

School Bridge and Resources for Teaching Children

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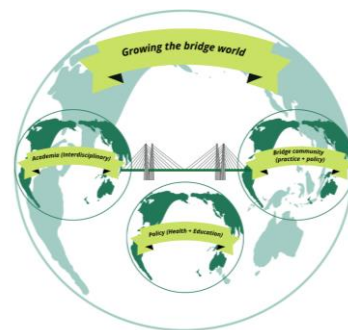
Bridge: A MindSport For All
Connects People, Challenges Minds




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BAMSA Aims

- Shift image of bridge
- Increase participation
- Ensure future sustainability

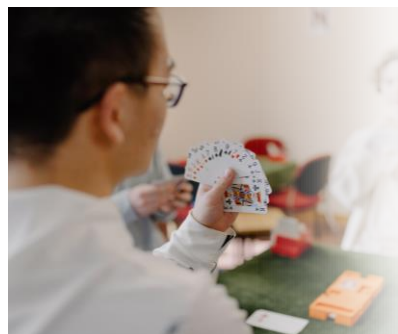


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Key project aim:

Work with bridge organisations and stakeholders

- disseminate the research evidence and reach new audiences
- co-develop toolkits, promotional materials, and accessible resources
- facilitate knowledge exchange and international partnership working



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- Research outputs for each study
- Academic papers
- Accessible summaries

www.bridgemindsport.org

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Bridging Schools project:
Bridge, Youth and MindSport Education

- Explore the **benefits** and **barriers** of bridge and mindsport education for young people – why do they play or not play?
- Develop **social science evidence** to help establish bridge as a partnership mindsport
- **Work with schools** to embed bridge in the curriculum



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Project overview: Bridging schools

- Fieldwork in four countries: USA, Scotland, England, Norway
- Data collection with young people, parents and bridge/schoolteachers
- Methods: interviews, focus groups, participant observation and a survey



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Five advisory groups

- Scotland
- England
- Norway
- USA
- International steering group



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Research questions

- What is the current degree of provision of bridge and mindsport education in the US, UK (Scotland and England) and Norway?
- What approaches to bridge teaching are currently utilised in schools?
- What do young people, parents, and school teachers think of the card game bridge and the way that bridge education is currently delivered?
- How can we attract more young people (and families) to bridge?



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Interview questions for young people

- **Their bridge journeys:** introduction to bridge; transitions; future plans
- **Fun moments:** Proud achievements; People who have made a difference
- **Benefits and likes**
- **Challenges:** youth-friendliness of bridge
- **Suggestions** for promotion and marketing



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Findings

- **Bridge:** a game for older people or "no idea what it is"
- **How can we promote bridge?** Some say social media, others say word of mouth is best
- **Recruiting students** – young people spreading the word has been effective; coming for the food, staying for the bridge
- **What makes us unique?** The social element (e.g. compared to chess)

"I thought 'bridge' meant building bridges with Legos!"



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Findings from the US

- Young people value the opportunity to **travel** and see new places – cited as the #1 reason for playing bridge
- Emphasis on fundraising and creating **experiences** with bridge – e.g. dinners, sightseeing
- What young people enjoy the most is **competing**
- They are also attracted to **scholarships** and the opportunity to win prize money with bridge



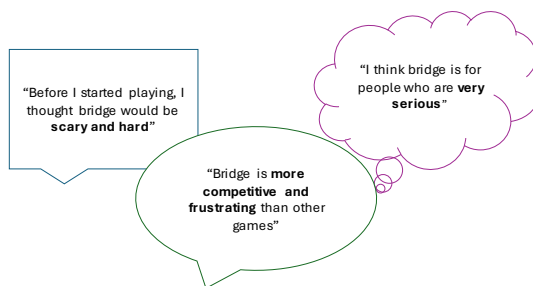
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Bridge is a different kind of fun

"I don't think Bridge is a game that you play for fun. I think that bridge is a game that you play to like have more experience. Not like Uno and stuff like that. You can't talk. You have to concentrate. It takes more thinking than somebody like a newcomer would expect."

"I feel like bridge is **only fun when you get to play the hand**. Other times it's boring. I want to sleep. I want to go home."

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Young people's suggestions

Being allowed to make mistakes and try things out

Bridge should not feel like another class

Spend more time playing and less time talking

"I feel like a lot of us are **overwhelmed** by the different amounts of plays there are"

"When it comes to **bidding** and other stuff like that, I kind of get confused."

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The views of school staff

Need to promote bridge so students, parents, teachers know what it is

Need chaperones for trips

Not able to grow club membership beyond core numbers (5-10 students)

Very supportive, see the value in it: critical thinking, strategy

"You need a teacher or coach to kind of treat it the same way a basketball coach would"

Many of the children in the after-school bridge clubs also attend chess clubs; try not to double schedule clubs

Bridge helps with school tasks requiring teamwork (presentations, other sports) and planning skills (e.g. going to college)

Bridge scholarships are great but still not as popular as basketball/ gymnastics scholarships

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Parents' views

I didn't know what bridge was. I thought she was building bridges like out of noodles or something. I didn't know it was a card game.

You know how when you watch basketball, it's just fun to watch. It's so easy to understand. Oh, you scored the hoop. Yeah. Whereas with bridge, if you have children observing that as opposed to playing it and, like, will they be interested?

