



Secrets of Teaching Martial Arts More Effectively

by
Keith Pascal

© Copyright 2001, Kerwin Benson Publishing

All rights reserved. With the exception of a printed copy made for the purchaser's ease of reading and brief quotations for the purpose of review, no part of this book may be reproduced (nor transmitted) in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

This book is designed to provide authoritative information with regard to teaching martial arts. It is sold with the understanding that neither the author, the publisher, nor anyone involved with the book is engaged in legal advice, or advice and expertise for your specific situation or set of circumstances.

If expert counseling of any kind, including legal, is required, the services of competent professional people should be sought for each specific area in question. And even with professional help, still do your own additional research.



Dedication

I thought about dedicating this book to all of the caring and talented teachers who have touched my life -- but I wouldn't know where to begin.

My mentors -- Steve Golden, Emmanuel Hatzantonis, Bill Stark and my father all helped to solidify my methods of teaching.

But I also owe credit to many teachers whose various techniques rubbed off on me in college -- Sylvia Giustina, Jack Powers, Bill Strange, George Sugai, Luis Verano, Maurizio Vianno, and a host of others.

And what about my colleagues during my years in public education -- Ralph Mohr, Jerry Kotsovos, Eleanor Dinkins, Mike Horowitz, Don Cataldo, Sheryl Barnum, Mike Stasack and the list could go on and on. Instead, I dedicate this book to just one lady

This one is for Kate

She is absolutely the only person who always offers me hope, lifts me up when I am down, and strengthens my constitution to handle the vicissitudes of life.

She is a realistic sounding board for my ideas. And she keeps my head out of the clouds, while making sure that my feet don't touch ground.

For all of this, as well as being a great wife and mother of our child ... this book is for her. Did I mention that she is a great teacher too?



Acknowledgments

Thanks always to **Steve Golden**. Most of my martial arts knowledge is **Steve Born**. And always a separate round of thanks to **Steve** and his wife, **Nancy**, for content-editing my materials.

My wife, **Kate**, plays an important part in the editing process too. I always hand her a rough draft of something, and then beg that she drop everything to help me out.

Thanks to my students who allowed their **mugs** to appear in the various photos of this ePackage. Specifically, thanks to **Kenny Bischel**, **Woody Edwards**, **Jacob Means**, **Caleb Pierce**, **Ben Rayack**, and **Mike Russell**.

Thanks to my Mom and Dad (**C. Bennett** and **Ilene Pascal**). They always seem to get a hand in the editing of some of my materials. They hold me to elevated standards ... and they do a lot of **Quinn-sitting**, so I can write.



Contents

Dedication.....	3
Acknowledgments	4
Table of Contents	5
1) What To Change In Order To Make Your Students Better	10
2) How To Become An Awesome Teacher.....	15
3) Change The Environment For Impressive Results.....	27
4) Give Your Students A Martial-Arts Makeover	35
5) The Art of Adding Ingredients ...Without Spoiling The Soup	57
6) Guaranteed Successful Implementation	64
7) Make Your Class Size The Perfect Class Size	74
8) Emphasizing Your Students' Strengths	81
9) Belts, Certificates, and Blueberry Muffins	87
10) The Best Way To Use Evaluation To Your Advantage	98
11) The Road To making Your Students Great	110
Appendix A	129
Appendix B	146
Resources	148

Introduction

Are you ready to make your students hundreds of times more effective than they already are? Do you want new ways to motivate your better students to progress even further? Do you wish you had a way to eliminate those glaringly bad habits found in your struggling students?

You'll learn how to give your students a martial arts makeover. You'll learn to emphasize their strengths, build on their weaknesses, and even add new variables to the learning experience.

This book provides you with many approaches to improving your teaching. You find out how to make these changes without ruining what already works. You won't add too many ingredients to the pot.

You can even guarantee successful implementation of these methods -- just read chapter six.

You get specific advice for getting students to surpass your skills. You get a power method for cranking out superior students every time. You'll learn to challenge your students to be more goal-oriented and to work harder towards improving.

I will show you how to do all of the above and more. And your students (and maybe even you) will improve, if you can provide two ingredients.

To incorporate all of these secrets into your teaching you need to have an **open mind** and a little **patience**. That's all.

I am not asking you to follow any new fads; you don't have to jump on the current bandwagon. I know all about bandwagons and their dangers. I should; I was a high school educator for over a decade. They are constantly bandwagon jumping.

I also taught a couple of years at the college level. These educators also have their bandwagons and new pop theories.

I have witnessed bandwagons while earning the endorsements that allowed me to teach from Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade.

With a Master's in the Art of Teaching, I still read about fads all of the time -- everyone is still in search of the Holy Grail. No, you definitely don't have to buy into any new pop-program.

I will however, give you some solid tips, tactics, and techniques (to borrow the subtitle from our on-line magazine). Some of the theory comes straight from our martial arts studio, some from what I have learned from other instructors over the years, and a percentage of it is founded in educational theory combined with my classroom experience.

• • • • •

Why a Book on Teaching Martial Arts?

So, why a book on teaching martial arts more effectively? If you're a black belt, doesn't that imply that you already know how to teach?

Actually, you, my readers, determined the subject. When queried through a survey over the Internet, the majority of martial artists wanted to know better ways of teaching their art.

Funny, I would have thought that making more money in their schools would have won, hands down. Well, it didn't. And neither did a book on beating your competition, nor one on improving your school's image.

I really thought that one of my money-related subjects would have been the winner. I was ready to start plugging away at Marketing Methods for Martial Arts Schools.

Well, teaching wins. That's fine with me. Even though I have left the high school classroom to pursue my writing career in the martial arts, I still fancy myself a teacher. I still teach martial arts, and I write, so others may learn.



How to Use this Book

Remember, my first criterion for making this work was having an open mind. So, check any skepticism you might have at the door. If you aren't going to approach this with an open mind, you'll probably eliminate some very workable techniques. You'll gloss over some really useful nuggets. So, keep that mind open to new methods and possibilities, OK?

The second criterion was having some patience — not because it will take a long time to see any results. You can try some of these methods in your very next class, and you will see results during that same class.

I say that you need patience, because some of your new methods won't work right off the bat. You may need to “tweak” some of your new instructional techniques.

Not all of this is going to be a piece of cake. You're going to have to put some thought into all of this improvement. You may have to redesign the way you teach class. If it comes to that, you'll need a dose of patience for that too.

Now, let's get down to the best way to learn from this book. First, read it with a notepad in hand — or on screen, if you are reading this in e-book format and prefer taking notes on your computer. Jot down ideas that you want to try. Also, write down some of the points that you disagree with.

You may also want to test the validity of those points. I am still trying to keep your skepticism in check. How can you be skeptical, if you verify the results (or lack of any results) in your new methods?

If you are new to using a notebook in martial arts, please read Appendix A. It will give you some ideas on how to make use of this valuable device.

Go all the way through the book with notepad in hand. By the time you get to the end, you should have a collection of tips to try.

This book should also get your creative juices flowing. Think of your own ideas to experiment with too. It's up to you how you'll arrange the ideas in your notebook. Look to Appendix A for ideas.

Are you going for the small changes? Or do you want to plan a complete overhaul? Reread Chapters Six and Ten to make your changes go more smoothly.

Have a separate spot in your notebook to evaluate and analyze your results. Start modifying to make your changes better and stronger. Have a way to keep track of what works -- you want the future benefit of keeping the change as a permanent part of your repertoire.

Also, let me know if I can help in any way. Sometimes, you need someone else's opinion of the results of one of your changes. If you can't find an advice giver, e-mail me. Maybe I can help.

kp@kerwinbenson.com

Keith Pascal



1

What to Change in Order to Make Your Students Better

While there are literally thousands of changes you could make to your teaching of the martial arts, there are **very few variables involved**.

You can change you, yourself — you can make changes in your behavior both while teaching and while not. You can make changes in the way you teach, both in presenting to the students and interacting with them.

You might also change your environment. You could change the conditions of your training environment. And you could also change where you teach.

You could change your class by adding a new variable into the studio. You add training equipment and devices (gear, tools, weapons, etc.).

And **you could change your students**. I am not talking about swapping all of your beginners for blackbelts with finely trained muscles and mesomorphic bodies. I mean implementing new techniques to train them more effectively, so their skill level changes.

After all, isn't that the goal of teaching martial arts more effectively? Ultimately, you want your students to improve, and to keep on improving.



If You Don't Have the Time for Big Changes

Yes, I do want you to read this book from cover to cover (or from beginning of the PDF file to the end). On the other hand, if you just don't have time for a comprehensive change, I suggest that you concentrate on one particular area.

If you don't have the time to work on all the above-mentioned variables, **concentrate on your students**. You will see a more noticeable change, when you give them specific techniques to practice, or change how they interact with each other, than if you change some aspect of your personal behavior.

The exception to this is if you are using your behavior as a reinforcer to change. An example would be complimenting a particular move that a student makes, and saying "no," when the student performs it incorrectly. If the student looks up to you, and respects you as the teacher, then you would assume that the student would want to reduce the number of "no"s and increase the compliments. It's human nature — it's also **operant conditioning** in psychology.

So, if you don't have the time, my advice is to work at directly affecting your students. With some of the exercises, such as limiting behaviors, you'll see results in your students before the end of class. It's amazing. And very rewarding.



If You Do Have The Time

If you do have the time to make a comprehensive change, then continue reading — and start planning. You should pick some elements from each

variable. Work on improving your students, your environment, your training tools, and, of course, yourself. We should never be so proud that we don't seek self improvement.

Several years ago, I did the following useful exercise. Back then, I had the time. Now, I would probably video tape one class only for review later. Nowadays, I don't have the time.

Anyway, I made two sets of notes. First, I carefully watched many of my classes. I took notes on some general problems. I also took notes on what was going right about the class. Here's a summary of what I came up with:

The Uggggh List:

- Absolutely everyone is telegraphing their motions ahead of time.
- More than half of them lack power in their punches.
- 3/4 of them have problems sustaining repetitive exercises. They fizzle.
- 7/8 of them need balance (full body control).



The Good List:

- They are starting to get tighter angles when turning off-line.
- All of them can roll in chi sao (sticky hands).
- All of them are leading with their strong sides forward.
- They all feel comfortable with an escrima stick.
- They all have started moving the weapon (hand or foot) first.



For my second set of notes, I did some creative wishing. Instead of a list, I wrote a mini-essay. I suppose it makes more sense to make another list, so you can compare them side by side. But I felt the need to get creative with more complete ideas and sentences.

I gleaned this idea from Barbara Sher's book **Wishcraft** (Ballantine, 1979), but instead of writing down my ideal day, as she suggests in her book, I wrote about my students performing to my ideal, with good habits, and well-developed skills.

Here's an excerpt of the essay. I have only included the part that relates to the above list. In other words, I knew that I wanted these specific improvements. The other parts of the essay were just creatively brainstormed ideas and traits of the ideal martial artist:

...all of my students move their weapons (strikes) first. They do so, smoothly and quickly, starting with their strongest side in a lead stance. There are no telegraphing motions visible before the strike. This makes them seem even faster.

During class, they practice all of the repetitive exercises with enthusiasm. They continue practicing with power and precision, until the instructor says, "stop." They do not fizzle out when tired — they exhibit more self-discipline than that.

I want to be able to see lower centers of gravity in their stances. They maintain good balance, even while putting power in their punches. And they have the power and technique to do so.....



Can you see how useful it would be to see where you're starting from? Then you look at where you want to finish, the ideal. When you see the gap between the two, **often the solution presents itself as to how to get there, from here.**

At least you see the distance that you are going to travel. Sometimes the distance between where they are and where you want them to be, with a certain technique or ability, is less than you expected. If so, be grateful.

If the distance is greater, **don't panic**. You'll break your goal for them down into more manageable chunks.



Let's end this chapter with two worn out clichés. They are my attempt at getting you to do this exercise. Take the time to analyze where your students are, and where your students need to be.

This book is filled with ideas for improvement, if you're having trouble coming up with a list or two.

But back to our old clichés:

1) Question: How do you eat an elephant?

Answer: One bite at a time.

2) “If you don't know where you're going, then how are you ever going to get there?”



2

How to Become an Awesome Teacher

Boy, have I seen some pretty incredible teachers in my lifetime — including my father, **C. Bennett Pascal**, **Bill Stark**, my secondary education mentor, and my primary martial arts teacher, **Steve Golden**.

There are a slew of others — too many to mention here. I have also witnessed a few horrendous teachers with terrible teaching practices — I won't mention names in order to avoid acknowledging the guilty with any specific recognition.

This chapter focuses on the good. There are many more desirable traits than I could mention here. This will get you started. In fact, **there is enough here to help you shape yourself into Mega-Teacher.**



Are You Nice or Are You a Meanie?

There is an age-old argument among high-school teachers that you don't have to be liked in order for the students to learn. **Some martial arts teachers also prefer the rough, drill-sergeant attitude.**

"After all," they reason. "**This isn't a game.** I am preparing them to defend themselves in the real world. And the real world isn't just a stroll through a green field. **It's rough out there.** The meaner I am to my students in the dojo, the better chance they'll have of defending themselves in a dark alley. So there."



Well, yes and no. **I believe in making their learning environment as real as possible, within reason.** And occasionally, I do get a bit rough with my students — I said a bit rough. It does help to prepare them for the nasties out there.

This doesn't mean I have to act like an ogre. Neither do you.

Students may still be able to learn from the jerks out there, but it has been proven that they learn more, and are more intrinsically (self-) motivated, when they enjoy the learning. This means also enjoying the teacher.

I sometimes think the ones who argue in favor of the cold-teacher point of view, are those who can't figure any other way to motivate their students. **There is a better way.**



Improve Your Reputation with Options

One way to immediately be thought of as nicer, is to occasionally give your class a few options. I use this as a bonafide tactic, when my students are in a right-brain/ left-brain dilemma. You'll read about that technique a little later in this chapter.

Giving options makes your students feel as though they have some

say in their learning. They also don't rebel as much to an idea, that they might otherwise not be too crazy about:

“Class, we’re going to punch now. In sets of 100 punches. But you have a choice. Would you rather do eight sets of punches now, and get them over with? Or, would you rather break them into manageable chunks and do three sets now, three sets in the middle of class, and two sets at the end?”

• • • • •

You'll notice a few key points about the above. I am manipulating them in the sense that **not doing the punches is not an option**. Nor will I allow them to break it into ten sets of 100 hundred each, which would equal 1,000.

I also **don't give them options that don't exist**. I didn't offer double the amount with sets of 50 each. Nor were they offered sets of 200 —some of my students would lose their technique that they haven't built up to yet.

Did you notice that I gave benefits to both sides?

If we do the punches in one shot this gets them over with. That's the advantage, or so the students think. If they do them in the beginning, then I am starting them on **endurance training**. They will start to build up the number of punches that they can do.

If, on the other hand, if they choose to break them up, they think that this will make it easier to do, more manageable. This is the beginning of **Interval Training**. I, of course, know that if they do them in smaller chunks, they can concentrate more on technique.

Either way is fine with me. Either way, they will be doing 800 punches before the end of class.

• • • • •

I have them vote quickly with a show of hands. Majority wins. If it's really close, I may make the compromise:

“OK, folks. Let's compromise. The vote was pretty close. How about 600 now, and two sets of 100 a little later?”

• • • • •

And away we go. I do this quickly. **Don't spend a lot of time on it.** And don't give them a choice on everything. Just enough, so they start **taking a little ownership for their class.** They'll also start to build more rapport, because they made the decision as a class. Also the few who may not have liked the winning option are less likely to complain, because they can see that the majority wanted it a different way.

In a small way, they got their say by a raise of the hand. They can accept the fact that they didn't win. There is always next time.

Try giving your students choices. It may seem small, but it goes a long way toward building rapport with your students. Build rapport — get them motivated. **Get them motivated — and watch them improve at a faster rate than you could accomplish with a chair and whip.**



Get to Know Your Students

I don't want to spend a lot of time here on convincing you to get to know your students. Why? Because I have another project in the works on how to make a lot more money in the martial arts by keeping your students longer. I cover the topic completely there.

Let's just say, that **there are benefits to being a real person around your students.** They try to please by learning and performing moves correctly. You'll keep them longer. You'll have more fun.

You don't have to be a guru. In fact, **almost anyone who makes a conscious effort to act like a prophet comes across as a big phony.** If you don't believe me, just ask other martial artists. We have all seen these phony gurus — they are a dime a half dozen (let's allow for inflation).

Now, I respect my teacher of over 20 years. I think he's a great martial artist. I think he knows how to make his students better. I think he has offered me good advice about the martial arts **and life too.** Yet, in my mind, he is not a guru.

I don't hang on every word he says. (Sorry, Steve.) He has occasionally ticked me off. In other words, **he's a real person**. And although he is **Golden**, he is not a god.

Your students should respect you too. They shouldn't think of you as all-knowing and infallible. You are a real person too.

Even with all of this down-to-earth behavior, **your students will still build up your status**. It can't be helped. You impress them. It's natural. You do something very well, that they want to be able to do too.

Would that I could be like Steve Golden. Although he'd say, "Don't work at being Steve Golden; concentrate on being Keith Pascal."

With sound advice like that, your students may even come to you for advice about occasional 'life problems.'



