

# LESSONS ANYTIME!

*“When there is a session, there’s a lesson.”*

*by Carol Matthews*

While I was in Florida playing duplicate at the Posnack JCC in Davie ... a wonderful game run by Jeanni Blume, Jeanni showed me a table of beginners, self-teaching during the open game. I was amazed.

Jeanni said, “For 20 years I would schedule lessons, block out the time, plan the sessions, rent the room and hope they would come. Finally I decided to take students on a first come basis anytime I had a duplicate game scheduled. As soon as I had three or four students, I would start a class at whatever level they requested and supervise them DURING THE DUPLICATE GAMES, charging them the same fee as I charged for the duplicate game.

“These students would usually continue (according to their schedules) and as soon as I had three or four more students, I would start another table. Sometimes we have beginners and intermediates at different tables all playing lesson hands with handouts, talking and helping each other. This approach had added benefits, since when I had three or more tables finished with lessons, they had their own NEWPLICATE game.



Eventually they feed into the regular game on the same night they used to come to take lessons!”

When I came back to New York, we (my partner Susan Scholer & I) decided to try it at our club. How wonderful it is! We ask students to notify us before they come (up to 1/2 hour before). We use mini-lessons, which we take from the Bidding or Play of the Hand in the 21st Century books. There are many sources of material, but this is what we used. We print a page with the summary of a chapter and the deals at the end of that chapter, and we give a copy to each student. We also provide a duplicate board with each of the deals read to play. The students are asked to read the page and play the first deal. After they complete the play, they read how they should have bid and played the hand. Sometimes, they decide to replay it, according to the directions. They can always ask the Director to clarify a point, or to explain something they don’t get. Students can work at their own pace, without any pressure from anyone, and leave when they want.

The key is: When someone wants to learn bridge, all we need is to get four students together, and we can start them on a minimum-supervised, self-teaching program, that allows them to come and go as they please. The fee is reasonable ... just the cost of playing in a regular game.

Having the students actually come to the club to play is a big plus, because it takes away the fear of coming to a real duplicate game. They become familiar with the surroundings, and will be more comfortable when it is time to come to an actual duplicate game.

We promote “lessons anytime” on our website – You can learn to play bridge ... just call us and we’ll help arrange a group and a time.

I really want to thank Jeanni for that day at her club. I appreciate her generosity in passing on this great idea. I hope all of you will check out her special events at [www.bridgejeanni.com](http://www.bridgejeanni.com).

*Carol Matthews is a TAP Trainer, popular bridge teacher, and co-owner of the Smithtown Bridge Studio in Smithtown, New York*