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Youth bridge education in Scotland

- 10 schools, more to come
- All educational stages, ages 10-18
- After-school clubs
- Inter-school competitions and Generation Game (online)
- Festival of Bridge
- Summerschool



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The Scottish manifesto

from
"The Landscape of Youth
Bridge in Scotland"

Requirements, barriers,
and success strategies of
school bridge
implementation"

Success factors

- Committed **internal advocates** within schools
- Immediate **hands-on engagement** over theory
- A mix of **social and competitive** elements
- **Administrative buy-in** and institutional support are crucial for programme sustainability

<https://bridgemindsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/The-landscape-of-youth-bridge-in-Scotland-report.pdf>

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The Scottish manifesto

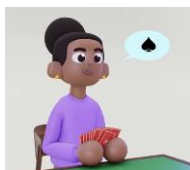
Primary challenges

- Limited **volunteer** capacity and **teaching resources** tailored to youth
- **High turnover** of key people leading successful programmes
- **Transition management** and retention
- Multiple activities **compete** for students' time and attention
- **Educational system** pressures

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- Build an **evidence base** demonstrating the educational benefits of bridge: we are on the case!
- Align bridge with **educational frameworks** and forge school partnerships
- Create standardised, **age-appropriate teaching materials**
- Develop **youth-friendly digital platforms** and gaming interfaces
- Engage diverse communities through **intergenerational** initiatives

Recommendations and strategic opportunities based on Scottish findings



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- Set up **transition support programmes** between educational stages
- Build **structured pathways** from school clubs to national representation
- Train and recruit **volunteers** in a sustainable manner
- Establish thriving **university bridge** societies and competitions
- Connect experienced players with youth through **mentorship programmes**



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New survey report: Children's views of bridge (Norway)



Survey of 135 children within 3 schools

- 22% had played bridge before (boys more than girls)
- 95% had played other card games before
- 41% would be interested in learning bridge after school

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Positives

- Play with friends and family
- Collaborate in a team
- Learn a new game
- Teach others how to play
- Become smarter
- Get better at bridge
- Have fun
- Win!

Negatives

- Requires concentration
- There is pressure to perform
- It takes a long time to learn and become good
- There are a lot of rules in bridge
- Need to have patience and wait for others to play their hand
- Losing!

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Working with trainee teachers

- Bridge demonstrations for future teachers at the University of Stirling
- A chance to explore the educational applications of bridge
- The feedback was overwhelmingly positive (average rating 8.25 out of 10)



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Feedback from the trainee teachers

The demo was well-received, informative and engaging.

But the initial bridge explanation was too fast!

Once they started playing, grasping the concepts was easier.



Bridge in Schools

Positive reception, potential to enhance math skills & community building

Requires proper resources, support, and gradual implementation

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Exploring how games can be used in education

Link bridge with educational priorities:

- Health and well-being
- Numeracy
- Literacy

Bridge for school teachers:

- Teacher training
- Teacher agency
- Professional development
- Team-building
- Game-based learning



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Working with school teachers

- Demonstration for school teachers
- Identifying ways that bridge could be incorporated into practice
- **Opportunities:** Lunchtime club for teachers/bridge in the curriculum
- **Challenges:** No time for bridge tuition, defaulting to bridge volunteers



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Teaching the teachers: Using Patty's materials

- **Long lead time** as syllabus created in the summer before school; Oct 2024 conference translates to August 2025 start!
- **'What's the catch'**
- **Opportunities:**
 - Matching the Jump Start Bridge curriculum to the national math core standards
 - Bridge within Professional Development (PD) hours

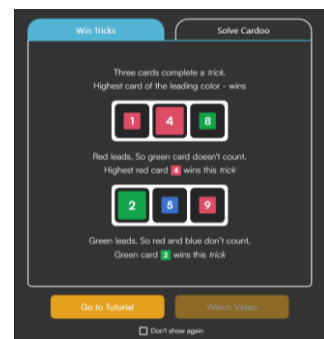


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Embedding bridge in a Computing class - example

- Teaching coding principles through bridge mini games
- Positive feedback on Cardoo <https://cardoo.today/>

"We landed on a mix of learning bridge and playing cardoo in between as the best method"



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BAMSA Learning & Teaching hub



- Aim: Support for all aspects of teaching children and youth
- Promotional materials in due course
- Feedback please



To access these resources, please visit:

<https://bridgemindsport.org/school-and-youth-bridge/>

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Flyer available

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Flyer design

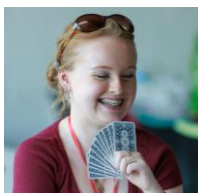
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Publicity for youth bridge

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Summer Camp 2025



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43 participants: Mix of complete beginners and experienced players
Superb feedback: 8/10 and above



New PhD student



“Stakeholder Approach to the Pedagogical Possibilities and Practices of the Mindsport Bridge”

- Understand how games are used in education and where bridge best fits in
- Bridge intervention study
- Surveys to test to test critical thinking skills and motivations before and after learning
- Numerical data to evidence impact of bridge

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Questions for you (please see hand out):

- What is your feedback on the findings?
- Are there any additional aspects or questions that you would like us to explore in the research?
- We need more critical voices: Do you know any young people who have dropped out?
- We need to hear parents' views: Can you nominate parents for interviews?
- Why is it that parents often don't play, but grandparents do? How can bridge become more 'intergenerational'?
- Have you got similar success factors and challenges to the ones we see in Scotland?
- Forging school partnerships is difficult: What can we do to be more closely aligned with schools? How could bridge be used in the classroom?
- How can we recruit more volunteers?

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Thank you!

We welcome your comments, questions, suggestions!

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