**Go Skills Guide C: Lessons C01-C12**

**C01: Corner invasions**

Show some standard sequences following from invading at the 3-3 point under a 4-4 stone. Also look at the situation of invading a larger territory based on the corner or side.

A good activity to do in the class is to have a large square area in a corner surrounded by a solid wall of one colour and the other player has to invade. For a 9x9 or 10x10 square this can be quite a balanced problem. The teacher might try to see if they can invade a smaller area e.g. 6x6 with the children trying to defend. The children could try to invade a larger area with the teacher trying to stop them.

This activity gives the idea of what size of area can be successfully invaded. It also shows what does and doesn’t work when stopping invasions, and it can give some life and death practice.

**C02: Opening ideas**

The children may be able to work out for themselves, or may already know by now:

* Where is the best place to make the opening moves (on a board at least as big as 13x13)
* Once they know it is in the corner area, how far in from the corner? Why?
* How much should the stones be spread out in the opening? Why?

**C03: Strong and weak groups**

Discuss what characteristics can make a group strong, for example:

* Can’t be cut apart
* Surrounds some space
* Has lots of liberties
* Is not shut in
* Already has two eyes
* Could clearly make two eyes if needed
* Doesn’t have enemy stones nearby
* Is stronger than the enemy stones nearby

Show some example positions and ask the children to identify strong and weak groups of stones

It is good to have the idea that it’s not necessary to defend strong groups or useful to attack enemy strong groups. However, weak groups of your own or the opponent may need to be dealt with urgently. If a group is very weak, it’s chances of survival are usually:

* Make a safe shape / two eyes (defend itself like a tortoise)
* Run away (like a rabbit)
* Fight back against the enemy stones (like a wolf)

**C04: Big and small moves, sente and gote**

New players often tend to play far too often near the opponent’s last move and don’t look at the possibility of playing elsewhere on the board.

A good plan is to think:

* Do I have to respond to the opponent’s move? Is it threatening something that worries me a lot?
* If not, where is the most important place I can play somewhere else on the board

This is a great way to think, and it’s a good thing to aim at, but it is not simple because first there is the concept of whether a move needs a reply or not, and secondly there is the judgement as to what are the big moves.

Use some puzzles to practice this. It’s good if the large and small move options are very clearly distinguished e.g. if the large move is playing in a big empty area or invading a large territory whereas teh small move is an endgame move.

**C05: Necessary and unnecessary moves**

Use a puzzle set where some positions show defensive moves that are not needed, and others show essential defensive moves. The object is to tell the difference between the two, to help to decide when we need to defend and when we can look for a big move elsewhere.

**C06: Good and bad shape**

This is a complex topic, and it’s good to introduce it only when needed e.g. when making bad shape has become one of the key things holding back some players from getting stronger. The most usual case is when children make a lot of empty triangles when better moves are available.

The example sheet in this curriculum shows some examples of good shape and bad shape. There’s a sheet of puzzles to practise these shapes.

Some good resources to use are:

* Making Good Shape (volume 3 of the Kiseido basics series)
* Good Shape and Bad” chapter of Kageyama’s Lessons in the Fundamentals of Go
* Shape Up book by Charles Matthews and Seong June Kim https://cdn.online-
* go.com/shape\_up\_v1.2.pdf - especially the first two chapters
* Empty Triangles youtube video about 12 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXTKewQwfTs>

**C07: Don’t play too close!**

A common mistake is playing too close to weak stones that you are trying to attack. This can give the weak stones something to push back against and can strengthen them.

This topic is best introduced when it occurs in games played by the children, when you can explore whether keeping more distance from the attacked stones would work better.

**C08: Endgame moves/size**

Show some basic late endgame moves, such as one point gote moves. Introduce the idea of being able to count exactly how much difference it makes who plays first in one of these situations, and whether it is sente for one or both players.

Show the hane and connection at the edge, showing both the sente and gote versions. Count how much it is worth.

Use some puzzles on counting the size of moves and whether they are sente or gote. The Korean 1612 book has many of these. It’s also good to look at some puzzles where the purpose is to decide the order of playing the late endgame moves. The GoMagic skills tree has some good examples.

**C09: Defending and reducing territory**

Show some whole board positions where there is a weakness that one side can exploit (like the Trouble Master problems of In-Seong Hwang, but in this case some easier examples are needed). There are some examples on the GoMagic skills tree.

This is to improve the skill of looking round the board to find potential weaknesses in both the player’s own and the opponent’s position.

Show some positions where one side needs to defend their territory or the other player can reduce/invade

**C10 Estimate the score**

Discuss why it is important to estimate the score during the game.

The children may be able to work out for themselves that if you are ahead you may only need to ensure that you hang on to the territory that you have already mapped out; but if you are behind you may need to attack and invade. Common mistakes are to not defend large but vulnerable areas of territory when ahead (e.g. to prevent corner invasions) and not to invade when behind until too late (when the opponent has strengthened their territory too much).

Practice estimating the score in some example 9x9 positions. Start with simpler ones which are already in the endgame and which are not too close so it should be easier to tell who is ahead.

**C11 Making a base**

Why is it important to make a base? Look at the situation where a group has no space on the edge for eyes and has to run into the centre - the opponent can often make territory on one or both sides while attacking. Contrast this with a group that has a stable base.

Look at the most basic base shape, the two point jump on the third line, which can’t usually be cut. Show how it can be good to invade at a point where a base could be made on either side. What about the situation where a small group or lone stone can either form a base or be denied one depending on who moves first in the area? The children may be able to work out for themselves why this situation is particularly urgent.

**C12 More invasions**

Look at some more situations where it is possible to invade e.g. the three point jump from the third to the fourth line. The Elementary Go Series book Attack and Defence has some examples.