The Art of Giving Advice

Be **careful**, be **careful**, be **careful**. Did you get that? One thing that I have learned, is that if the advice you give ends up backfiring, then the student may end up blaming the giver of the advice — **you!**

It would be safer not to give advice. After all, you don't want all of your students coming to you every day with their piddly, little problems. Are you a psychiatrist? Their personal therapist? No. **You are a martial arts teacher.**

On the other hand, I can think of at least two instances when you might want to turn into a more understanding soul:

- A student comes to you disturbed. This person has nobody else to turn to. Rather than turn him/her away, a few kind words could do wonders. In Oregon, in the high schools, it's illegal for a teacher to ignore certain signs, that all might not be golden in the Emerald City. You can get fined thousands of dollars for moral turpitude. Signs of abuse cannot be ignored; another agency has to get involved.

Since you are a caring soul, maybe you could adopt a similar philosophy of helping when you can, and getting someone else involved, when the seriousness of the situation warrants it.

- You notice that a student is disturbed. In your best judgment, the student can't continue class effectively in this emotional state. With a brief talk, you can determine whether to send the student home, or whether a good physical workout, with a little pep-talk from you, would be the better medicine. A good workout will improve the mood -- endorphin release, elevated oxygen levels, etc....



If you choose to give advice, you might want to follow the model of the **Natural Helpers Program®**. Natural Helpers reduce the risk by asking the troubled party to come up with possible solutions. They spend several days training students and adults in a process that helps people help themselves. Of course, if you know of a different, effective program, you could try it. The important thing is that you are caring and helping -- without getting too involved. You have to take care of yourself too.

I couldn't hope to tell you everything you'd need to know about a helping program like this. But I can give you an idea that helping someone is good, common sense. And it isn't as hard as you'd think. Here's a brief explanation of most of the steps:

If the student comes to you, you can skip step one.

1. You identify the behavior. How do you know the student is down?

"You have seemed all tense and angry lately."

"Your face is red, and your hands are trembling a bit. You seem upset."

2. You ask them if they'd like to talk about it.

"Want to talk about it?"

3. You clarify and restate their problem to make sure you understand it.

“So, you flunked your test and you have to tell your mom, when you get home tonight. Is that the gist of it?”

4. You ask the student to come up with possible solutions. You ask him/her for possible reactions to these solutions.

“So, what might you do?”

“I could not tell my mom.”

“What might happen then?”

“I’d get grounded and have to quit martial arts.”

“So, what else could you do?”

“I could sign up for tutoring on the way home, so when I tell her, I have already done something to correct the mistake. It won’t get me out of trouble, but at least I won’t have to quit martial arts.”

5. After you explore all of the possibilities, ask the student what he/she is going to do. And make arrangements for some sort of follow-up on your part. Either the student will get back to you at a specific time, or you’ll get back to the student.

“So, what are you going to do?”

“I am going to arrange for a tutor, talk to the teacher about a retake if I study with the tutor of her choice, and then I’ll tell my mom. I might even get a note from my teacher saying that I have permission to work on improving my grade.”

“That sounds great. Will you tell me how the talk with your mom went, before class on Thursday?”

And that’s a helping session in a nutshell. Of course, if you deal with adults, you adjust the tone, but the idea is the same. You work through the steps — be sure to let them come up with the possibilities, and make the student choose the best course of action.

You are there to gently guide, but let **them** make the decisions. You definitely do not want the problem to come back and bite you. After all, you are just a sympathetic listener who wants to have your martial arts class function smoothly.



How To Teach A Super Class

Another way to be perceived as a **super teacher**, is to **present a super class**. Fulfill their every need; impart to them **the secrets of the masters**, and they will follow you to the ends of the Earth ... or at least to the other end of the dojo.

Yet again, here is another subject that could warrant a whole series of books. I have spent years exploring information on how to present a great class, where **your students learn a lot**. Again, you get a nutshell version. Don't be disappointed — these nutshells have enough nuts and bolts to keep you together for a long time. (Wow -- how many metaphors did I mix in that last sentence?)



Leave Them Wanting More

Good performers know to leave their audiences wanting more. You should leave your students wanting more. Start thinking now. **How do you make your students chomp at the bit for the next class**, rather than looking at the clock to see when this class ends?

You could try the **Cliffhanger Technique**. Teach them a move, and then tell them that you'll teach them the reversal at the next class. **Bingo**. You have now created desire.

Or you might have them **end on a strong note**. If you have been building separate techniques into a complicated set during the class, you could end your class by having your students successfully perform the complicated set.

Make them sweat. Release those endorphins — get them feeling good about themselves, you, and the class. If they sweat, still have them end on a successful note. You might want to remind them how good they feel.

Dick Burrow, an excellent martial arts teacher, who passed away in May 2001, had a break-a-sweat rule. All of his instructors were required to make sure their students worked up a good sweat at each and every class. I think they really appreciated the workout.



Creating the Perfect Class

I just taught you how to end class, but what about the rest? I have two different models on how to present better classes. Your students might even say that **you present the perfect class**.



The first model comes from **my perception** of one of the ways that **Steve Golden** has put together his classes in the past. I call it **The Building a Masterpiece Method**.

After our initial conditioning routine, he'd start us practicing a move, maybe a strike-check combination. We'd get really good at the strike-check. We'd practice for precision.

Then we'd practice another move, maybe a backfist. We'd practice it for precision. **Then we'd put the two together.** First we'd do the strike-check, then the backfist.

Next we'd practice a kick. We'd hone it to perfection — or at least do a couple of hundred of them.

After that, we'd pair off and practice taking the kick efficiently. We'd practice it for a long time. We'd explore different possibilities. And just when we thought we really knew the kick inside and out, Steve would add back in the strike-check combo, followed by the backfist.

Whatever we practiced at first, ended up fitting perfectly into the final sequence of our lesson. Of course it was planned. It was masterfully planned.

It also had the added benefit of **leaving us wanting more.** Why? Simple. Towards the end of each class, we got into a situation that we thought didn't have a workable solution. Or maybe we thought that we had come up with the best solutions possible.

Then, all of a sudden, we were presented with a great solution, **a solution composed of moves that we had already practiced earlier that evening.** **He turned us into instant successes.** Of course we wanted more. Who wouldn't?

If you'd like to plan a class like this, it's probably easier for most to start with the end result. Then you work backwards, and break it down into its components. Only you know where you will be heading.

On the other hand, if you are super confident in your abilities, you could just have someone attack you during your planning stage. Then you react, and because you are such an expert, your reaction is the correct one.

Then you build on your initial good reaction. What do you want your students to learn to do? What principles go beyond technique? How can you ingrain those principles into your students?

You experiment and tighten, until you have the desired sequence. Then you break it down as before. And teach them your reaction.

The second model comes from the world of secondary teaching. It is called **I.T.I.P.**, pronounced eye-tip. It stands for **Instructional Theory Into Practice**, and it was invented by **Madeline Hunter**. For awhile, all Oregon teachers were required to be trained in the **I.T.I.P.** model.

I promised myself that this book would be practical, and wouldn't get too technical. So, here are some of the **niftier** points from **I.T.I.P.** Call this a tossed salad. You get some principles that are purely I.T.I.P., and you also get some of my strategies, and some of those from my education mentor, Bill Stark:

- **You start each class with a hook** (Do I really need to tell you that it's called an anticipatory set?) You have some small activity or tidbit to impart.
- **Either use your beginning hook as a warm-up activity**, where you review a recent lesson, **or** you use your anticipatory set to **build anticipation**. Arouse their interest. Pique their curiosity.
- **Have the right number of learnings per class**. Don't bore your students by doing one thing all class period. On the other hand, don't jump from one thing to the next so fast, that nobody has time to process the information. Figure out the right mix.

Note: If you have really advanced students, you can get away with an intensive lesson or two -- an all-sticks class, or sticky hands for the entire night. This isn't always so successful for beginners. They haven't developed that attention span, yet.

- **Have an objective (goal) for each learning**. That's right -- pre-think what you want them to be able to do after you complete each activity. It keeps you focused on the target. Your students will make consistent progress.
- **Have a way to measure whether or not your goal has been reached**. Makes sense -- you don't want to think: *well, I guess they learned*.
- **Do activities where you elicit a group response**. If you go around the room one at a time, your students may only get to perform four times during class. What a waste! Have everyone perform at once -- so they get hundreds of practices.

- **Have an alternate plan.** Some days the students can't seem to focus -- change gears. Other days, you perceive a rare intensity in the class atmosphere — make use of it. You won't get that opportunity every day.

I think of it as planning both left-brain (logical, precision repetition) and right-brain (creative, sparring, learn by games) activities. I can switch gears at a moment's notice. Sometimes, the students don't even know that I changed plans.

- **Have closure at the end of each class.** Ask them what they learned. Debrief them about how to use the techniques in a practical situation. Maybe create a cliffhanger to leave them wanting more. Give them a taste of the next lesson.

Do some separate last activity, like the ones mentioned above. Make it a small separate activity. Even have a question and answer period. Whatever. Just make a final activity, so the main one doesn't just peter out at the end.

It makes for a much stronger class.



Sure, there is a lot more to I.T.I.P. than the above, even with some extra tips by Bill Stark and me. But this should get you started. You could always research the subject later, if you are interested.

Now, you have two very strong models for planning tighter classes. These really are **the secrets to teaching an effective class**.

The great thing is that you can mix and match. Both methods can easily intertwine. I am sure you are already seeing the possibilities, right?



3

Change the Environment for Impressive Results

This chapter is really about preparing your students for reality. As martial arts teachers, we are trying to train our students to react competently in as many different situations as possible. This means in as many different environments as feasible and practical.

This is definitely a **what to do** chapter, rather than a **how to do it** chapter. I assume that as a teacher of martial arts, you probably already know how to deal with many environmental variables. Those variables that you don't, you can probably figure out for yourselves.

But say you get absolutely stymied on how to negotiate a particular surface, for example, and the seniors in your style don't have advice for you. Or possibly you aren't in contact with your instructor(s). **If you really feel befuddled, e-mail me. I'll help with suggestions, in any way that I can.**

I was fortunate. I had a teacher who accepted our sometimes off-the-wall, environment-conditional questions:

“Steve, what do you do if you are sitting in a movie theater and someone comes up from behind and starts to put a carotid artery hold around your neck?”

“Steve, what would you do if suddenly someone poured soapy water over the floor making it too slippery to stand or kick on?”

“Steve, what would you do if you were standing at a urinal....”



Looking back, that man must have had, and still has, an extra dose of patience. He helped us through all of these different environments. We'd set up folding chairs to imitate a movie theater — we'd brainstorm through several possibilities.

Let's take a look on how you can add tension to your students' lives so as to incorporate different training environments into your teaching.

And a small piece of advice: Make sure you have thoroughly practiced and analyzed each situation that you are going to pop on your students. After all, **you are the master**, right?



Going Outside

Before going anywhere, **make sure you are covered with all the insurance that you might need**. How close do you have to be to the martial arts building to still be covered by insurance?

Could you alleviate any potential problems by having your students sign releases before training outside (or include it in the original papers that you have them sign, when they join). Of course, if you are dealing with minors, then you have to provide permission slips to be signed by the parent or legal guardian.

Even with my advice, check anyway.

Once in awhile take your students outside. It adds realism. It prepares them to better handle being attacked outside. Not all encounters with attackers will happen on wooden floors, like in a dojo.

Have them practice on smooth surfaces and on rough surfaces. Make them spar in the grass, if it's available. Head out to the woods for different terrain.

And speaking of varying terrain, have you ever had your students practice their techniques on a staircase? It's an experience. The change of height alone is enough to really weird them out.

Make sure your students can fight on all surfaces — sidewalks, streets, and even gravel (ouch — be especially careful when practicing on gravel — I can see the bloody elbows already). Just think, mucky mud in a forest won't offer them problems; neither will dry rough surfaces that prevent them from gliding, cat-like towards and around their attacker.

From surface practice, we move to weather conditions. Will your students always have blue skies above when they have to defend themselves? Hey, it even rains in Hawaii and Mexico.

Or should you spend time practicing in the rain? No colds please, and be careful of slippery surfaces and distractions (stomped water splashed in their eyes — oooh, a possible tactic?).

And don't forget the snow. Snow competence would give you a distinct advantage in most parts of Oregon, if the way Oregonians drive in the snow is any indication of how they would fight (we're just not used to it, unless we go skiing, or live in Eastern Oregon).

Note

I taught martial arts for over four years in a park in Coos Bay and for about a year in Eugene. Parks offered a convenient place to meet for everyone to train. And it got us used to fighting in different weather conditions.

Most of the time, we fought in the picnic bench area that was covered by a roof, but you could still feel the biting cold of an almost freezing rain, with a very high wind chill factor. This was very important. This is how I met my wife.

On a more basic level, working outside prepares your students for an important consideration. How the heck do you fight effectively with the sun in your eyes? It can happen. Prepare them for it now. And make sure both partners get the opportunity to practice with the sun blinding them. As long as we are talking about fighting in the light, let's also consider training our students to....



Fight in the Dark

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. Wing Chun artists demonstrate chi sao, which is an in-close fighting exercise. It starts with both of your hands in contact with your opponent's. It's often referred to as sticky hands.

When they give public demonstrations, they sometimes make a big deal about **blindfolding their students**. Now, here's the secret: it's actually easier to fight this way without looking, if you can get over your initial hang-ups. I often tell my students:

“Keep your eyes closed. You're not good enough to fight with them open — yet.”

And I am serious; I don't want them to get visually faked out. I need them to rely on touch, not sight.

Note

In the first four or five years that I learned chi sao from Steve Golden, he would occasionally turn off the lights right in the middle of our engagements. Mid-punch, the lights would suddenly go off. Click. Instant darkness.

Guess what? It never even fazed me. I had practiced with my eyes closed almost from day one, so I didn't usually notice a difference. To this day, when I go against someone I don't seem to be having any success with, the first thing I do is close my eyes. I get my sensitivity back.



Have you taught your students how to fight in the dark? Have you prepared them for fighting in a pitch dark room, from non-touching positions? If you practice this, you better have protective gear for everyone, and set up some safety rules.

You need to give them some strategies. Are you going to give them advice to buy infrared equipment for seeing in the dark, or are you just going to advise that they up their carrot consumption?

And speaking of infrared equipment, wouldn't it be great if you had such equipment on, so you could see how your students are faring in the dark? Who knows, **maybe you'd get some new ideas for strategies**, just from spying on their practice session.

I tend to practice dark fighting indoors. It's easier for me to control other aspects of the environment, in order to keep everyone safe. I don't have to worry about people tripping over loose branches, twisting their ankles in gopher holes, etc....



What Else Could You Do?

Your goal is to make your students ready to fight under all circumstances. You want them to be able to fight in wind, sleet, or snow. You want them to be able to fight in the dark, or where there is blinding sunlight.

Consider all of your surface possibilities. Could they fight in sand? How about on mats? A slick floor?

It's just like professional tennis. The very best pros practice not only on the regular-surfaced courts, but also on clay, and even grass (if they intend to make a showing at Wimbledon). They practice like crazy.

The sports commentators tell us immediately which players are handicapped on a particular surface — would that we could have such a commentator to enlighten us when that attacker corners us.

Note

I once wrote an article about a Taekwondo school that came to the high school where I was teaching. They gave a demonstration in our auditorium. I guess they weren't used to such a smooth surface on the stage, because they slipped all over the place. Even the black belts slid on their butts, when they tried some of their high kicks. It was both sad and hilarious at the same time.

I vowed that my students would be prepared to fight on just about any surface.

We discussed fighting on stairs. Can your students fight in other close quarters? My students don't have a choice. We train in my garage 90% of the time. The rest of the time, we head over to the park, or practice on our sidewalk, driveway, and street. It's hard to fight in a hallway, if you are used to having a full dojo in which to run around.

Your Normal Practice Area

Most of this chapter was devoted to the practical aspects of changing your environment. We talked about how your environment directly affects the way you can defend yourself.

You could change your normal practice environment to facilitate your students' learning. You could improve your practice area:

- * A new coat of paint could do wonders. There are a ton of studies that show how color affects brain stimulation — blue for calm, yellow for creativity, etc.... Could you repaint one or more walls to positively affect your students?
- * What kind of image do you want to project for your studio? Sweaty hardworking gym? A clean, family-oriented environment? Something exotic? You're fooling yourself, if you think your students aren't affected by the conditions of your dojo. Hmmm, maybe I

should move the boxes in our garage — after all, that's where we do most of our training.

- * Put quotes up on the wall. Make them inspirational (not religious, inspirational!) Maybe a quote or two from Bruce Lee, like "It is the will that makes men [and women] — success takes perseverance." Add some humor if it's appropriate.
- * Put up some good posters. Make them goal-inspiring as well. Or, make them educational. My teacher had a nunchaku chart up that had a bunch of different spinning patterns. More than one of his students memorized and practiced every pattern, one at a time.



Just keep in mind that you can help mold your students' experience at your place of teaching, by its look. Someday, I will polish and revise something else that I wrote on this subject, and publish it. It also includes dojo decoration, although that's not its focus either.

Also, keep in mind that **students do bump into things**. Keep your nice posters and artwork safe. On the flip side, keep your students safe — don't let them run into any knives or swords on the wall.



Conclusion

Whether it's changing your dojo, or taking your students out to change their environment, start now. Do this service for your students.

