

FIDE Pilot Project INFINITE CHESS: Experience and feedback

Kanthi Sarjoo
The Browns' School



INITIAL PROCESS

Parental Consent forms were sent out on the 26 January
All Participants responded positively



THE BROWNS' SCHOOL

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26 January 2022

Dear Parents/ Guardians

Re: FIDE Infinite Pilot Project

We are pleased to inform you that your child _____ in _____ was chosen to participate in the FIDE Infinite Pilot Project 2022. The project aims to investigate the impact of chess on children with ASD. The Federation has chosen the KZN Chess Academy as the Supervisor. The teacher, Mrs. Sarjoo is trained and provided with specific workbooks to work with your child. A coach is also provided to oversee the chess lessons at no cost to you. You will be required to provide feedback regarding your child's behaviour and overall performance.

The lessons (30 minutes) will be conducted on Friday from 12:30-13:30. Two groups have been accommodated for the project. Sessions will be from 12:30-13:00 and 13:00-13:30.

Permission is required for photo and video recording of your child, for the purpose of the pilot project of FIDE INFINITE CHESS (teaching children with autism spectrum disorder how to play chess), the research within the current program and the announcement of results.

Photo and video footage of your child, results of research and organizers' observations can be used only for the following purposes:

- Development and filling of project's educational program INFINITE CHESS.
 - Publications on the official website as well as official social networks of the International Chess Federation and its partners, international media, collections of scientific works and journals.
 - Demonstration at thematic seminars and conferences.
 - Other goals for the purpose of project's development and its promotion.
- Permission is also required for the processing of the results, observations and surveys by FIDE, as well as photo and video processing which includes the following actions: processing (incl. data collection, systematization, data accumulation, storage, clarification, update, modification), usage, data sanitization, blocking and destruction of personal information.

The consent comes into effect after the moment of signing and until achieving the goals of processing of personal data for an unlimited period of time.

All COVID-19 protocols will be followed.

Please contact Mrs. Sarjoo if you have any queries regarding this pilot study.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

K.D. Sarjoo (Mrs.)
Chess teacher


B. Hattings (Mrs.)
Principal

Selection criterion:

- Learners must be between the ages of 8-12 years
 - Academic Language competency at Grade 1 level and above
 - Medically well managed in terms of behavior and attending skills
 - Diagnosis of ASD from a medical profession
 - Parental consent requested before commencement
 - Have a keen interest in chess
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- Parents were well informed regarding their child's participation and the parents involvement in the project in terms of providing feedback
 - Teachers were informed regarding the details of the project and that their feedback was important





Classes commenced on 11 February
Thursdays –Group of 7 children aged 9-11 years
Two groups were held on Friday
Group One consisted of 11 children aged 8-10 years
Group Two consisted of 8 children aged 11-13 years

At the end on March 2022, two additional children joined the program.
The children were in the mainstream section of the school and were keen to play chess. One was accommodated in the Thursday group
One in the Friday Group 2 group.

Each session was 30 minutes as the school timetable has 30-minute slots.

Where is the project running,

At The Browns' School

A dedicated room was created in order to commence with the project (Photo)

EQUIPMENT:

- Demo Board
- Floor Board
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers
- Infinite Project Programme - workbook
- Laminated photos of chess pieces and how they move
- A social story on the introduction of chess pieces
- Each child was given an exercise book in order to stick in the homework and communication between parent and teacher was encouraged through this book
- Glue
- Pencil
- Timer
- Stickers-for rewards
- Hand sanitizer
- Surface sanitizer



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Methodological guide for teachers to conduct Chess classes when working with children with autism spectrum disorder.



- Main guide for planning and delivery of the chess lessons
- Provides a well-thought out hierarchical guidelines as to how to introduce chess to children with ASD
- Practical exercises and worksheets accompany each lesson which provides both the child and parent with support

GETTING STARTED:

- Research indicates that children with ASD benefit best from a room that is organized, less distracted.
- Minimal furniture and have clearly marked areas.
- We have a dedicated chess room that was used for both children in the “mainstream” sector of the school and for children with ASD.
- Children with ASD were verbally prepared regarding the lessons.
- Chess was included on their visual schedules in the classroom



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- THERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUES:

- It is important to ensure that the environment is conducive to learning:
 - -sensory issues are accommodated by making sure that the lighting is suitable for the children
 - each child is comfortable where they are seated
 - check the children's level of tolerance to the noise of fans
 - Tone and loudness of the chess teacher/coach
 - dress code of the chess teacher/coach



When presenting the materials to the children, it is important

To be :

