotion of bridge. Bridge for example is not well known in Japan, and it takes a lot of extra work just to explain the game when recruiting players. Stephanie Threlkeld suggests that it is important to focus on learning by doing, rather than by being talked to. She spoke about efforts to revamp a teaching programme and that, when the pandemic hit in particular, the challenge was to come up with an online programme which embodied the same principles.

Panel 2 discussed school and youth bridge and how to engage and retain learners. The session began with Marianne Harding from the Norwegian Bridge Federation and Morten Bilde Chair of the Danish School Bridge Association whose presentations and discussion were focused on answering questions about the key challenges and opportunities as well as tips for what works in practice and how to advance research of bridge. Marianne Harding started off by dispelling a myth that youngsters are not interested in learning bridge. She said many are simply unaware of what bridge is, so have no reason to say if they want to learn it or not. Morten spoke about the Danish school project, and he said it is important to understand 'the way people learn things are changing and that means that the way we teach bridge in general has to change'. He argued that it is important to have case study research on how bridge impacts learning. This is needed to get politicians to fund activity. They were joined by three more panellists, Sue Johnson, Michael Xu and Patty Tucker who continued the discussions and shared practical knowledge and experiences such as with 'New Tricks' in the UK, the founding of the Youth Bridge Association in 2020 and the Atlanta Junior Bridge group.

The session overall highlighted where there can be important shared learning of practical approaches to learning and teaching, which are diverse. It also illustrated scope for new academic research that is interdisciplinary, and engages with theory, as well as offering specific learning to use for policy engagement.

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