If you are changing your dojo, it's fun to get a new look all at once. Close down for a weekend and redecorate. Surprise them all when they return at the beginning of the week. Of course, for paint jobs, enlist the aid of some of your students. Still, shock everyone with the instant change.

If you are making your students comfortable on different surfaces and able to defend themselves in different weather conditions, don't do it all at

once. Build a little at a time. Train, one or two at a time, the number of different environments in which your students are comfortable defending themselves.

As your students build competence on different surfaces and with other different environmental variables, you will definitely be giving your students an edge.



Author's note: I recently finished a book due out soon. In it I teach you how to ride a bike on different surfaces. Some of my recommendations would definitely apply to training on these hard-to-negotiate surfaces.

If you are interested, drop me an e-mail, and I'll see if I can get you more information, OK?



4

Give Your Students a Martial-Arts Makeover

If I mentioned yet again that this next chapter covers a topic on which I could write volumes, you would label me as way too repetitive, and my father would accuse me of being tautological (yes, I had to look it up in a dictionary). At the risk of annoying both you, my reader, and my father, who is one of my editors, let's just say “big topic — choices to be made — this time.”

You have already seen how to change you, the teacher, to teach more effectively. And you have seen how you can change your environment to help your students improve.

Now, you get to learn how to change your students. While, **for some, goals are not the most exciting subject**, concrete goals will help your students improve at a faster pace than those who practice undirected.

The first part of this chapter focuses on goals. From there, you will learn how to make your students better than you are at the martial arts.



Impossible, you say? Not at all — with a few guidelines.

Next, you will learn how to actually **make it impossible for your students to make a mistake** — which isn't as hard as it sounds.

After learning to limit their behaviors, you will help reinforce the students' strongest moves. This way, the student develops unique ways to respond. You won't be cranking out clones — each will respond differently. **But don't worry, all responses will meet your approval.**

From there, you will learn how to make your students **take ownership** of the principles and tactics that they are learning. They won't just mimic a few moves; they will truly understand the principles of speed, timing, distance, etc. that you are so carefully trying to teach.

Last, and certainly not least, you will learn **a method that some of the power high schools use to crank out superior students.** You better read this section carefully; don't gloss over it, once you discover its theme — I take it out of the realm of public education and make it applicable to the martial arts studio. Guaranteed.

So, let's start with goals....



Why Goals Are So Important to Your Students' Success

I could cite a bunch, and I do mean a bunch, of boring research that shows why focused goals help the rate of improvement. And then you'd probably skip this section — not a good idea.

Instead, **do me a favor.** Imagine two classes of students. Both classes have students of exactly equal abilities. You teach both classes.

In the first class, you come in. Everyone lines up, and you start punching. You do this at the beginning of every class. Eventually, by sheer amount of practice, your students' punches will improve. After all, **that's the way martial arts have always been taught.**

Now, in the second class, you make a little change. At the beginning of class, you tell this group of students that you have a goal. You tell them that your goal is for them to be able to do 1,000 crisp, clean, fast punches in a row. Then you have to make it a desirable goal, so

You tell them about one of your star black belts, who claims that **her awesome ability comes directly from being able to execute a good, fast punch**. You tell them how a single punch was the scoring point in her win last week.

Then you tell them Bruce Lee's story about a punch being just a punch at first. Then the development of technique, to where a punch was no longer just a punch. And finally, after learning speed and power, eliminating telegraphing, etc., then the punch finally came back to its core concept of being just a punch.

You have to go through the development, in order to make the punch powerful and fast. Only then is it time to turn it back into a natural movement. (Apologies to Steve Golden for any bastardization in my attempt at an explanation.)

Then you confide to them, that **they aren't anywhere near the goal, but that with your help, they will be able to reach it very soon.** You add that they are going to have to pay special attention to their punching.

At each class, you give them a little pep talk about how their punches are coming along. You tell them how close they are to the goal. You tell them all of the benefits of being able to execute an awesome punch (implied reward).

Now, imagine both groups going in day after day. Both classes punch. Which class do you think will make the fastest improvement? Are you with me?



After teaching a numerous high school classes, I can tell you that the students improve at a much faster rate when they have goals. I have always had teacher-generated goals — I taught in the classroom using a lesson plan for 14+ years. Goals have worked wonders for some of my students.

The goals in this section are, if not student-generated, ones that **you make known to the students**. They benefit by working towards a goal. Keep the goal in front of them. Link the goal to rewards — either intrinsic

(satisfaction of knowing they can defend themselves, for example) or extrinsic (maybe offer to bring in ice cream for all of the students, as soon as 90% of them can do “X” successfully, “Y” number of times).

Even though you have the students focus on their goals, you can still make lesson plans with your own goals (See illustration — sample lesson plan for martial arts).

And all of your goals stem from your main goal. Never forget that. What **is** your main goal?



Your Main Goal

When we say that we want to teach more effectively, I think we are basically saying that **we want to improve our students’ abilities in the martial arts**, right? Isn’t this our main goal?

Of course, we get lots of other benefits from teaching: money, satisfaction of passing on the art, etc.... We even get the added benefit of self improvement. After all, **the best way to improve is to teach** (See **Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert**, Chapter 13).

The survey from **Martial Arts Mastery: A Tell-All of Tips, Tactics, and Techniques** showed that your goals as a teacher aren’t necessarily money related. Neither are they of a selfish nature. You want methods to help your students improve. My, aren’t we a selfless bunch — I say this **lovingly**, because I also have these same altruistic goals.

Your main goal is to get your students to improve, and help them accomplish their goals (properly directed ones — their main goal shouldn’t be to beat up everyone in the local bar).

Always keep the goal in mind.



Your Students' Goals

It's pretty important to know why your students are taking your class. Sure, you could have the "I don't give a damn" attitude and think, "I provide good instruction. This is the way I teach. Let the students glean what they may. Goals? Who needs goals?"

I think that model of teaching is a dinosaur on the brink of extinction. It's time for us to learn about our students.

If you want to motivate them, learn what drives them to take your class. Do they want to be a martial arts star? Are they recovering from a personal attack? Are they trying to become more assertive? Do they want to learn self defense against school bullies? Do they want to be able to protect family and friends?

If, for example, your students are taking your class just for self defense, you can occasionally drop phrases like, "this would work especially well at night, if you were ever caught off guard."

On the other hand, if your students are competition-oriented, you would offer different motivators — "Here's a move that will almost always get you an extra point."

Now, don't just offer these tidbits to create a false image of what you're teaching. Actually teach to their goals, when appropriate. Really teach those **self-defenders** what to do on a poorly lit street. And do give your **sparring nuts** some clever moves to try in competition. But it's OK to put up some signposts to let them know you are all on the same path.

By being more in tune to your student's goals, you can tailor your class a bit, and motivate them a lot more.



Artificial Goals for Big Improvements

Sometimes your students have different goals. And sometimes, it's impractical to try to segregate them into different classes by their goals, i.e. you may not have time to teach a self defense class, and a groundfighting class, and a sparring class, and and and....

So, what do you do?

Artificial goals to the rescue: You should still try to make your class flexible enough that you take everyone into consideration. But if your students' goals are different, or if your students don't really have set goals, then you need to help out.

You help them by creating a group goal (sure, you can give students individual goals, but here, we are talking about a goal for the entire class). Your goal could be centered around a skill that you want everyone to improve — see the example in *Why Goals Are Important*, from this chapter).

Or you might want to link a goal to an event. You want everyone to work on weapons katas for the tournament next month. You want everyone to make their sinwali patterns (double sticks from Kali and some of the Escrima arts) crisper and faster for the mall demonstration next week.

If you don't have a real event, create one. "Two weeks from today, we are going to have a backfist competition. Categories will include fastest backfist, strongest backfist, and fastest series of three consecutive backfists. So, for the next two weeks everyone, we will be practicing... you guessed it... sweep kicks I mean... backfists!"



Become a Goal Expert

One of your personal goals should be to learn more about goal setting. I have learned that one of the best ways to keep a secret (especially how to do something) is to tell everyone about the thing you want kept a secret. Tell them everything about the process. Make it really simple, plain even, but make it complete. Then, once they read "all about it," they will never actually try it.

And so it has been with goals. People who don't get anywhere in life always wonder how the super successes do it. So, the super successes tell the wonderers (wanderers. maybe) about goals. Does it change anything? No.

Well, besides the natural confidence that develops from martial arts training, and the self discipline that develops from sustained practice of almost any studied activity, I think teaching your students about goals could be the most important benefit that you have to offer.

A lot of times, what they learn in your class, generalizes to the students' everyday lives. Wouldn't it be incredible if most of the students who went through your classes learned to achieve all of their lifelong goals? Wow, what a concept!

If you really want your students to be the best that they can be, do some research on goalsetting. One of my favorite books on the subject is **The Magic Lamp**, by Keith Ellis. If you want a book on goals that has a martial arts flavor for teaching general goal-setting, try **Unleashing the Warrior Within**, by Richard J. Machowicz.

I just went to Amazon.com -- they have over 700 listings for goals in the book listings alone! I am sure you'll find something to help you plan for your students' success.

P.S. Also look for future reading from the author on goals in the martial arts.



How to Really Help Your Students Surpass Your Skills

Some people believe that you can never get better than your teacher. Your martial arts instructor will always be better.

While it's true that you martial arts teacher may always know what it takes to get in on you, you can still surpass him/her with your skill ...eventually. If this weren't true, then the martial arts would over time deteriorate, until it became a watered-down bunch of not-so-useful moves. I don't believe this.

While you can't make your students better than you, you can point them in the right direction. Then with a lot of time and dedication, some of them, not all, could eventually surpass you. This is a very long process. There is a shorter route....

This is yet another idea gleaned from the brilliant mind of Steve Golden. He taught me to get the students to a level of mastery with one particular exercise or move at a time.

No, I can't make everyone better than I am at my entire system of martial arts. On the other hand, I could make Kenny an expert at six-count patterns with sticks, Rebecca can be an expert at the trapping exercise called lop sau, Woody can throw knives and shuriken better than anyone else (including yours truly), etc....

Do you get the idea? You find a strength of your students. You emphasize that strength. You build on it. You get them so precise at that one aspect, that they soon become better than you — after all, you practice everything equally, while each student is emphasizing a more tightly-defined skill.

Think of all of the benefits:

- * Since each student gets good at a different skill, they won't be comparing themselves to each other.
- * Each student gets to start to build a foundation. As they develop more mastery skills, they will improve at a faster rate. This effectively eliminates the law of diminishing returns, because they are perfecting new and different skills.
- * You will improve like you wouldn't believe. Instead of having to work with beginners all of the time, you get to practice a limited sequence with someone who is better than you at it, or at least with someone who can give you a run for your money.
- * If you need to demo some move or exercise, have your most proficient student do it. The student gains confidence, and you develop a reputation of being able to get students up to that particular level.

This is better than you can imagine. So, you don't get to train with the perfect fighter; you do get to train with fragments that make up an incred-

ible whole. You need to practice taking excellent kicks, then work out with Ben. Need to go against a strong grappler? Then head to Jacob. Would you like to perfect sticky hands? Well, I have a student who is almost seven feet tall, who just happens to love chi - sao (sticky hands).

Not only do you improve, but it's reciprocal. You get better by working with a student who is proficient at a specific move, and your student improves by working with you.

After all, now you are the only one who can almost keep up at that particular exercise.

Their motivation will soar. Why? Because they see continued success. They are getting really good at something. Who knows? That particular exercise might eventually get linked to their personal goals.



A True Story

A number of years ago, when I had only been practicing my current system for a couple of years, my teacher, Steve Golden had us practicing a lop-sao exercise. We practiced it weekly. Everyone knew it.

Then I noticed that the advanced students could switch sides. Some were smooth at the switch; others weren't. Some of the students had an extra punch that they were including.

I don't know what motivated me — maybe a word of praise from my teacher — but I went home and practiced. I practiced switching sides, and I practiced the extra hit.

The next week, I tried my new moves on Steve. He didn't even raise an eyebrow. He just continued on. Then suddenly, he was doing the exercise on the other side.

How could that be? I hadn't felt the switch. So, he showed me a new way to switch sides. I went home and practiced.

When I returned two days later, he surprised me in the exercise with an invisible hit. This wasn't the extra hit that the other black belts had been taking. This was something different. I went home and practiced.

And so it went. He'd show me a move, and I'd practice. I paid no attention to the lop sao moves that the other students were learning. I just practiced and practiced what Steve showed me.

Then one day, something amazing happened. It was while Steve worked out with me doing the lop sao exercise. He got faster, so I got faster. He varied his hits, so I did too.

We matched each other counter for counter. We got faster. We got more intense. And then it was over. We both drew it to a close. Steve only said one word to me afterwards. He simply said, "Thanks." (Then I noticed that every single student had stopped to watch our little show.)

Did that episode affect me? Forever and ever. Even if I never get as good as Steve Golden, at least at one exercise, for one brief moment in time, I was on a more equal level with him. Wouldn't you like to give a similar gift to your students?



Limiting Behaviors

What if I could give you an absolute money-back guarantee that this next tactic will produce results in your students so fast, that you will see major improvements in under an hour. Remember, this tactic comes with a money-back guarantee. It's that powerful. Interested? Read on....

On The Kerwin Benson Publishing web site (<http://www.kerwinbenson.com>), there is an article that I wrote entitled, "[How to Get Rid of Bad Habits in Your Martial Arts Techniques](#)." As of this writing, it is still posted on the site, in the Free Reports section.

In the article, I tell the following story...

It all started one night in the early 80's. We were working out in Steve Golden's garage in Junction City, Oregon. He kept telling us to take

shorter stances. He told us to move with a purpose (Bruce Lee's philosophy). We were doing neither. He was getting in on us every time, due to our inefficient movements.

All of a sudden, he was silent. He went to his workbench and cut lengths of rope. He tied one end of a piece around one of my ankles. He tied the other end to my other ankle. My ankles could only be about shoulder-width apart at their greatest distance. Boy, was it hard to move around.

Steve moved on to the next student, and then the next. When we were all tied up, he just continued class. I had to take really short steps.

Movement was hard. I only moved when I needed to and --bingo! All of a sudden, I was moving with a purpose.

It took me about 20 minutes to get used to moving with the rope around my ankles. After about half an hour, I was pretty fluid. After an hour, I didn't even remember that I had the rope on. We had all gotten over the falling-flat-on-your-face stage.

Then, as if for no reason, he told us to remove the ropes. It was amazing! I mean really amazing. I was moving with incredible ease. I was turning off-line like there was no tomorrow; I passed punches and countered with my own.

I could tell by my classmates' expressions that they were experiencing a similar effect.

• • • • •

What was going on?

Steve Golden was getting rid of our bad habit by limiting our behavior. He was getting away from the intellectual level. Sure, at first it was a conscious effort not to tug at the ends of the cord. But it quickly became automatic. We were retraining our brains and our bodies.

By limiting the behavior, he was speeding up the learning process. We would all achieve automaticity a lot earlier. We were creating new instinctive behaviors. What a principle!

When the ropes were removed, our brains (and bodies) operated as though still restrained. We got rid of our bad habit almost automatically.

I think Steve evaluated that we weren't tugging against the ropes before he took the chance of removing them. If we had reverted to our old behavior, he could have just put the ropes back on.



Can You Apply This to Other Habits in Your Students?

Yes, definitely. What first comes to mind, is to continue to use a rope as the limiting factor. Bind one hand next to an ear, to learn to keep a guard hand raised.

If you want a student to learn to step off-line and punch on a tight angle, then bind one hand behind the back, so the student can't block. This forces the student to angle.

After using a rope to bind, could you use something as a wedge? If, for example, one of your students keeps dropping his head, could you put a neck brace on him, so he can't lower his chin?

Even a wall could be used as a limiting factor. One of my wife's students kept moving her whole body, when she punched. She thrashed her upper body all over the place. Kate kept telling her not to move her upper body -- it didn't work.

So, on my recommendation, Kate backed this student up against the wall. She made the student continue punching with her shoulder blades touching the wall behind her.

Her instructions were to never let the shoulders disengage from the wall. You wouldn't believe the results. It took almost no time at all.

Now, any time she slips, she almost knows without being told, to go back up against the wall (apologies to Pink Floyd).

Start analyzing your students. Look to their errors. Look for sloppiness. Look for positioning that is off. Make a list.

Now, brainstorm. Which of these problems could be corrected if you limited some behavior? Don't worry about the "how" for now. Just highlight the ones that could be corrected if you could limit, or eliminate, an action or position.

Make a new, smaller list compiled of these behaviors or positions that you'd like to eliminate or somehow restrict -- like the distance of a stance.

Now is the time to figure out how to accomplish this. Where are our engineers when we need them? Get creative. Use rope; use foam; use a block of wood. I have heard that duct tape solves any problem that a rock band might encounter while setting up on stage. Could it also solve all of your creative design problems.

Note to Self: Never let anyone stick duct tape to my body. Clothes, yes -- hairy body, no.

If you make a list of corrective behaviors, you could have activities that could last you for months. Maybe devote 20 minutes to limiting behaviors, once a week. Each time, you pick a new behavior to correct. Just think what you could accomplish in six months.

Once you have limited all of their errors right out of existence, then it's time to broaden their perspectives, which brings us to our next section....



