

Curriculum Outline for a Beginning Go Class

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Activity 1

Goal: Pique their interest

Activity: Show a 19*19 empty Go board. Ask: What do you see? After a few comments say: 'I see infinity. You can put a stone anywhere on this board. There are as many possible Go games as there are stars in the universe. Go has been played for 4000 years. Millions of people play. How many games do you think have been played in 4000 years? (Rhetorical question).

Supplies: 19*19 Go Board, bowl demo board for all activities.

Vocabulary: Bowl, stones, Go Board

Activity 2

Goal: Build relationships between players. Establish a learning environment

Activity: Please choose your first Go buddy. (If there are an odd number, ask them to make one group of 3). After they have done this say: 'Today you will learn, and play, with your first Go buddy. Your job is to begin to learn the secrets of Go. While of course you want to play and win, in this class you also want to learn the many secrets of Go. So your Go buddy is both your opponent and your study partner.'

Activity 3

Goal: Understand the equipment.

Activity: Say: 'There are different sized Go Boards.' Show a 9*9 and ask, 'What is the size of this grid?' Show a 13*13 Go Board. Ask: 'What is the size of this grid?' Show a 19*19 Go Board. Ask: What is the size of this grid? Say: 'When you are learning it is better to play on smaller Go boards. The standard size of a Go board is 19*19, and this is the size Go board you ultimately want to play on. In this class, we'll often use smaller Go boards, which are better for basic learning and quicker games.'

Supplies: 9*9, 13*13, and 19*19 Go boards

Activity 4

Goal: Learn how to place stones on the board.

Activity: Demonstrate and let them practice.

Supplies: Go boards for each pair/triple, any size.

Activity 5

The First Secret of Go: Capturing Stones.

Goal: Learn to capture a stone(s). Set reasonable expectations.

Explain: The rules of Go are very simple, but, because of its infinite nature, it takes time to see the things that are happening on the Go board. Remember, whenever you try

something new, there is a learning curve. People learn at different speeds. Don't worry about this. As long as you are curious and interested, you can enjoy this game, where you can continue to learn more and more throughout your whole life.

Activities:

- Demonstrate the capture of one stone by surrounding it on 3 sides and ask where to play to complete the capture. Say, 'Yes, you have taken this stone's last liberty, or freedom.'
- Place two stones on the board and ask what points need to be occupied to capture and remove the two stones from the board.
- Leave one liberty and ask how the two stones can escape.
- Practice: Say: 'To learn to see the board, play with your Go buddy until one of you captures one stone. Black always plays first. Never let the stone touch the board until you are sure where you will play it. This is considered rude, and in a tournament once the stone touches the board it must be played there. Do this a couple times, and then play until one of you captures two stones. (15 minutes, circulate, point out problems.)
- Problem: Distribute the attached 9*9 diagram with many stones one move away from being captured. Ask the group: 'If it is Black's move, which White stones can be captured with one move?' If it is White's move, which Black stones can be captured with one move.?' Ask: 'What rule about capturing can you derive from this exercise?' (Answer: 'In a race to capture, the one with the most liberties wins.')

Supplies: Go Boards and stones.

Vocabulary: Liberty, freedom.

Activity 6

Learning To See The Board

Goal: Get players to see illegal moves

Activity: Tournament I. Play on 9*9 boards, in which the winner is the one who catches the most illegal moves.

Supplies: 9*9 boards, stones, prize for tournament winner, and the definition of an illegal move.

Definition of illegal moves:

- a. Playing a stone that takes the last liberty of one's own stone or stones.
- b Taking an opponent's stone or stones off the board before all their liberties are occupied.
- c. Putting a stone on the board, picking it up, and then playing somewhere else.

d. Leaving a completely surrounded stone, or group of stones, on the board (not an illegal move per se, but, you gotta do it!!!)

Activity 7

Practice Capturing

Goal: Practice capturing stones.

Supplies: 9*9 boards, prize for tournament winner.

Activities:

1. The first person to capture a stone wins.
2. The first person to capture two stones wins.
3. Tournament II: Whoever captures the most stones wins.

Activity 8

Practice Surrounding Territory

Goal: Learn to surround territory

Supplies: 9*9 boards, prize for tournament winner.

Activity: Tournament III. The person who surrounds the most territory AND captures the fewest stones wins.

Teaching Point for activities 2 and 3: "There are two ways to win: capture territory and capture stones. In general, territory is more important than stones."

Activity 9

The Second Secret of Go: How to Win (Count)

Goal: Learn how to count and how the game ends.

Activity: Distribute the attached completed game. Say: 'Here is a completed 9*9 game. (Leave some dame points.) The person who won has a larger total of territory plus captured stones. This is Black's territory, and, this is White's.' Ask, 'Who won?'

Ask: 'How do we know this game is over?'

Explain: When a player thinks he cannot capture any more stones, or, surround any more territory, he passes. The other player can either pass or play again. The game ends when both players pass.

Ask: 'What happens if White plays a stone at A, Black passes, and White doesn't capture any stones or territory? (A is a place in Black's territory that is no threat.)'

Ask: 'What happens if White plays at B and Black passes? (B is a place in Black's territory that threatens to capture something.)'

Explain: An invasion may or may not work. If it doesn't, and your opponent doesn't respond to it, you've just given him a point...that's very kind of you.

Ask: Why did the players leave these points open when they passed?

Explain: Points between the borders of the territory cannot be surrounded and are not worth any points, so players pass and end the game without filling them. After both players pass, either one can fill these points so that the borders of the territories all touch. (N.B. This is Japanese counting. There is also a Chinese counting method, but we won't go into it now. If you are curious, Google "Chinese Go Rules" to find numerous resources.)

Supplies: Handout, finished 9*9 game, w. note of Black and White captures. (Two invasion stones are marked spots A and B.)

Vocabulary: Territory, invasion, *dame* points, counting.

Activity 10

Play Go, the real game

Goal: Practice playing Go. Learn to see the board.

Activity: Play Go on small boards with your first Go buddy.

Say: 'Please call me over for any questions or disputes. Strange things may happen on the Go board, and I've many secrets yet to tell you.'

When the first Ko appears, stop the class, put it on the board and say, 'What do you think of this?' Let the class show the problem, ie, that you can capture back and forth forever. Say, 'Ko is the Japanese word for infinity, so you can see why this situation is called 'ko'. Explain the rule of Ko, and, Ko threats.

Supplies: Go boards and stones.

Vocabulary: Ko

If it is Black's move, which White stones can be captured with one move?
If it is White's move, which Black stones can be captured with one move?