Clear and concise

Speak in short sentences

Pause and make sure that the children understand the concept

Test and retest

Present the information on various platforms e.g. demonstrations,

Role play, social stories, on demo board, on the floor boards

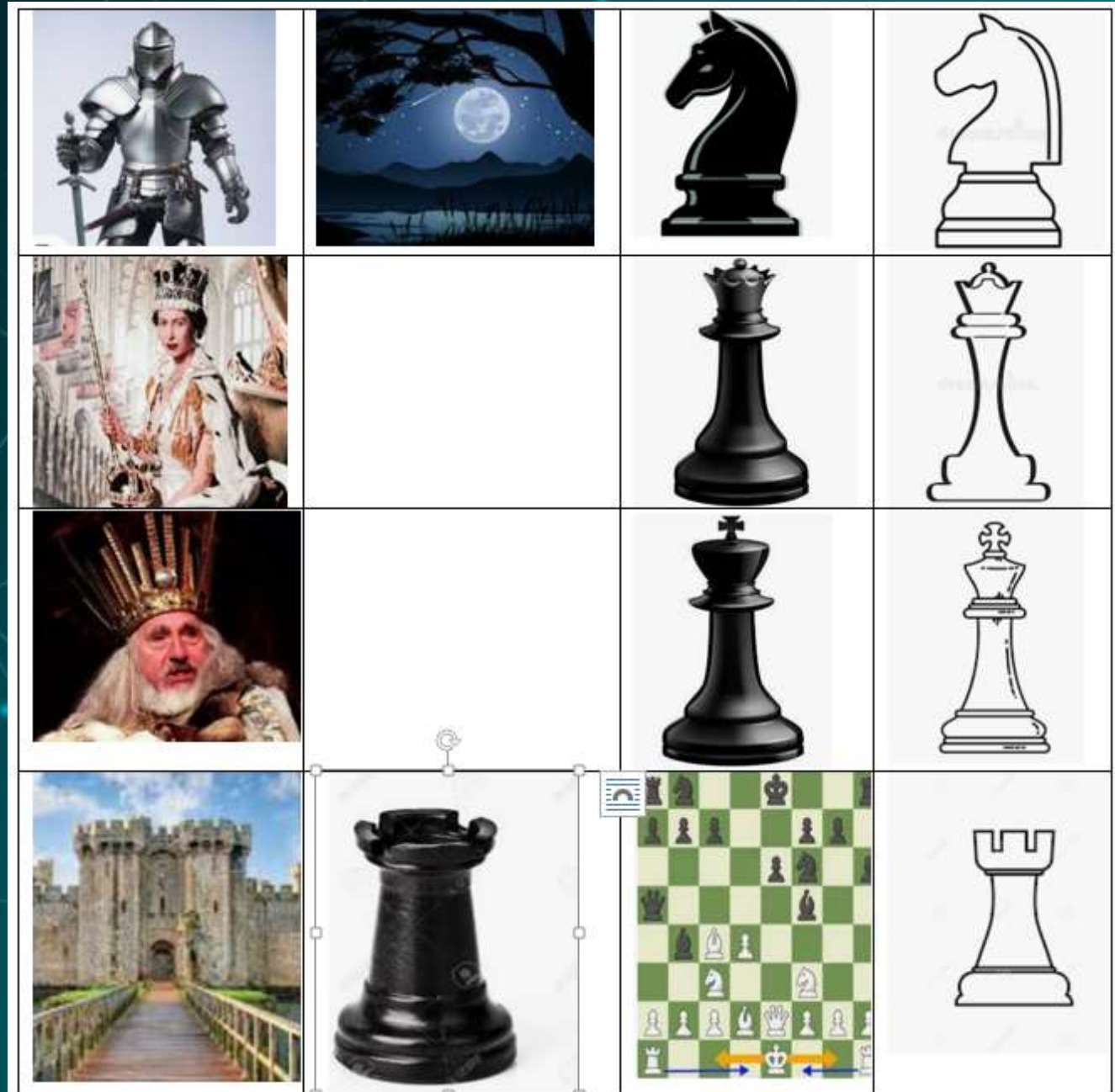
Reinforce with worksheets

Revise the concept in the next lesson

Go slow



- Remember that chess is a language that we are presenting
- The concept KNIGHT, QUEEN, KING, CASTLING can be
- Ambiguous e.g



Social Stories and Posters



This is a queen.



This is a king.



This is a pawn.



This is a rook.



This is a knight.



This is a bishop.



This is a chess game.