Spoking From One Move

Trying to go through a long sequence of techniques with a partner, a series of attacks and counters, may be good for perfecting techniques, but it isn't that practical for real self-defense situations.

You might be able to predict two moves in advance, and their responses, but any more than that would offer too many possibilities. Basically, it becomes impossible because of almost geometric proportions (although the number of total moves in one's repertoire might pose some limits). You punch. Maybe your opponent can respond in any one of five different ways.

Assuming that you could come up with five responses for any given move performed on you, then your opponent now has 25 variations to deal with. And if you add just one more move to the sequence, then you would have to deal with 125 variations.

I am not so naive as to think anyone could actually come up with 125 different workable sequences, but it does say that there are a ton of combinations to deal with from just your first move to your third response.

So, for me, super long sequences don't have a place, other than the mental exercise of figuring out what might fit next in the puzzle.

It is much more practical to practice what I call **spoking**. You pick a move. Then you practice a response to it, until your response is smooth.

As an example, maybe in response to a left punch to your face, you step off to your right. As you step, your response is to punch with your right hand, while you check with your left. You practice this over and over. Both you and your partners take turns perfecting the response.

This becomes your core move. You will spoke out from it. How?

Either pick a follow-up that you could do, or a response that your opponent could perform.

For this example, let's use a follow-up. Your opponent punches, you step and punch (that really should be **punch and step**), and then you grab his left wrist with your right hand, and you perform an arm bar with your right wrist to his triceps.

You have now started a spoke. You can continue on the spoke, by hitting him with a backfist to the face. Maybe you want to add a kick to the face, as you bend him over with the arm bar. After the kick, pulling him back by the hair, while chopping to the throat, seems appropriate.

All of these moves, logically flow from the core move. You spoked, when you decided to pursue the arm bar path. As you add moves, make sure both of you get to practice. And don't rush through the earlier moves, and get sloppy, just to get to the newly added technique.



After you both perfect the arm bar, then you look for a different spoke. Maybe after you step off with your punch, you're going to immediately punch with the check hand (in this case, your left). The right hand would now switch to the check position. Doing this combination would start the next spoke. Maybe this spoke pursues what happens if, while you are countering, so does your opponent with his other hand -- sort of like a one-two punch.

Each time your next move after your original step-off punch is something different, you have started a new path. It doesn't matter if your response is a kick, punch, wrist lock, or arm bar -- any new attack, or response on your part, starts the spoke.

It's your choice if you're going to continue the spoke with more moves, or shut it down early. If you continue, I recommend that you perform a series of moves that don't rely on a counter-for-counter response from your opponent. You want to do your series all at once. You want to finish your whole series even before your opponent gets that second punch fired.

Spoking has an added benefit of turning your system into a tailored system. It is tailored to the individual. **How so?**

Your students will get to practice a myriad of responses to a single attack. Actually, their moves will stem from one good solid response, but they will know tons of variations. It's only natural to assume, that given body type, strength, age, preferences, speed, and other factors, your students will be attracted to different moves.

I am a big guy. I favor moves of strength. My wife is petite. She goes for finesse. Would that I could -- but I can't, so I don't.

Your students will respond with their favorites. That's OK. After all, they have all been taught and approved by you. This is what will make them unique. And the more they spoke, the faster their improvement.



Pick a Principle and Work It to Death

This technique is similar to **Spoking**, except that Spoking picks one move and then branches out..

Here, you pick one principle and then incorporate it into everything you do during that practice session. Whatever principle you choose to practice, you will make sure you use it on everything during this sort of super session.

Say, for example, that you really understand what Bruce Lee was talking about when he outlined the differences between set rhythm, broken rhythm, and no rhythm.

By the way, if you really do correctly incorporate those principles into your training, you are one of the few.

Anyway, you pick one principle, like broken rhythm. Then all you have to do is make sure that every exercise you do during the class utilizes this principle. You break rhythm with your punches. You do it with your kicks. You do it as an attack. You execute it as a response. You even experiment with how late or early in the technique you are going to try your technique.

In other words, **you work the principle to death**. You really help your students to master the concept. You are also helping them to generalize the principle (see page 187 of **Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert**). They will be able to use the principle in a variety of situations.

You are also helping to make the principle stick. So much so, that they might use it as a crutch in future lessons.

If they do, don't worry about it. Just get them to do the next principle, and then work **it** to death. **If you really want a secret to teaching more effectively, then spiral back with your principles and techniques.**

Once your students perfect the second principle, then bring the first principle back into play. You spiral back to that first principle, but with the added twist of the second principle. Show them that they have a choice now. Let them switch back and forth at will. Make them masters of the two principles. And then....

You guessed it. Add a third principle, and then a fourth....



The Power Method for Cranking Out Superior Students

First a warning: If you went to school at any time in your life, for an extended period of time, then you probably aren't going to like what I am about to say ... unless you are a teacher or were/are a straight-A student.

The power method for turning out superior students is easy ... just **assign homework**.

“What?” You say, “I paid money for advice like that? I want my money back!”

Hold your horses. Give me a chance. If I haven't convinced you by the end of this section... then ... try it out on one of your classes first. Then if it doesn't work, ask for your money back.

OK. Here goes -- I have the monumental task of convincing you that homework will mold the kind of martial arts students you are trying to produce.

First, there are several kinds of homework. You could have them **practice**. You could have them **study**. And you could have them **observe**. There are others, like having them **create something**, but let's just deal with the first three.

• • • • •

Practice

Ah, practice. Well, I shouldn't have a hard time convincing you of the benefits of practice. If your students were to punch 2,000 times a day, every day, they'd either blow out their elbows, or they'd start to get some confidence-inspiring punches, right?

I am sure you already see the benefits of practice. Convincing you of this, was no task at all. To get to where you are in the martial arts, you had to have practiced. I am sure of it.

Wait. We'll get to **the others** in a minute.

I just want to remind you that your task is to get your students to **actually** practice. This isn't as hard, if they have already developed disci-

pline from practicing a musical instrument, for example. Or maybe diligently practicing a sport.

Your harder cases are a different story. I'd like to write a book on how to motivate martial arts students. Unfortunately, I haven't yet seen the demand from fellow instructors. Maybe someday.

My best advice, for now, is to contact (public) school teachers. See what techniques they use to get students to do homework.

Note: **Practice** really is a **power method**. When I was a Spanish teacher, my students consistently outperformed other students, when I took them on trips to Mexico. Why?

Well, one of the main reasons, I feel, is that I made the kids actually practice.

I told the students that they needed 75 contacts with a word to make it theirs forever. I also told them that they wouldn't get that in my class. They were actually going to have to practice on their own, outside of class.

I even made a deal with them.

If they gave me honest practice (and I could tell -- the teacher knows all), then I would back off on the amount of homework. I would assign less written work than the other teachers, in order to give them time to practice.

It worked -- consistently -- with a little **behavior shaping**, at first.

What about written work? **Why would anyone assign reading homework to a martial arts class?**

I have always had my students read outside of class. Sometimes, I give them problems to work on. Sometimes, I ask them to study a concept.

Other times, I ask them to read an article. If such an article doesn't exist, then I write it personally.

Again, why do I do this?

For several reasons. For one, I want my students to be able to talk about their style to others. I want to make sure that they understand our principles, especially if they have to explain them to someone from a different style.

If they are articulate, then they can better explain why we do things the way we do.

I also make all of my students do some teaching, at some point. Well read students are able to more confidently field questions posed by the rest of the class.

This also prepares them to be an instructor for me someday, should the need or opportunity arise.

By having them articulate principles to me, I can assess their level of understanding. I also like to see whether each student **explains** better or **performs** better. How does the student best demonstrate the tactic?

• • • • •

Of course, **the best benefit of homework is you are covering another mode of learning.**

We all learn either visually, auditorily, or kinesthetically (by movement). Sometimes, it takes a combination of the above to make a principle really sink in.

While one student explains an answer the others listen. It's another opportunity for the students to listen. They also get the concept explained in words other than the teacher's.

They get to see the tactic, from reading about it, imagining it, and watching others perform it. Then they take it to a kinesthetic level, when they actually practice it.

You are giving them lots of ways to perceive and understand the tactic.

The homework element is a strong one. There have been so many times that a reader has written in and said that they never really understood something, until they saw it explained in my **Wrist Locks** book. I occasionally receive similar comments about some of my articles.

They are finally understanding it, after reading about it. It may be strange, but it's true.

- * Use homework as an introduction to a new concept that you will work with at the next class.
- * Use homework to reinforce what you have already been working on.
- * Use homework to help catch someone up who missed your class.
- * Use your homework to create a group of students who can explain their style and their actions during public demonstrations, to students of other styles, and even to the media, if the need should ever arise.

Remember, part of gaining self confidence is the confidence to talk about your style -- not necessarily to a crowd. After all, public speaking is the #1 greatest fear, even over death.

Turn your students into power students, who completely understand the principles of martial arts and self defense. Assign them homework.



Afterthoughts:

When I was a high school teacher, I disagreed with one of my administrators, on more than one occasion. One rule that he instituted was a good one. He said that all teachers will assign homework every day. It didn't have to be a lot. It did have to be meaningful (and so should yours). And it

had to be consistent -- occasional breaks for holidays, or after tests were allowed, but not too often.

They were to receive consistent homework. They did. And it worked. That was the year of improvement. That was the year that we created some power performers.



P.S. Homework doesn't have to be boring. Assign interesting readings. Not too long.

Occasionally assign something just for the fun of it -- but don't waste your students' time. They will resent it. Give them good mini-lessons outside of class.



5

The Art of Adding Ingredients...without Spoiling the Soup

If all of the repetitive ads in the martial arts magazines are any indication, then martial artists and martial arts teachers are constantly in search of new training devices. Curious.

I am of the **no-equipment-necessary-to-train** philosophy. Grab a partner and you're ready to **tango**. Still, there is something to be said for the use of proper training tools.

Rather than taking the easy way out, by just making this a glossary with pictures — you know “**...this is a punching bag, the way you use it is....**” **Yuck!** I think I can give you better and more useful information than that.



Neither do I want to describe a bunch of weird training materials. Fads fade and then die away. I don't want to send this book into obsolescence before its time. You need material that will stand the test of time.

So, I head back to the idea of giving you some principles and tactics to think about. OK, one or two of the sections present a little philosophy, but nothing too esoteric e.g. how to cram more learning into an exercise.

I have broken this chapter into four little vignettes for your reading pleasure — OK, just think of them as a collection of tips. And no chapter would be complete without my claim that ... I could write volumes on this subject. **These are just a few thoughts to get you going.** So, let's go.

We can change the teacher, the students, and the environment. Here, we add a new variable to the equation. We are changing the conditions of the teaching, by adding a new variable. We introduce some sort of training equipment.



Best Use of Your Time

You can add a new variable like a heavy bag, where each student takes his/her turn, or you can get enough equipment, so everyone has a piece to train with.

One big error that I see in martial arts classes is the use of the heavy bag. It's not what they do with it...



Note: But as long as we're on the subject, are you making the best use of your heavy bag?

Do you have contests to see how many people can kick it to the ceiling?

Do you have them kick at it, while it is swinging toward them?

How about swing away from them, so they can practice snap kicks to the groin, while the attacker retreats?

And swinging at an angle when they kick it?

Do you occasionally have someone hold/support it from behind, to offer the resistance of a real human body?

Ever get creative and take it off the hook? (You can even practice hip throws with it.)



As I was saying, it's not what they do with the bag, but what they do with the class. They usually have the class line up in front of the bag. Then one at a time, the students take turns either kicking or hitting the bag.

What does the rest of the class do? **They just stand there wasting time.** For my class, that's a big no-no.

I only have my students for a limited amount of time each week. I have to make use of what little time we have.

That doesn't mean letting the students stand in line waiting for their turn to kick.

If I have a particularly small class, say only four students show, then I may have one student support the bag, one student evaluate the kick (for both good and bad points). And one student warms up for next up at the bag -- the fourth student is the one kicking.

If I have a full class, then everyone spreads the line out, and they all practice kicking, until they get to the bag. I keep everyone active to make best use of their time.

So, whatever variables you bring into the class, make sure that everyone is still involved with training, even if you have to create exercises for them.



Create Intense Desire wWith Your New Variable

I saw those advanced students pick up the weights. I wasn't allowed to in the early stages of my training. As ridiculous as this may sound, I craved those weights.

I almost couldn't wait for the weights. I knew my day would come. Someday, Steve Golden would be putting weights into my hands. I just knew it. So, I trained harder.

The next time I see him, maybe I'll ask if he knew he was creating desire. Knowing him and his devious mind

Note: Yes, my day of "weighting" finally came. I felt very proud the first time I got to punch with weights... and then my arms got sore.

At about that time, another thought occurred to me. Maybe he wasn't only waiting for the appropriate time ... maybe he was selective, because he didn't have enough weights for everyone to use. As I said, knowing Steve....

Still, this could be a very powerful technique. Maybe your students aren't allowed to use the heaviest bag, until they can kick the lighter bag to the ceiling. (Ooh, now we are combining the last principle with this principle of desire).

Only green belts and above can spar with the full equipment. Or only the Wrist Locks Class can work out on the mats.

You get the idea. Create desire with your new variable.

Make your students chomp at the bit for the next level of training.



Make It Hard -- Make It Challenging

Sometimes, your students will really take to a particular training device. They really learn to use it. They put it through its paces. So, take their practice to the next level...

Make the training with the new variable harder... more difficult....



Example #1

I started training with a top and bottom bag -- it's a round leather ball connected from the top and bottom by bungee cords. The top cord is secured to the ceiling and the bottom to the floor.

You punch the bag. Simple enough, right?

I started practicing. It didn't take me long at all to start to get a good rhythm. Then ol' teach walked over and hit it from a different angle. And he told me to continue.

Continue? Was he kidding?

The ball was now bouncing back and forth erratically. I had lost the rhythm. I got frustrated. I kept missing the bag.

Eventually, it got better. Soon, I was able to punch the bag at all angles. I had developed a new skill. I was an infinitely better martial artist, because my teacher made the training with the new variable more difficult.



Example #2

I used to have a dart board hanging for my students to practice on, in their spare time. They were developing throwing accuracy. And it was fun.

To make their training harder, I changed the rules after they started getting better. The first change I made was to put the dart board on a two-foot string.

And I started the target swinging. Now, they had to hit a moving target. After about a month, they started to master the new variable.

So, I upped the ante again. This time, they had to stop the target by pinning it to the wall with the first dart.

Then we changed the game again. They had to hang the target with the first dart, by planting a dart in the path of the string as it swung towards the center.

After they shortened the swing with the first dart, they had to pin the dart board with the second dart. And finally they were allowed to score points with the last dart.

Soon after, we started increasing the distance to the target.

I kept making the goal harder. Never completely out of reach, just harder.

Could you do the same?



Conclusion

Whatever training device you introduce ... whatever weapon you bring into the dojo ... whatever new variable you add, make sure you use it to its fullest potential.

Involve everyone. Make the best use of the variable by introducing it at the right time -- not just when you have some enthusiasm for the new toy. There is a right time, a right stage for everything.

Create desire. Use the variable as a motivator. This is where your skill as a teacher will come into play. Experiment.

And once you have your students hooked on the new variable, up the level. Make the training challenging. You'll get more use out of the device. Your students will stay motivated longer.



6

Guaranteed Successful Implementation

Do you want to guarantee success when you try these changes?

Have you been taking notes while reading this book? Do you have a notebook set up to start collecting ideas that you'd like to try from this book and from other sources? (See Appendix A on The Martial Artist's Guide to Successful Notebooking).

I hope that you are getting excited about trying new ideas — new activities, new ways of teaching, new ways of running the class. If you are excited, don't jump the gun and just start trying anything and everything you read, at random.

To insure success, you need a calmer, more systematic approach. You need to think these changes through ahead of time, or you could risk losing some of your students. After all, I am sure some of your students

are very happy with the way things are run at your school now. Any change from their routine would upset them.

Most of us are creatures of habit. We like our patterns — our routines. Change them at your own risk.

Yet you want to teach martial arts more effectively. To do so, you will have to change something. So, how do we get around this dilemma? And how do we guarantee our changes will be successful?



Plan Your Changes Ahead of Time

There are no guarantees that everything implemented will be a success. This is why you experiment, you test, you evaluate, you change, and then you evaluate some more.

As a teacher, you should constantly improve your teaching technique throughout your martial arts career.

Just think about it. If you tweak your class, until it is perfect, and then keep evaluating and adjusting from there, you will be the consummate teacher... in time.

Not only will you have reached an incredible level, but you will maintain that level. Wow. Even if you start to stagnate, and you aren't improving -- you'll notice this as soon as you evaluate. You just adjust the course, and on you go!

So, to start out, plan it all ahead of time. It wouldn't be a bad idea to read this whole book, before you even make one change. Take notes.

Once you have a collection of ideas you'd like to try, then see if you can categorize them. Put all of the housekeeping into one category (payments, late fees, accounting, etc.). Put changes to class rules in another. Lump all of the teaching strategies into another. You get the idea.

Planning it out also means thinking each and every change through thoroughly. Imagine how it will go if your activity or idea succeeds. Imagine what kind of problems you might encounter. Plan your contingencies.

For me, I play a movie in my mind of the possibilities. My movie is realistic. I know what my reaction will be ahead of time to lots of different possible snafus. I also have answers to questions preplanned.

With a little forethought, you can account for a lot of variables. You better your chance of success. You think it all through.



Get Your Other Teachers or Senior Students on Your Side for a Successful Change

If you are the head instructor, then you should win over your other instructors and your senior students to your side, before you attempt to change the whole school.

If you are the only teacher, you still need to win over your senior students, and if you are just one teacher at the school who has a particular class to teach, you should still convince your best students of the benefits of your impending change.

This is a pretty important step. These “top dogs” are important.

First, you owe it to them to make them happy. You are providing a service, and they are your most loyal clientele. Some of them may even be company employees (your other instructors) — there have been books and books written on how and why to keep the employees satisfied.

They can help make your change a success more than any other group. This is a top down change, so let the upper levels help to sell the lower levels on the idea.

When I successfully convince my best students of a proposed change, I get them so enthusiastic, that they do a lot of “selling” to the less advanced students.

It’s almost automatic. Their enthusiasm is contagious. It’s great.

Note: A good tactic is to convince your **hardest sells** first. Whenever I try for a change, I know that a certain percentage of students will be in favor of the change, a certain number will be against it, and a certain percentage will remain completely indifferent to the proposed change.

Sometimes, I work on convincing those who would be against the idea, before I work on the rest of my students.

This is a very **martial** philosophy. You convince them, then convince your staunchest supporters, and **then** let everyone enthusiastically convince the indifferents.

It works. Experiment with it. Try it on a limited basis, and see if you get the same results that I do.



It’s Easier To Make Changes, If You Are Not Representing a Big School

If you are on your own, it’s easier. You downplay the changes. You don’t make a big deal out of any proposed changes. It’s no big deal — you are just experimenting a bit and trying a few new ideas out on them.

Then you encourage them to let you know what they think of the new activity, for example. Let them be part of the evaluation process.

If you do belong to a big school, you can still downplay the little changes.

Minute changes don't even really have to be mentioned, unless they are noticed by someone else. As the teacher, the students don't necessarily know what you do at any point in your sequence of training them from, say, white belt to black belt.

So, how will they even be able to identify your changes, unless someone who has gone through the process before them, notices the difference and then points it out?

At that point, be honest. Tell them why you made the change, and what benefits you hope to gain for them with the new way of doing things. People are very understanding, **if the reason makes sense to them.**



Exactly How and When Should You Make the Change?

As I said before, if you are doing small changes, you can just work them into your normal routine. You don't make a big deal about them. Although, if you have nervous-type students, you may want to provide a little advanced warning.

“In two or three weeks, when the weather gets good, I'd like to have a class or two down at the park. We'll have a lot more room to practice throws, takedowns, and grappling technique. Is that OK with everyone?”

“Starting in a couple of weeks, we will be holding a knife fighting only class the first Tuesday of every month. If you are interested, there will be a sign-up sheet by the drinking fountain.”



If you are planning a comprehensive change, then I suggest you wait for some sort of natural break.

For example, my classes break for the summer -- although this summer, for a change, we're going straight through without a break.

But normally, when they come back in the fall, they just know that **Pascal will having something new planned.**

They expect it. Isn't it great that I have them trained to expect and even anticipate change?

If you don't break for the summer, you could create some artificial breaks....



Breaking Your Classes into Semesters, Trimesters, Quarters, etc....

It's not a bad idea. You could even match the school system, and have a Spring Break when they do.

Dividing your year into time periods like quarters offers you several benefits.

First, since we are talking about change, it offers those natural breaks. You institute a change between quarters. You teach nine weeks. Then you have four or five days off, while you plan.

When the students return, you start the new quarter with the new plan.

You get other benefits too. You can plan picnics or potlucks at the end of each quarter or semester. Celebrate a successful term. Build loyalty.

Show appreciation for your compadres.

You can plan Spring cleaning activities at term's end. After every nine weeks, your students **AND YOU** wash down the walls, clean the parking lot, etc. Do any of the chores that you don't do regularly.

You can also have promotions at the end of the term. They get tested. Some get promoted. Then they come back after a long weekend to find ...

that you have made a few changes.

Note: If you are still hesitant about making changes, try it on a test group first. Experiment with one class. If it works, then at the next term change, or logical break, you can roll it out (marketing terminology) to the entire school.



Remember, the bigger the change, the more you should plan it out in detail. All of the previous suggestions set the stage for change. You are using them as dividers, as natural breaks.

You need these natural or artificial breaks to implement your new plan.

Smaller changes require smaller preparation. Maybe you could try your change after a long weekend. It all depends on your teaching situation.



If You Are Still a Little Hesitant

Hey, change often doesn't come naturally. You have to learn to get accustomed to experimentation.

If you are still a little hesitant, I have a great technique for you. It's practically guaranteed to work. Just be reasonable when you use this technique.

The technique, or tactic, is to give your students options (discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this book).

Pick two changes that you are thinking about. Ask which they'd prefer:

“Would you like to emphasize practical, yet exciting, kicking techniques for the next two weeks, or would you prefer some new, fast grappling techniques for the next couple of weeks?”

Did you notice that they only had a choice of two options? None of my options was leaving things the way they were. I am asking **which** change they'd like, not if they want one in the first place.

It's amazing how well this works. Your students will focus on deciding which of the two options is better. They won't even realize that you have guided them into making a choice from only two options.

Anyway, if you are hesitant about change, lessen the blow, by making your students part of the decision-making process.

This technique also **builds trust** with your students. On the other hand, I avoid this technique, when I already have this trust. Then I just tell them what we'll be doing. Otherwise, I come across as too **wishy-washy**.

Let me repeat that. If you want to build trust, give options. If you already have their trust, then don't give too many options, or you'll appear indecisive. OK?



Give Your Change a Chance To Succeed

If at first you don't succeed, **tweak and tweak again**. A lot of people in life just give up too soon. As a martial arts teacher, you see this all the time.

Don't you commit the same error. Give your change a chance to succeed. A little patience is in order.

If you don't think it's working, how do you know? Do you have a way to measure results? How do you know those results aren't being met?

OK, **Sherlock Holmes**, why don't you think your change is working?

What could you do? Could you video tape the class and examine it later? Could you survey a random sampling of the students? Are things bad enough (I hope not) that you have to have a meeting with all of the students?

Is there anyone else who could look at the situation and offer you a possible remedy, without scrapping your whole idea? Get help, if you need it -- you might appreciate a different perspective on the situation.

Maybe if your plan isn't working, it's because your students aren't really motivated. Could you offer some sort of small reward, to gently guide them in the right direction ... at a faster pace?

For example, homework in a martial arts class is a hard pill to swallow. But if you point out the benefits (see Chapter 4 on Homework), tell them how much faster they will progress, and how it's necessary for promotion...

... you could have some highly motivated homework-oriented students. Then put a small reward on top of it, to sweeten the deal. Sometimes, all it takes is a small reward, a small change, or a different take on your stall to jumpstart your students' progress.

E-mail me for reward ideas. I have a few up my sleeve.



Evaluation

Make sure you read the section on evaluation. You need methods to measure results — even if those results are intangibles, like improvement in **the class atmosphere**.

You want to use what works, and eliminate or change what doesn't. You need a systematic way of checking to see if you are getting the results you expect.

Part of teaching more effectively is moving toward a goal. You have personal goals and goals for your students.

To really achieve your goals, you need to evaluate, and modify as necessary. This is a very important step in teaching more effectively.

Leave it out and your students will suffer.

Also, don't forget to use others' input where necessary. Other opinions can be very valuable. Your students may be getting more than you think from your new methods. Ask them once in awhile.



7

Make Your Class Size the **Perfect** Class Size

The size of a class is a big issue in public education. The teachers and the public focus on the overcrowding of classrooms. School closures and budget cuts force more and more students to work together in crowded environments. It's hard to learn under these conditions.

The world of martial arts instruction is very similar. Some of the more commercial schools have taken to overcrowding their classes, so they can make more money per class taught. With more money, they can keep the doors open.

Whether it's a martial arts dojo, or a public school classroom, packing the students in is detrimental to learning.

Note: My wife and I worry about having classes that are too small, too. We like the group dynamic that develops with a bit larger class. Many times, individual personalities and differences rear their ugly heads, when the class size is too small. Sometimes there is safety in numbers. Just not too many.

There are advantages to both small and large classes. You may have

a preference for one or the other, but you should definitely experience both at some point in your career. It will make you more well-rounded. You will be a better teacher as a result.



The Secret to Using Class Size to Teach More Effectively

The secret to improving your students by focusing on class size is to use the cards that are dealt to you to your advantage. In other words, **work with what you've got**. Don't try to force a square peg into a round hole -- unless you have a good palm strike ;-)

My martial arts teacher still teaches out of his garage, after all these years. He definitely has some space limitations. He handles this by creating a waiting list. He only teaches a small number at a time. I had to wait nearly five years to get in.

His students have been with him for years and years -- his old students still attend his classes. Sometimes there are more students at a given class. So, the garage gets a little cramped.

The emphasis of the training for a crowded evening would be the kind where you don't move around a lot. **Dust off the Wing Chun or close-range techniques.**

On the days where only eight show up, you can move around a lot more. It's still a bit crowded, but I got used to it **after my first eight years.**



Advantages of Smaller Class Sizes

If you have ten or fewer students in a class, consider yourself small. This is the perfect size for you to work with each student during class.

You move around the room and spend some time with each. Gauge

yourself, so you do get to everyone.

In an exercise like chi sao (sticky hands), you have to learn by feel. You can't learn by imitating what you see. Think how much your students will improve if they get the chance to feel the teacher's energy at each and every class.

We should take the hint from tennis. It is a common belief on the courts, that the best way to improve, is to practice with someone better than you are. You will play at an elevated level. Just think how much better you'd be if **you** had **your** teacher all to yourself.

If you have smaller classes, then you have to take into consideration whether you are teaching an odd or even number of students.



Odd or Even

- * If you are running around correcting everyone, then an even number of students is better. Everyone gets a practice partner, and no one is left out.
- * If you do have an odd number, and you want to run around correcting, then you can have people rotate to working solo on a piece of equipment. For example, everyone takes a turn with a specific movement on the Wing Chun Dummy.
- * You can also solve the odd person out dilemma, by having your , most advanced student go around and teach the next move in the sequence. The advanced student circulates from pair to pair teaching, while you do your own meandering to correct technique.
- * As mentioned before, having an odd number is a perfect opportunity for you to work into the practice session. You become a partner for a few minutes at a time. You have everyone rotate after a few minutes, so everyone gets a chance to work with a lot of different partners.



Large Class Sizes

If you've got the space, you can allow for a much bigger class. Still, don't make it too big, or you'll lose some quality control. You won't get to work out with each student much.

My limit is about 30, when I have the space.

And even with 30, I like to have a couple of senior students wandering to help out. For me, quality is very important. Since the students do a lot of perfecting on their own, I want an "expert" close by to answer any of their questions, and to gently guide them towards martial development.



If you do have larger class sizes, take a tip from I.T.I.P. (Instructional Theory Into Practice, mentioned in Chapter 2).

Go for a group response. Have everyone respond at the same time. Don't go around the room and call on students one at a time. If your classes are big, it's a waste of time to go for individual response.

It keeps everyone waiting.

Note: When I do have those necessary waits, as when everyone is lined up at a piece of equipment, I have everyone in line practice the movement solo, while waiting in line for their turn (See [Chapter 4](#), [Give Your Students a Martial Arts Makeover](#)).

Make use of those pockets of time. Yes, they can still chat while they are kicking in line.

In fact, I want them to. I keep having to remind them that they can talk and kick at the same time. It's a useful defense skill.



Plan for the Unexpected

When I teach in my garage, I sometimes cancel class, if only a couple of students can make it. It's my attempt to save people some money.

Also, remember, my wife and I like enough bodies around to energize the class.

This is actually a disservice to my students. Some of my best learning experiences occurred when there were only a couple of students in Steve Golden's garage. He practiced no matter how few showed up.

On one occasion, only two of us made the drive out to his class. We used that night to practice taking a stick strike that came in on one particular angle (a "One" for those into Kali). From a one, **we found 22 workable counters.** *Twenty two!*

That never would have happened with a full class. The group dynamic would have been wrong.

• • • • •

On the flip side, he waited for a full class, before he made us practice something that was *good for us*. By the way, at his class, *good for us* often meant *painful*.

I remember the night that we took almost the entire class to go through the first form of Wing Chun (Sil Lum Tao) **just once**.

We moved at a pace that would make a snail seem like a Nascar driver. It was ever so slow. My muscles still cramp just thinking about that night.

And yes, it was good for us. Wasn't Steve nice to wait for all of us to be present in class?

• • • • •

The point of all of this is that none of these classes, except for the painfully slow first form, was planned.

Of course, my teacher threw out some options, but we didn't stick to the curriculum. Often we took advantage of our reduced numbers.

You might want to consider a few contingency plans. What kind of **great** class could you offer, if all but a few of your students were out with the flu?

On the flip side, if one of your classrooms flooded the night before **(hey, I live in Oregon — it rains)**, what would you do?

You have two classes that are held at the same time. Could you invite the displaced class to double up?

• • • • •

Could you make such an impromptu situation work?

Let me tell you, if you can — and you perform such magnanimous feats on a regular basis, **you will build a reputation as an outstanding martial arts teacher**. Your colleagues will admire you.

They will also want to work with you. After all, you are easy to work with and so creative — you did invite the flooded out class to combine with your class, remember?

• • • • •

Flexibility

One of the marks of a great teacher is **flexibility** — and I am not talking

about the ability to do the splits while performing a spinning back kick in mid-air.

Can you go with the flow ? (no reference to flooded dojos intended_

Everyone forgot their equipment — no problem, we'll change the exercise.

The electricity is out — great! What a wonderful opportunity for us to practice sticky hands in the dark. After all, it is a sensitivity exercise.

The class is packed — we can make it work for tonight. Then we'll open up another section, and divide the class, so the sizes are more manageable.

Only one student showed up for class — wonderful. I wanted to help him improve on his knife-fighting skills. What a great opportunity. We can get to know each other better too.

Cultivate a positive, flexible attitude about everything class-related, including class size. You will teach much more effectively.



8

Emphasizing Your Students' Strengths

I suppose it makes some difference as to whether you intend to crank out robots, who all perform with the same degree of competency, or if you are working towards building individuals with different strengths and weaknesses. Both have their merits.

Personally, I **emphasize the individual**. This attitude stems from my training in Bruce Lee's system. It was his philosophy.

I am a big heavy guy, with ankle problems. My wife is small and petite. By my reasoning, it would be foolish for us to attempt to defend ourselves in the exact same way.

We do study the same style, so you see a lot of similarities. We have the same flavor to how we respond. But I go for power moves. I don't finesse as much as someone with a lighter touch would.

Kate has darter movements that reach up through the middle. I can't go to the inside like that — my upper body mass prevents it.

So, we believe in **different strokes for different folks**. With that in mind, I think part of teaching effectively is playing to our students' strengths.

It doesn't matter if we are playing to group strengths — create a squad of fighting machines — or if we are catering to the individual. The philosophy should be the same. Emphasize their strengths.

Of course, we still work on building up their weak points — that's really what martial arts training is about.

We systematically develop new skills. We turn klutzy movements into precise, effective techniques. Yes, keep working on their weaknesses, but emphasize their strengths. They will improve at a much faster rate overall. I can practically guarantee it.



What If They Don't Have Any Strengths?

I mean, have you ever tried to train a complete klutz? I have. No offense to some of my students intended, but sheesh. Over the years I have ... well... you know.

So, how do you emphasize their strengths, if they don't have any? You build. And one of the very fastest ways to build, is to teach them the secret of Acting As If....



Acting As If....

I think Dorothea Brande was the first to write a book about it in the 1930s. It seemed to be a forgotten secret, until Maslow brought it back with his movement in Psychology. I don't know why it isn't more popular. It

certainly is effective. It is as important as his concept of a hierarchy of basic needs.

Basically, you act **as if** you had already achieved competence at something:

Example: A student is doing poorly in school. Rather than beating himself over the head saying what a dunce he is, he instead chooses to act as if he were an **“A” student**.

He lists all the things he believes the bright students do. He might even talk to a few of them and ask them about their habits.

Then he starts behaving like them. He studies as much as they do. He turns in his homework when they do. He starts to talk the way they do. Before long, his grades start to take a big turn for the better.



You need to get your students to model good techniques, and to pretend they are doing them the way a black belt would. They need to imagine what kind of force a black belt would use — what kind of precision would be there — what kind of speed, etc....

Creative daydreaming is a good thing. Impress the snot out of them on occasion -- give them something to dream about.

Make them want to learn techniques like that. Then get them to pretend that they have that level of precision. Make them practice the techniques slowly for precision. Then have them practice the technique at the blinding speed of a **super hero**. Have them act as if they were confident martial arts experts.

Then after you start building some good techniques in them, you can proceed as usual.



When Your Strengths Become Their Strengths

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I guess it's nice that your students try to imitate you. You impress them. But sometimes our strengths can become their strengths. This can be both good and bad.

In the case of my wife, it was both good and bad. She got used to working out against me. So, when she went against some of my peers for the first time, they were amazed. She fought like she was a bulldozer. She had incredible forward energy. It felt like they were fighting me. They were impressed.