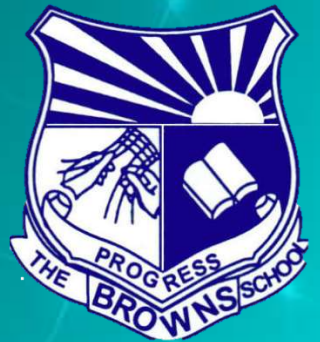
I can play chess.





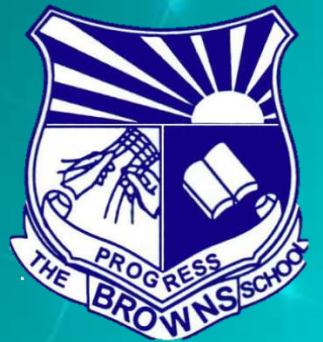
The chess teacher is pointing to the corner squares on the chess board .

Particular difficulties are spatial concepts





The child is given an opportunity to show the targeted square on the Demo board.
Also creates lovely opportunities' for turn taking





Here the child was given a target square word e.g. centre, corner. He had to find it on the Floor board





Group activity to find
corner squares
Encourages problem
solving skills





Finding the ranks and files on their own boards



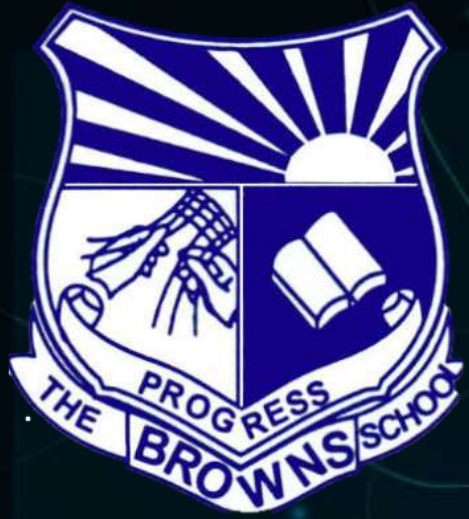
Doing the worksheets as a class group
Lovely opportunity to work on listening
skills





Getting to know the chess
pieces
From 3D to 2D





Richard is showing off his sticker for getting his board ready for a MINI GAME

The kids listening to the teacher by choosing the pieces called out



Playing PAWN's PARADE



Nkazi is in the Autistic 5 class
And is 10.3 years old.
He is unable to write and can
read a few simple words.
Minimal speech
After attending chess lessons,
he appears more aware
and definitely knows when
it is his Chess day.
He talks about it upon entering
The school yard.
Drives his teacher crazy!!!



Siphesihle avoids most written tasks at school.
Surprised us all with her drawings and expression
of her feelings

MOTIVATIONAL AWARDS



This certificate is awarded to

in

for

Good knowledge of the chessboard

(Concepts like corner, edge, centre, files and ranks were assessed)

Date: _____

Ranthi Sarjoo-Chess coach and co-ordinator

Observations

- Children were motivated to come to the lessons
- They needed demonstrations and lots of repetition
- Sometimes the week's events influenced their participation in the lesson
- The words chosen to provide explanation were differed from group to group e.g., horizontal-side to side/ left to right
- The more competent children were slightly less motivated and wanted the lessons to move at a faster pace
- The room has to be structured, well organised and less distracting at all times
- Children were always motivated by rewards i.e.. stickers, awards and introducing some competitive games



Comments from Teachers

- Teachers noticed that the learners showed a keen interest in the chess lessons
- Chess sessions were used as a reward to encourage “good behavior” in the classroom
- The learners showed greater interest in mathematical concepts especially with spatial relations
- The learners appeared more interactive in other social situations
- Learners were able to relate their experiences regarding the chess lesson to their teacher spontaneously



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Observations

- Each child had a specific way of comprehending the information shared e.g. pawn-higher and lower/ forward and backwards etc.
- Always test and teach as revision of concepts is vital to the game
- Using different mediums e.g. role play, adapting social games, watching videos, using puzzles and word games encouraged better comprehension and interaction
- Always be aware of the child's environment-teacher absent/ lessons being cancelled influences their emotional state when coming to the lesson



LIMITATIONS

- Lessons restricted to 30 minutes-too short to complete a concept
- Time constraints –preparation and follow-up
- Lessons cancelled-holidays, natural disasters, school events
- Could not assess videos-loadshedding
- Resources are limited



Thank you to

- Infinite Project and Nadzeya Krauchuk and the INFINITE PROJECT team for their support and guidance
 - Erick Takawaria for his ongoing support and training
 - Mrs. Hattingh, our school principal for her constant support and encouragement
 - To all the children and parents who participated in this project
 - And who always provided us with valuable information that guided our intervention programs
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- KANTHI SARJOO
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