On the other hand, we had failed to emphasize her natural strengths — her speed, her flexibility, her (then undiscovered) ability to finesse. She had become me — forceful. She needed to discover her unique strengths. I could have helped her more — now, I know better.

So, how do I affect my students? I would say that they are hungrier for good **hand techniques** because of me. Because of my size and lack of flexibility, I tend to emphasize hands more than feet. And I don't spend a lot of time kicking above the waist. Neither do my students — which is a travesty in the case of my 6'10 advanced student.

Think of how good I should be making his legs, instead of teaching him to love fighting blindfolded in chi sao (sticky hands). I promise to mend my ways.

Just be careful that your favorite techniques don't become your students' favorites too. You owe it to them to help them discover their own skills and develop their own expertise.

You might want to reread the section in Student Change (page 35), in order to make each student better than you at something. Remember, getting them to improve is an excellent opportunity for you to benefit from practicing against their skill.



So, How Do You Emphasize Their Strengths?

- * Practice the things they are good at more often — for awhile. By practicing more they will get better. Because they are now more proficient, they want to practice more. So they get even better. And on it goes.
- * Build on these strengths by linking other techniques to them. If your students are good with jabs, use that as a starting point. Review the technique of Spoking (Chapter 4).
- * **Treat them as if....** It works both ways. They can act as if, and you can treat them as if ... treat them the way you want them to be. Give them respect. Admire some of their traits. Let these students live up to your impression of them.
- * Defer to them in the presence of others. Let one of your students tell the story. Let them demonstrate the move. Help them build confidence. It doesn't matter that you can do it better — sometimes, you need to let your students **strut their stuff**.
- * Show interest in their learning. Even if you have done it a million times, feign enthusiasm. Lead by example.

Note: This is a sore point with me. Some high school teachers plug in the video and then go to their desk to grade papers. Then they get upset when the students work on other things too.

Even if I was showing the same **blasted** video to all six classes, I still watched it each time. I laughed at the appropriate moments. I **booed** with the students at some of the cheesy acting. I shared the experience with them.

This is a very important point.

- * Make them perform on a regular basis. Make them teach the material that they are good at. Make them explain it. Have them serve on a panel of experts.

Do whatever it takes to make the students take ownership of the material. I know it sounds corny — but practice does make perfect. Get them used to being the expert on a subject.

* Last but not least, read the eBook **21 Ways to Energize Your Martial Arts Class**.

When you read it, link the concept of breaking the routine with emphasizing their strengths. You should be able to think of some pretty powerful combinations.

Whatever you do to break the routine could be linked to what they are already good at. Then they can improve even more. Still, don't forget to make your students well-rounded. Even though they have a special talent, that doesn't mean they shouldn't develop their other skills, right?



9

Belts, Certificates, and Blueberry Muffins

What do you do to motivate your students? I should ask what you do to motivate your students in a **positive way**.

After all, you could think you motivate them, by having them do push-ups every time they commit an error. This is not positive motivation.

Sure, you'll make your students stronger, but you won't be motivating them to learn at a faster pace. You may end up just teaching them to despise push-ups.

If you want your students to improve at a faster rate, part of what you need to do is **develop a refined system of rewards**. I am not talking about popping a small candy in their mouths like dog biscuits, to be portioned out whenever **the dog** performs a technique correctly.



You need to develop some positive reinforcers to speed up your students' learning progress. Proper use of rewards is a secret held by some of the great martial arts teachers.

The funny thing is, some of them don't even realize that they are training with a reward system in place. These superb teachers may think that they are just offering an encouraging word or two at the right time. They don't realize how much this can motivate their students.

Let's talk about reinforcing your students....



Belts: Just How Important Are They?

It depends on several factors. Probably the biggest is the students' feelings about belting. Some like it, and some don't.

Recently, I had a 20-yr. old interview for my class. He was really into Bruce Lee, and he knew that I taught a JKD-based system. During our talk, he reminded me that Bruce Lee didn't belt, and he didn't believe in belting either.

Note: Actually, this isn't entirely true — I have seen my Teacher's Certificate signed by Bruce Lee.

To me, certificates serve the same purpose as belts. I do understand what Bruce was getting at. For one, you couldn't identify a person's skill by a piece of cloth. You had to observe and make your own judgments.

And he didn't want people to get caught up in the classical mess of ranking. Still, the certification could serve to lend credibility — if one felt the need.

Actually, I do award belts. They don't signify anything to the outside world. I have rearranged colors, on purpose. We don't wear **actual belts**— they come in the form of a certificate.

Each student knows his or her ranking, but it's up to them if they want to share that information with others. It's always their choice.

I use these certificates to show personal improvement. The belts don't necessarily relate from one student to the next. Someone who has received two promotions is not necessarily better than someone who has only earned one.

It just means that this student has shown personal improvement, maybe overcoming two big plateaus.

Even though we don't do the testing and ceremonies surrounding belt promotion, they are still important....



One of the Great Motivators

There is still a mystique surrounding the **black belt**. For some reason, my students think that all black belts have awesome power, react at the speed of light, and know fighting secrets that the beginners can only dream of.

I always hate to burst their bubbles, but I have seen some pretty bad, and I mean really low-skill level black belts out there in the real world.

Still, what people think, goes. And my students are impressed by belts. They want their black belt — each and every one of them. Some of them won't admit it, but they do....

Note: My teacher never handed out belts. He did award teacher certification on very rare occasions. There was mystery surrounding those certificates. It was said that as long as you wanted one, you would never get it.

All the students believed that any outward desire would guarantee that they'd never earn it.

They all warned me not to ever mention my desire for the certificate. Bull! At that time, I was very goal oriented — still am.

So, I had a talk with my teacher. I told him that I thought this mystique around the certificate was a bunch of crap.

I told him that everyone was afraid of ever mentioning it. In fact, whenever it was mentioned, they all proclaimed to the skies, and to Steve Golden, that they didn't desire teacher certification — they were just working for knowledge.

Again, I told him, that I thought that that was a bunch of ca-ca. I told him that we both knew that every last one of them yearned for a certificate. They drooled over it. They dreamed about it.

Steve laughed and laughed, and he agreed with me.

I told him of my goal of certification. I explained that I understood that it was just a piece of paper, but that I also understood that it represented something more. I would be able to promote under his name. And I would be competent enough to progress on my own. That's what it meant to me.

It took me five years. I got my black belt and my teacher's certification. I worked for it. I did whatever it took.

Could I have done it faster, if I hadn't mentioned my goal to my teacher?

No. He explained that you earned it, when you earned it. The rumor of never mentioning it was just a rumor. He didn't mind the rumor, because then people, **other than yours truly**, wouldn't constantly bug him about promotions. Oops.



So, we need to use belt promotions to our advantage. Use them as a reward. **Let the students know ahead of time** which hoops they are going to have to jump through to earn the next belt.

Give them concrete goals. How many punches will they have to do in a row? What kind of precision will they need with those punches? Demonstrate acceptable punches and unacceptable punches. Teach them how to know the difference.

Concrete goals can still be tailored to the individual. Set different goals for students who are at different levels.

When your students have jumped through the required hoops, promote them. Let them taste the success of a promotion.

Tell them -- not during the ceremony -- that you are proud of them. Even if you do mention it during the actual promotion, **you need to mention it again, privately** sometime. Little reinforcers like this come naturally to great martial arts teachers.

Be specific. Use the student's name. Tell them what you liked most about their achievement — maybe they have **tight** side kicks. Tell them that.

Also, if you have to introduce one of your recently promoted students to someone, be sure to tell that person of the recent accomplishment:

“Mr. Quinn, this is Rebecca. She’s a great student. In fact, she just earned her green belt.

She’d be happy to show you where studio C is.”



No Belt Schools

What if your school doesn't offer belts along the way toward mastery? Don't worry about it. Not having belts can be of special significance too.

Let your students wear the fact that you don't belt as a badge of honor. Model for them how to explain to people that they are into the arts for the sake of the martial arts and for personal growth, not for extrinsic prizes like belts. Their goals, and hearts are pure.

Remind them why they are there, from time to time. Keep them there with the desire for personal development. Repeat that you are proud of

them, because they don't have to work for **piddly belts**. They are training for more altruistic reasons. Applaud this purpose.



Certificates

You can use certificates like belts, or you can use them for different purposes. If you are sponsoring a three-day seminar, for example, make sure the presenter gives certificates on completion.

If not, suggest that **you** provide them, and the presenter co-sign each certificate ahead of time.

Your students may end up collecting these seminar certificates.



T-Shirts

You could print **event t-shirts**. Put a martial arts design on them, and the date of the seminar or event. You could even have contests to allow your students to submit designs for the shirt.

Or just put a copy of the poster right on the shirt, if you aren't violating any copyright laws.

Now you have a theme and promotional materials. Of course, each student who enrolls in the seminar gets a free t-shirt. Have different sizes, and be sure to have some big ones, for people like me.

You could sell the extras at and after the seminar.



Do your students hang on every word you say? Do they love to hear you tell stories of people's martial successes?

If so, your students are probably candidates for some honest praise. It's a great motivator, if you use it correctly. Don't use it too often, but do praise, **more** than you criticize. My planned ratio is about **four to one**. I deliver four compliments for about every one

"No, I don't think you have it yet."

I also make my compliments sincere and specific. I don't just say "**good**," although it can be very effective. I get detailed —

"Good job getting your knee higher than the foot. See how it allows you to thrust with a lot more power from your leg? Great kick."

This makes sure your compliments are sincere. False flattery is not a good motivator. Avoid it. Make sure your compliments are honest, sincere, and well-timed.

Some students get embarrassed when you pay compliments, even though you are spreading them around equally. They blush. They don't know how to respond....



Exercise for Taking Compliments

In martial arts, we train to get comfortable with uncomfortable situations. We also train to develop some automatic responses that work well in a variety of situations.

When I saw that my students had problems taking compliments, I just thought about it as though it were a martial arts exercise.

I wanted to train them to be comfortable in the situation of receiving compliments, and I wanted them to have a generalized response that would work in a variety of situations.

I paired more advanced students with less advanced students. I had them practice an exercise. The advanced students' job was to teach the beginners a couple of responses to a specific attack.

They had to present not only the new techniques, of which they could choose their two favorites from a variety, but they had to get the beginners to some level of mastery in the two techniques.

About ten minutes into the exercise, I stopped everyone. I gave them a new task.

The advanced students had to say three positive things about each performance or two of the series, and then one way to improve.

Each time the beginner heard the compliment, he/she was to say thank you, or thank you very much. That was it.

Also, while this was going on, I instructed the beginners to look for two things that they liked about their partner's teaching technique, and one martial arts technique, or reaction, that they really admired in them.

During the practice session, **the beginner got one sincere compliment on each repetition**, and/or for every three corrections. And at the end of the session, the beginner complimented the advanced student on one aspect of martial arts, plus two compliments on the advanced student's teaching technique.

This may sound like a dumb exercise, but it worked. Even though I only did it a few times in my martial arts classes, I did it over and over again, when I taught high school. It worked like a charm.

I think it worked because I modeled the correct responses for them ahead of time. Even though we joked a bit while I was explaining it, to keep the atmosphere light, I explained that I wanted them to take this exercise seriously, down to the compliments. They did, out of respect to me.

I just kept doing the exercise every once in awhile, until they took compliments, without thinking about it. Then I'd check to see if the ability had generalized to the real world, and if it hadn't, I'd do more compliments later.

I kept working them, until my students 1) reacted naturally to them, and 2) actually liked receiving compliments.

After perfecting the exercise, I could use compliments to reward. And I taught them a useful skill for the real world.

Learning to accept compliments brought out a certain confidence in my students. It was subtle, yet it was there. They were also learning a classier response than their previous responses of avoiding eye contact, turning on the shy routine, etc. while receiving compliments. This was a better way.



The Right Motivators

What motivates your students? In true operant conditioning, you offer the smallest reward that will do the trick. And you don't always offer the reward — you do so intermittently. This strengthens the behavior.

Before you worry about the **frequency** of rewarding your students, you have to figure out what makes them try harder. Are they into competition? Does a compliment from the teacher do the trick? Do they want their next promotion?

Personally, my students work for blueberry muffins (**you wondered why that was in the title, didn't you?**).

Well, it's actually more than that. My students know that when I am pleased with our progress, I invite them over for a weekend-morning workout.

We get together on one of the weekend mornings, whatever is good for everyone, and then we have a shorter workout session, followed by a breakfast that my wife and/or I prepare.

We drink juice, eat food, and ... we watch fun martial arts videos.

Sometimes, we'll watch a **Bruce Lee** movie. On other occasions we'll pick an oldy but goody like **The Warriors**. We even examine some great technique videos. Anything that is fun for all.

Then I send them on their way at about noon, so it feels like they still have the full day. My students love this reward. They work for it.

The key is **you** have to find what works for **your students**. If you need more ideas for rewarding students, be sure to read my ideas on using tickets for effective rewards.



10

The Best Ways to Use Evaluation to Your Advantage

If you really, and I mean really, want to teach more effectively, then you have to know what's working and what's not.

The more accurately you evaluate the effectiveness of any change, the better you will be able make adjustments. These adjustments are what will make your students improve at an incredible rate.

There are several types of evaluation. You have on-going, **daily evaluation** of your students. Maybe you also have **formal testing** on a regular basis. You can also teach your students forms of **self-evaluation**.

You can **allow your students and instructors to evaluate you and the school**.

You can **evaluate your changes**. And to wrap it all up into one **neat and tidy little package** — you can evaluate all of your evaluations, in order to see your next course of action.

This chapter should give you ideas for each type of evaluation. Let's start with the most difficult.



Letting Your Students and Colleagues Evaluate You

For some, this is the hardest type of evaluation. Why? Because you are opening up **yourself** and/or your school to criticism. And negative criticism is often the hardest pill to swallow.

It is also the tool that can help you to improve the fastest.

Rather than just asking for people's opinions over a cup of hot chocolate, you should make it a more formal process. Have typed forms for your students to fill out. Here are some points to consider:

- * Provide writing utensils. Not everyone carries a pen while they practice martial arts.
- * Don't send it in the mail. You will be disappointed with the percentage who respond. Hand it out in class. Have them fill it out before they leave.
- * After you hand out the form, you should leave. Have all the students put their evaluations in a big envelope. Then have a trusted student deliver it to you. When I taught at the University level, the teachers weren't allowed to see the evaluations until after the grades were turned in. In other words, there were no grade changes based on what the teacher read in the evaluation. This encouraged honesty.
- * Allow those who wish to respond anonymously. You'll get more honest responses. I tell my students to sign their name, only if they

wish me to be able to reprint some of their comments for the promotion of my school or class.

Also, they can sign their name, if they want to write a personal note to me, of some type — otherwise, I have to direct my responses to the class in general, rather than giving a private note back.



When you make up your evaluation questionnaire, don't ask too many questions. Definitely limit it to one sheet of paper. You'll get more complete responses, and the answers are much easier to tabulate, if you are only dealing with one sheet per student or teacher.

Include open-ended response questions, like:

- * What is the part of the class where you learn the most?
- * What is your least favorite part of the class?
- * How has the teacher personally helped you to improve?
- * If you could change one thing about this class, what would you change, and why?



Also, give your responders a break by asking some questions that require them to just circle a number or a **yes** or a **no**. Examples of different types of close-ended responses might be:

- * Is the teacher friendly to you? Yes or No (circle one)

- * How would you rate your teacher ?

mean	a little unfriendly	friendly	very friendly
1	2	3	4

For open-ended questions, I copy the question on a blank sheet of paper, and then I go through each questionnaire, and write down every answer to that particular question.

I put a star or check next to a response, every time I get a duplicate. This way I don't have to rewrite the same answer twenty times. Also, sometimes I just copy the relevant part of the answer, if it's too long.

Advice: It seems natural to delegate this task to someone else. Don't do it. By doing your own tabulating, you guarantee that the answers remain private and anonymous — nobody else will ever see who wrote what. Be sure to mention that you'll be the tabulator and it's all for your eyes only. You'll get more honest responses this way.

You want as much contact with the results as possible. If you keep reading a criticism over and over again, you have a better chance of paying attention to the advice.

On the flip side, repeated exposure to a ton of compliments can be beneficial. After all, teachers need positive reinforcement too.

What you do with your responses is up to you. First, don't get too depressed. And don't get angry and/or defensive. You just encouraged everyone to be honest with you. Reward them for their honesty; don't punish them.

Also, remember to take their advice with a grain of salt. I have seen high school teachers get depressed, when beginning students feel that the teacher doesn't have a good command of his/her subject.

Come on! You can't expect a true beginner to be able to evaluate your command of the subject. So, don't get too depressed. These teachers just spent 5+ years (foreign language requirement) studying their subject intensely at the college level -- they shouldn't get depressed over a beginner's judgment.

On the other hand, if everyone thinks that you lack command of your subject area (style of martial arts), this could be indicative of a problem.

Why do they all think this? Is it your appearance? Lack of confidence in front of large groups? What is causing the group to feel this way? And can you correct it?



Once you evaluate all of your results, you need to brainstorm in several areas. Figure out what needs to continue to be emphasized. Decide what needs to be changed — even if it's just the students' attitudes.

Brainstorm how you could accomplish this.

Then go back to the chapter on successful implementation. Figure out when you are going to make changes. How you are going to evaluate the effectiveness of the change? Are you going to hand out another evaluation at the end of the next term (logical break in your teaching sequence)?

I have found that my students are always interested in the results of the survey. I report back to them. This is often my icebreaker towards instigating a change....

“Almost two thirds of you reported that you lack confidence with your kicks. I would have thought that your kicks were coming along just fine. But for some reason, you all disagree.

So, for the next month or so, we will be making three changes in our normal routine.

1. We will start every class by working our basic kicks. We will use this time to develop more power, more precision, and more speed.
2. Each class will have at least one reality-based exercise, where a kick would be the most effective response. You will gain confidence knowing that your kicks will work in a real-life situation.
3. Expect more compliments on your kicking. I need to let you know when you are improving.” (Don't tell them that it's also a great confidence builder to keep telling them how awesome they are.)

You have now set the stage for some changes. The students will accept these changes. Why? Because **they** are the ones that wanted the changes in the first place.

They just shouted this at you on all of their evaluations.

As mentioned in another part of this book, you could also give them choices. By sharing the results with them, and then letting them choose how to proceed with the change, you are empowering them (to borrow an expression from one of the weakest bandwagons to come along in years)....

“ At the end of this month, we have to decide how we are going to evaluate our improvement. Would you like a kicking contest, with different categories? Should we have a formal test, with certificates awarded? Or would you prefer peer evaluations?”

Then you open the suggestions up for discussion. You moderate the discussion, so it doesn't drag on. After the discussion, vote on it. If the vote is too close, try to figure out a compromise.

Just don't spend an inordinate amount of time on this decision-making. You don't want to take away from training.

Can you see the power in this method? You ask the students for their needs. You offer them solutions. They agree on the changes as a group. Everyone is happy. Even the few who voted against the majority won't be too disgruntled.

After all, with a close vote, you sought compromise. And who knows, maybe they'll get their way next time.

Besides, if they really have a problem with the proposed changes, they can always come to you with their concerns. You have encouraged them to seek you out, haven't you?



On-going Evaluation of Your Students

I thought that everyone kept files on their students' progress. When a student joins, I open a file on them. I track their progress. I make notes on both their strengths and their weaknesses.

Note: My notes sometimes get pretty detailed. I even know what type of learner each student is. Some students learn better by movement. Some learn by watching. And some of my students process information more accurately when they can hear it.

You can have a visual learner practice the movement over and over again. Yet, for them, sometimes they won't "get it," until they see it performed a few times by someone else.

My auditory learners love it when I give them sounds ... they love to react, when I clap my hands. They like activities that use a metronome to set the rhythm. They also learn to understand broken rhythm through sounds too.

And my kinesthetics love movement. They are the ones who will practice the move a couple of thousand times a day. Don't bother them with fancy explanations — just let them practice. Also, make them **feel** the corrections.

I don't keep extremely private notes — nothing embarrassing or illegal. I do keep track of allergies, fears (If you are deathly afraid of heights, I won't force the issue during class. It doesn't do anyone any good to try to get you through your particular fear, while everyone is watching).

I record promotions in their files. I also keep notes on their hobbies and interests. If all of your students watch Scooby Doo cartoons, then it would be pointless to constantly use examples from the opera The Mikado, don't you agree?

If along with Scooby Doo, I know that my students love knives, then I can tailor my class to include a lot of knife-fighting examples.

By including examples that they can relate to, they will improve faster. They will also pay attention.

Talk about honor and integrity to a group of ten-year olds, and I guarantee that not all will be paying strict attention. Some will be daydreaming. Others will be checking out your wall decorations, while lending you half an ear.

But relate your martial arts point to the latest craze advertised on TV, with collectibles available at your local fast-food restaurant, and you will have their undivided attention.



Teach Your Students to Self-Evaluate

I use this technique, when students start asking for too much feedback. When I was a high school teacher, students began to ask me their grades almost every day.

I felt as though I were constantly telling them their grades. And I thought, “this is a good thing.”

After all, they were involved in the class — they wanted to know how they were doing. I also knew that fast feedback meant faster improvement. Or so I thought.

They started to focus on the grade, rather than on the subject to be mastered. The grade was the reward, not learning the content.

It was time to shift the focus.

So, I taught everyone how to track their own grades. I taught them how to plot a trend graph, in order to see if they were improving. I even taught them about data-decision rules, so they’d learn to evaluate and make changes, before their grades went down the toilet.

Then I went back to emphasizing the subject matter. If they wanted their grades, they had to figure them out. In a way, I was helping the math

department with a little practical application. It worked for awhile -- eventually we drifted back into the old routine.

Now, the big question is: Can you make this work in a martial arts context? Yes, if....

- * You make it a simple record-keeping process. My students just had to record a number — their grade.
- * Look to the scorecards that people keep when they lift weights. They think in terms of numbers of repetitions, and numbers of sets.
- * Make a way to keep the information private. In Oregon, it is illegal to post students' grades on the wall with their names in a public school setting. You have to use something private, like the student ID numbers, or even give them code words, that they can refer to.
- * Get the students to believe in the worth of the exercise. Otherwise, they just won't do it. Reinforce the behavior. Monitor it. Guide them to accurate record keeping.
- * Teach them not to fudge their answers. This can happen at both ends of the recorded period. Some students don't try very hard, when they do the initial test for their maximum effort. This way, they show lots of improvement almost immediately. Other students fudge, by inflating their performance later on. Either way, it's false improvement.



You could put a chart on the wall, with each student's social security number, or some other private way to identify their column. You could give them a private file, to keep their own records. They could keep a score card in their lockers.

If you teach them to keep records accurately, evaluate and change, you could produce some powerful students. And what about your other teachers!

What should you evaluate? Who should decide what's to be evaluated, you or each student?

I like a mix. I want to cater to my students' goals — after all, I provide a service by teaching martial arts.

I also like to set some goals for them. I am the teacher — I know best (most of the time). I have a discussion with each student. They list their goals — I translate them into exercises to record.

I then offer some of my goals for them and my reasoning behind these goals — I need the students to believe in them.

By the way, when I record the goals, I don't separate them by whose they originally were. Over time, I have found that my goals become their goals. They don't necessarily remember who decided on the goal that created the particular exercise.

Since this book deals with making changes, I might add that I often create individual goals based on the changes that I want to make.

It's a chance for me to try out specific exercises on a limited basis.

Note: That last paragraph was one of the most important of the whole chapter. If you have 200 students, then you have 200 potential mini-laboratories (or guinea pigs, depending how you look at them).

Get it? If you don't want to risk a big change on a whole class, you can try the change out on a very limited basis.

Tell the student that you designed the exercise just for him/her. If it works, you will either let the whole class try it, or experiment with a few more students first.

If you still need ideas on what to have your students self evaluate, then e-mail me. I may be able to brainstorm with you.

(Contact me through Kerwin Benson Publishing
keith@kerwinbenson.com).



Keep a Notebook

Periodically, you need to take a look at the whole picture:

- * Are your students progressing as fast as they could be?
- * Does your school have the image you desire?
- * Are your instructors happy?
- * Are you happy?
- * What is working?
- * What needs improving?



Take notes on the answers to these questions. Record the results of your evaluations. Talk to yourself in the notebook. Use it for self dialogue.

If you are feeling down, record it. Analyze it. What can you do to improve your mood?

Use both your evaluation notebook and your idea notebook. Use them in tandem — brainstorm possible changes, then evaluate the results.

Retire your notebook to a handy shelf, when it's filled. Then start another. But keep your old one(s) handy — it is your history.

You learn from history, so you are not destined to repeat your mistakes.

Keep a file of student evaluations. Copy the good ones as testimonials. Also keep old students' personal evaluations. You want to know, if ten years ago your average green belt could do 250 sidekicks in a row, but currently, your average student can only do 75.

Now that you are evaluating things more closely, you will notice trends like the sidekick example above. You can correct these — easily. But you have to have the data in the first place. Yes, evaluating is very important to teaching more effectively, wouldn't you agree?

Be sure to read the Notebook article in Appendix A



11

The Road to Making Your Students Great

Always keep in mind that I am a firm believer in goals and goal setting. I mention goals a lot, don't I?

I truly believe that you need to see clearly where you are headed, in order to get to the destination.

So, it's no wonder that I prepare an overall course plan for myself. I want to know where I am headed with my students. I plan, keeping the end result in mind. What do I want them to be able to do, at what level of competence, when they finally **leave the nest**?

I always start my plan with the end result written on a note card. When you plan, break the over-all learning process into steps. Common

practice says that you should start with the end result and work backwards. Just ask a computer programmer, or anyone designing a process.

Say, for example, your desired outcome is to make all of your students street competent. This might be defined as your students having competence in fighting multiple attackers, with weapons.

Note: I would also get some specific clues or behaviors of the end result. How will you know if you are successful? How will they know?

So, The next step backwards might be to be able to fight multiple attackers without weapons. The next step back might then be to be able to fight a single attacker with a weapon. The first step might be to fight a single attacker without a weapon.

After you break the course of action into these steps, then you have to break the steps down further.

What exactly do you mean by being able to take a single attacker with a weapon? Which weapons? How skilled is the attacker? How are you going to train for this skill? Yes — each step needs to be broken down into many mini-steps.

Note: Even though most people use this reverse-order flowchart to plan, I don't. I tend not to think linearly.

I put down the end result. Then I write where my students are beginning from. Next, I brainstorm all of the components that I think will be necessary to achieve my goal for them.

Then, I arrange them, from start to finish, in a logical order.

My next step is to imagine my students going through the long process. In my mind, I see gaps in their learning process. So, I fill them in. I work backwards and forwards to develop my plan.

My way of planning is supposedly flawed — or so the experts say. By working backwards, you won't miss any steps. My method works for me. You should do what works for you.

Once I have a plan, it's not set in stone. If something isn't working, I change it. If our goals change, the plan changes too (although we are pretty consistent about sticking to an overall goal).

If I see that my students are missing some skill necessary for them to achieve their goals, I figure out a way to work it in.

I think this is a much stronger way to teach, than simply going out there with the attitude of,

“I'll teach them some punches and some kicks. I'll just give them a basic martial arts class.”

Plan your classes, and teach 100% more effectively.



How Do You Choose Which Approach to Take?

There are a lot of conflicting philosophies in the martial arts. And I am not just talking about differences in styles.

For example, do you introduce weapons from the very beginning, or do you only teach them to advanced students? Do you hold information back from your students, or do you show them everything you've got? Do you emphasize technique, or do you focus on sparring?

Of course, some decisions will be easy to make, because of your particular clientele and their needs. But some of these decisions should be made by the teacher. So, how do you decide which course of action to take, especially when it seems that two philosophies are in juxtaposition to each other?



Allow me to start our discussion with a true story:

In the late 70s, there was a teacher who had two schools. I won't use his name, because I don't have permission, and the conclusion that I drew from the story is not necessarily the point he was trying to make when he told it.

Anyway, he had two schools in neighboring cities. In one school, he decided to focus on technique. In fact, sparring was never even mentioned. That school did not spar —ever. They only worked on perfecting their techniques, and practicing set moves against each other.

The students in the other school in the neighboring city were taught to spar from the very beginning. They got in the ring at each and every practice session. They were used to going up against opponents.

Then one day, after several years, the teacher brought the two schools together to spar. Can you guess what happened?

Yes. The sparring school kicked the living daylights out of the technique school. The sparrers wiped the mat with the other school. It was pitiful.

So, after they each returned to their respective cities, the teacher started teaching the technique-oriented school how to spar.

The next time they got together, it was a little more evenly matched. After two more times, the technique school started winning consistently. In fact, there was no going back — and no catching up for the other school.

The technique fighters were just too precise for the sloppier fighters. They had a much better foundation.



But the story doesn't end here:

I used this information to model my martial arts classes. And I went one step further — I brought this principle to the high school classroom.

I was a foreign language teacher. The current bandwagon instructed foreign language teachers to have their students practice freely talking to each other from the very beginning. They wanted them to **spar** from the beginning.

Grammar was out. Practical oral production was in. So, I went against the grain. I focused on grammar exclusively. And those who stuck with it long enough, eventually were taught oral proficiency too.

But now they had a foundation — they would be much better speakers in the long run.

The problem was that not enough of the students stuck with it long enough. I taught first year, and I taught fourth and fifth year. Not many of them stuck it out long enough to get me again for the advanced class — where we really practiced. Maybe this was because some of my colleagues didn't continue reinforcing the grammar enough, so....

I had to develop a different method. I adapted. I gave my beginners as many responses as I could to a couple of questions. Then I turned them loose to ask questions of each other. **Many set responses to only a few initiations.**

It worked! Like a charm. We kept building from there. Any time the responses got too inaccurate, I shifted back to grammar. Then I figured out how they could use their grammar to enrich the limited answers that I gave them to use.

Do you see where this is going? (It had the **flavor** of Spoking.)



Back to Learning Martial Arts:

I was on to something. What I was doing had a similar feeling to the way Steve Golden taught his classes.

We were always building. We never sparred, yet I had the feeling that I was responding spontaneously to a variety of attacks.

Thus, I brought this technique back to martial arts. We worked on technique. We emphasized technique. After we built a couple of responses, they had an opportunity to try out what they learned in a more loosely defined context.

They still weren't allowed to spar, but they were given freedom to respond in a limited context. Can you see how my idea of Spoking came from this strategy of learning?

I modified the technique a bit. Since my students couldn't accurately invent words in the foreign language, they had to rely on me or a dictionary for their building blocks.

But not so with martial arts. I gave them a bit of freedom to use what they already knew.

Of course, I had to tighten their techniques, change timing and angles, but we got some of their techniques to work. This was important to me — I wanted them to have some of my style-driven responses under their belts, but I also wanted them to be able to rely on what was inherently theirs.

After all, the students are allowed to contribute to their fighting style too — within limits.

Consequently, I ended up with a hybrid. I definitely had a technique-driven school. They weren't allowed the complete freedom to spar and get sloppy.

Yet, I made sure that they felt as though they were free sparring to some degree. So, it would be super simple to make the shift over to full sparring — without the learning curve.

Note: I guess someday I will learn how to spar, too. Wink.



Do You Still Need Advice about Choosing an Approach?

There were several points to the above story, but I bet you missed a subtle one....

Did you get that I must have gone through several changes in approach on my poor martial arts class?

They started with sparring. Then I forbade it, and we only worked on techniques for a couple of years. Then I did my new method, the hybrid. And guess what?

They survived. The students learned in spite of the teacher.

Through my changes, which I didn't make all that lightly, I still maintained consistency in other areas.

I still stayed involved with their learning. I still cared. I still helped them to learn better, when things weren't going smoothly.

Yes, you do need to take care before you completely reshape a class. Just don't worry too much.

Plan it all out. Make choices based on a combination of logic and intuition. Sometimes, you know a certain change wouldn't be good for a particular class. You just don't know exactly why. Trust your instincts — do what your gut tells you to.

Being open to change doesn't mean you have to be insane. Make choices that you can live with, OK?



Suggestions to Nudge You in the Right Direction

I didn't want this book to be just a random collection of teaching tips. Yet some of you have expressed a need for a few, just to get you started.

I could fill volumes with **the lessons that my students have taught me**. Here are eleven to get you started — plus a bonus tip, to make it an even dozen:

Patterns

Students crave pattern. They not only like to practice patterns, they like a consistent routine.

Always start the class with warming up. Always end the class with a review. They get used to having their class conducted in a specific order.

This is basic I.T.I.P. You can read more about it elsewhere in this book. It boils down to common-sense teaching.

Every once in awhile, break up the routine. If you are used to presenting four or five activities during a given class, then occasionally have a class where you work on just one thing, like taking on a knife wielder, when you don't have a weapon.

Don't do this kind of change too often — after all, you may have a few students who are absolutely bored by the idea of a whole class of knife fighting. In general, stick to a routine — just break it up from time to time.

Note: Careful with the pattern lovers. While it's true that students crave working on patterns, it's not always the best use of time.

Don't be fooled by the Karate Kid Syndrome of **Wax on and Wax Off** — sometimes students **can't** apply the pattern to real life.

Don't let them practice stick patterns ad nauseam. Don't spend your whole class on Kata. Yes, we do repetition for precision. But we don't do it **instead** of more realistic practice.



Relate Patterns to Real Life

Just a reminder to keep the eye on the goal. If the goal is to get good at patterns, great.

If the goal is to defend yourself on the street, then you should spend more time relating the patterns to real life situations. Get it?

If you feel the need to make your students practice patterns, make sure that they can relate them back to the practical at some point during the class. Don't trust that they will make the connections themselves.



Teach to Their Level, Plus One

Once I was reading a message on Sean Madigan's forum

(www.junfanjkd.com) by Mavourneen Rister. She was commenting about our teacher, Steve Golden. She said:

“...he is the only person, I have rolled with who makes me feel like I am doing it right. He drops to your skill level, so you can really feel things. I don’t know many people that can let their egos go enough to let someone”

Of course, Mavourneen goes on to describe what it’s like when Steve reacts. You think you’ve got him ...

“... and then he is no longer there.”

I agree with Mavourneen to a point, but I would make a distinction between practicing the set exercise with Steve, and opening up with a little freestyle chi sao (sticky hands).

When Steve is practicing the exercise **as your partner**, you get in ... when you perform the technique correctly. He allows that, even though his natural reflexes would allow him to easily feel a good counter. He lets you hit him. It’s part of the exercise -- you repeat it to improve.

On the other hand, when you do a little freestyle with him, he stays just a hair above your level. He doesn’t match your level — you wouldn’t improve much that way.

Neither does he knock the living daylight out of you, impressing all with his masterful technique.

He fights at your level, **plus a little**. This helps you to get good fast. As you improve and reach his slightly elevated skill level, **he improves too**.

He stays just a tad above you. It’s like playing that tennis player who is better — it’s the best way to improve.

Note: I learned this technique from foreign language teaching. They call it input + 1. I believe the theory was originally developed by Stephen Krashen.



Learn about Comfort Zones

Pick up a book or two about comfort zones. We humans crave our comfort level.

You'd think that this rule wouldn't apply to skydivers and other risk takers. Not so. They have their own comfort zones. For them, an adrenaline rush becomes a familiar feeling — something they crave.

We all like our level of comfort. More people would probably take martial arts classes, but they are afraid that they'll get hurt in the class. They can't imagine getting thrown around a dojo. They are outside of their comfort zone.

Push someone too far, and they panic. Never push, and they will progress at a snail's pace. You need to find the right level....

Many rabbis have been asked by their congregation just how religious each person should be. Just how much religion should be incorporated into one's daily life?

A few rabbis have responded with an analogy about a new pair of dress shoes. When you get a new pair of dress shoes they are just a bit uncomfortable — they may be a little stiff, a little tight.

They aren't so tight that you take them off and refuse to wear them. But you do need to get used to the new shoes. They need to become a part of you — they have to mold a bit to you too.

This is how I feel about martial arts. I want to push my students a bit out of their comfort zones, but not so much so that they'd feel bad, or even think about quitting.

While I realize that I am preparing them for reality, I don't have to dump the **whole** real world on them in one fell swoop.

Sometimes, it's fun to have them look back and see how far they have progressed. I can remember when I was afraid of multiple attackers, for example. Or when I almost quit class, because we were going to start fighting with sharp knives, instead of the training knives.

Boy, has my comfort level been pushed over the years. I have progressed. In other words, I left some of my **woosiness** behind.



Involving the Audience

In addition to being a martial artist, I have been a magician most of my life. Magicians and other entertainers have long ago learned that involving the audience makes them enjoy the show more.

In our context, our students are our audience. If you want them to get more out of the experience of taking martial arts, teach them to enjoy training.

They will enjoy it more, if you involve them. I am not talking about practice in class — although it is involvement — I'd get bored to tears, if I had to watch night after night, without being allowed to participate.

By involvement, I mean individual involvement. Grab a different student each time you have to demonstrate something. Don't just use the senior student in the class (your helper) all of the time.

Have students volunteer scenarios for you to brainstorm a few quick practiced responses:

Someone reaches in the open window of your car, and you are belted in.... You are attacked while you have a bag of heavy groceries.... The best way to get money out of an ATM in the dark of the night (not always a smart move).

Another way to involve the students individually is to have them make presentations to the class. A student could report on a seminar that she went to. She could even **demo** a few of the more impressive moves.

Note: Whatever you do to involve your students, don't embarrass them. Don't knock the sense out of them in front of everyone. Get a volunteer for the demonstration — leave the student intact [unless you are knocking the “ego” of someone — necessary on occasion].

Also, keep in mind that the number one fear is public speaking, not death. So, if you are going to force them into it — proceed at a tentative pace.

Remember our talk about comfort zones? This isn't the time to push — help them out.

They will be off the comfort chart due to nervousness at having to make the presentation. Get them used to it in small bites.



Pace the Class

You set the class pace by planning quick exercises when you want to pick up the pace, and having them work with a partner on their own when you want to slow the pace down.

Do you want to end on an up beat, or do you want to slow the pace down, to draw to a close? It's your choice — you get to orchestrate your class.

You decide on breaks, etc.... If the class is under an hour in length, you push. You don't have much time — so, you keep them going. Make them feel as though they got their money's worth.

If your class is 90 minutes or more, you can afford to slow things down at times. You also might want to consider building a small break into a longer class.

Give them a restroom break. Let them talk for a few minutes, maybe get a drink of water — especially if after the break, you are going to switch gears with a new activity.

If you decide to give them a bathroom break, train them to be back on time. Maybe a slight whistle, or some other cue.

Note: I didn't say a break to get a drink of water. My martial arts students can get a drink on their own any time they need to. They are quick about it. I don't believe in dehydration. They drink when they need to. They are also polite enough not to, when I am explaining something.



amount of silly giggles, as the year progresses. Fun is fine, but sometimes....

My high school boys have, on occasion, emitted body noises during class. And even though these are natural functions of the body, they produce these noises with glee. Again, it may be the nature of the beast.

But even given your target audience, you still have control. None of the girls would giggle, if my wife, Kate, were to lower her voice, get a bit serious, and start talking about recent rapes reported in the newspaper.

And my students automatically check their rude noises, when we have guests.

Just keep in mind, you control the class. If I wanted prim and proper behavior out of the boys, I'd get it.

It just so happens, that I am giving them a chance to let it all out (pardon the pun) after school. They need to relax. They have been behaving for adults all day.

Decide what kind of atmosphere you want, and then work towards it, Model good behavior yourself.

In my class, we are serious when practicing with knives. We tell jokes when we are doing calisthenics. Sometimes we are playful; sometimes we are all business. Not only do I dictate the pace of the class, but I also control the atmosphere.



Bonding Doesn't Have to Be Touchy-Feely

As long as I am orchestrating the class, I get my students to really appreciate each other. I have exercises where they build trust. They have to rely on their partner through some task.

I also occasionally pick the partners for each student. Based on how things are going, I may even have students keep the same partners for the whole class.

When I do this, they almost always are more friendly toward their partner at the next class. It's as though they have a ... I hate to say it ...

special bond. I have felt this too. I still feel a kinship with those who have worked with me the most.

If partners aren't working out, I may switch things around. If this happens, I continue switching a few more times in the class.

It seems as though telling everyone to switch partners was just part of the plan — not because there was a personality conflict.

I have numerous ways to get a whole class to bond. One small way, is to ask them occasionally to fill out a 3 x 5 card with a few answers to a few fun questions. At the next class, I read the answers, keeping the responders anonymous.

The class gets a feeling for each others' tastes. Sometimes, I ask a few of these questions at the bottom of one of my formal evaluations. This is a technique that I learned from Professor George Sugai, at the University of Oregon.

It's fun to hear their answers. I only ask a couple of questions at a time. So, I spread it out through the year. Here are a few of the questions I have asked:

- * What's your favorite martial arts movie?
- * What's your favorite movie of all time?
- * What's your favorite restaurant in Eugene?
- * Which fast food restaurant should be closed down?
- * What's your favorite book of all time?
- * If you could (or had to) be anyone other than yourself, who would you be?
- * What's the best thing that has ever happened to you? (I warn my students to keep it appropriate)
- * If you could learn one new skill, besides anything martial arts related, what would you want to learn how to do?

We get some great answers. Remember, I don't read names, just the answers. This is just one of my bonding techniques. There are many others — I intend to cover more in my next e-project.



Yes, Sweat the Little Things

This particular tip may sound like a little detail — little details are important; they can impact learning in a very big way. If you are going to have your students respond one at a time, I have a little suggestion.

It doesn't matter if it's a verbal response to a question, or if you will have them respond by correctly executing a technique.

If you are going to require a response, where they have a second or two to think it over, then ... I have a rule about the order that you present the question:

Make sure you ask the question before you call on the responder. And for heaven's sake, don't call on people in any kind of an order (that the students can perceive).

Please don't skip to the next tip. This point is so very important, once you understand it.

There are unfortunately many teachers who would ask the question like this:

“Kenny, demonstrate a pok sao/lop sao combination.

or

“Kenny, name the Five Ways of Attack from Jeet Kune Do.”

The problem with this is that the teacher prefaced the question with the student's name. The second that the teacher said **Kenny**, everyone

else's focus relaxed. For some, they stopped paying attention completely the instant they heard the name. It wasn't **their** name.

Get more learning out of your students. If you pose the question, pause, and **then** ask the name.

It forces everyone to try to come up with the answer. This is a good way to push their comfort zones a little:

“Let's see. I need someone to rattle off **Bruce Lee's Five Ways of Attack**.... And the person I want to do that will be [pause pause] ... Rebecca.”

Such a small detail. By switching the order, calling on the name **after** making the request, you force everyone to think through the answer or practice the techniques in their heads.

It's the little things that will make a big difference. Does this technique make sense to you?

• • • • •

Bonus Tip:

At the end of each class, have the students recap what you did.

Plant tonight's lesson firmly in their minds. Give them another contact with the material. Don't make them strain to remember what was practiced.

If you go around the room and ask for the details of the class, make sure you don't go in any particular order. And call the name after you say something like,

“... and then what did we do next? [pause pause] ... Caleb.”

“..so, what principle did we learn from that technique? [pause pause] ... Caleb again.”

Did you notice that I called on Caleb twice in a row? It wasn't an accident. Sometimes I ask someone a question in between, before I come back to him.

Yes, **keep them on their toes**. Don't allow them to breathe easy, just because they have already answered.

They will continue to pay attention to you. Chuckle chuckle. [Thanks to Professor Perry Powers and my father, Professor C. Bennett Pascal for this technique.]

Besides reinforcing the class in their minds, there is another added benefit. If you are teaching students who are young enough to go home to their parents each night, then you get an added benefit.

If the student is sitting around the dinner table with the folks, and mom asks what the child did during the day, little Billy is likely to talk about your martial arts class.

Why? Because **you** asked *what did you learn today?* Then **the folks** ask the same question. I am willing to bet that many of the kids will choose to talk about your class. More word of mouth marketing for you.



Now, It's Your Turn

Do you have good tips for teaching? Write to me. If I include them in the next edition, or my next project, I will give you full credit. I am not looking for activities in your class.

I just want good teaching techniques. I have a ton — but I need your input too.

Also, if you have any questions or particular teaching problems, write to me. I'll see what I can do to help.

You have a lot to think about, I hope. Constantly changing and improving, so you teach more effectively, can be a life-long pursuit.

It's great when a class goes smoothly. It's even better when you get your students in that altered state that teachers refer to as **the teachable moment**.

They get absorbed in what they are learning. Their minds fill with possibilities. You kindle hope. They lose track of time for a bit.

I hope reading this book has been a teachable moment for you!

Keith Pascal



Appendix A:

Welcome to one of the rare secrets that makes great teachers truly great.
Welcome to **The Art of Notebooking**.



The Art of Notebooking

As a martial arts teacher — and as a martial arts learner — you should definitely have this secret weapon at your disposal. Before you skip ahead to the next appendix, stick with me just a bit longer....

Imagine that you are searching for the one thing that will turn you into a great martial arts teacher. You meet a true martial arts master — you admire everything about this person. You like the way they teach. You like what they teach. Their classes seem to flow without a hitch. Even the jokes seem perfectly timed.

You want to know the secret. You pester the master. He (or she) isn't immediately forthcoming with the answers you desire. So you pester some more.

Finally, this master agrees to sit down with you and explain the secret to, in this case, 'his' success.

You are eager — filled with anticipation. You sit on the edge of your seat.

The master begins, "The secret to the art of teaching martial arts more effectively"

You think, here it comes

The master continues, "... is to use a notebook."

You are utterly disappointed. You were waiting for some great secret. This is almost as bad as finding out how the magicians really do their tricks. How depressing.



So, is that how you're feeling right about now? Or do you have faith that I am about to reveal a **hidden gem**?

Obviously, this isn't the only secret weapon that makes a teacher great. Consider it the hero's magic sword — the hero is a hero whether wielding a sword or not. But boy, the hero sure wants every possible advantage in the climax of the adventure. A magic sword sure would help.

Here is **your** magic sword. You can use it in everything from brainstorming new ideas to lesson planning. Some of the best academic teachers I have ever met have been masters of the notebook.

In particular, I loved looking at the old, worn notebooks of Jim Freeman (my high-school, A.P. European History Teacher), Emanuel Hatzantonis (my Italian professor, mentor, and babysitter), Mike Helm (first, my Jr. high teacher, then a colleague at Churchill High School, and now a fellow author), and C. Bennett Pascal (Harvard PhD., Professor Emeritus at the University of Oregon, and my Dad).



Here's a quick synopsis of how to use notebooks for lesson planning. Don't skip this — it could be your most powerful tool for improving your teaching.

Note: All of these teachers seemed to use notebooks that had pages that couldn't be removed. I prefer the ability to update mine.



From years of watching them, I was ready to try my hand at using this powerful tool.

I was planning my first week's lesson plans for the high school. I wrote everything down. I planned how long each activity would last. I planned the desired results I wanted. I planned how I'd know if the students learned each activity. I even jotted down a few jokes and witty remarks for appropriate moments.

Then came the first day of class. I taught my first class. When I had free moments, I jotted notes in my trusty notebook.

At the end of class, I started scribbling in my notebook as fast as I could.

In all, throughout the day, I taught the same class three times — although I taught pieces of the lesson to all six classes.

The next year, I taught the same classes again. The following year ... yes, I repeated the classes.

Of course, I varied the lessons, and we used different textbooks, but in all, I taught the same levels for over a dozen years.

So, what did I scribble in my notebook all those years?

Well, from the first day of class, I took notes on each activity. I wrote down what worked. I wrote down what didn't go so smoothly. I tried to figure out why in each case.

I also wrote down points in the class where attention seemed to wander. I especially noted the points where my class turned into “clock watchers.”

Throughout the years, I constantly rearranged the order of activities. I tried to get principles that I could apply — when to use left-brained activities; when to incorporate right-brained creativity.

I also took notes on the witty remarks made by students. Why? So, that I could use their comments (giving credit, when the students knew the author of the remark). Even though I credited the students for the original comment, my classes found me very entertaining. And it was so much easier for them to learn when they were in a good frame of mind -- that is probably the secret to my teaching success.

Throughout the years, I constantly tweaked my classes. The activities got **tighter**. I planned for every contingency. I had super witty remarks at all points in the lesson.

I even took notes on when it was important to be serious.

My classes were tight. I got oodles of compliments from the students. And they learned ... **a bunch**.

Now, I am going to admit something to you. After the first few years, I kept the notebook hidden in my desk. I just wrote in it between classes, at lunch, and after school.

At home, I practiced my delivery of the lesson. I memorized my remarks. In class, the students thought that I was just winging it ... off the cuff. They thought I was a naturally gifted teacher who came by it automatically. Little did they know how much effort I put into it all.

After a few more years, I had super-cohesive lessons. They were well planned, and they were memorized. I didn't need the notebook for certain daily lessons anymore. I had it all down pat.

• • • • •

And that was just one use of my **handy-dandy notebook** (I have been watching **Blue's Clues** with my daughter).

In this report, you get more uses that will improve your martial arts teaching. After looking at some ways to use your notebook, you'll discover some useful layouts for recording information.

At the end of this report, I'll even tell you what my note-taking system has evolved into. It's different, but it works for me.



8 Uses For Your Martial Arts Notebook

The student file —

Not to be confused with files on your individual students. In this section of your notebook, you could record certain repeated encounters that you have with all of your students.

Have a section on what to say at your first meeting. Take notes on what works when selling them on your school. Take notes on what to say when a student misbehaves.

Note: No, don't read the notebook when you are reprimanding. Preview it before the encounter, if you have the opportunity. Or study it at home. Don't have a crutch when you punish.

Have a list to go through for your first encounter — give appropriate papers, sign forms, payment options, uniforms, and rules, etc. As you deal with more students, your notes, just like my lesson plans, will get more and more complete -- messier too.

Use this section to give yourself the edge when dealing with students. For the student, it's probably the first time such an encounter comes up — for you, you have been through it so many times that you control the situation. You make everything go without a hitch.



Lesson Plans —

We already talked about this just a minute ago. Suffice it to say -- plan! Don't try to pull off an impromptu act. Sure, you can get away with it. But your lessons will be stronger if you know where you are headed. By now, you really know how I feel about goals. A lesson plan is just an arranged series of mini-goals.

At first, list everything you want in your lesson. Put down the hook for the beginning of class. Break the lesson into the different learnings (activities). Include what you are going to do for closure at the end of class. If

you want to get them excited about the next lesson, include the cliffhanger. And so on.



Lectures —

Do you ever have to talk to a group of people about martial arts? Use this section like your lesson plans — keep filling in your lectures with anecdotes.

Record your lectures on tape. Listen to the audience — put some jokes in your **lull spots**. Let the audience breathe after a series of jokes. Give them time to applaud. Put your findings from your recordings into your notebook.

And by the way, have a section for anecdotes. Record stories about Bruce Lee. Write about the little vicissitudes of life that have occurred, where either you, or your students, were involved.

By recording funny stories, you have less of a chance of blowing them out of proportion when recounting them later.

Note: Do you know you're going to a martial arts get-together, where everyone will be sitting around swapping old stories afterwards?

Then review some stories from your notebook. This way, you won't always retell the same stories over and over and over again. You can search through your notes for some that these martial artists may not have heard — some of your rarer anecdotes.

This will definitely make you a more interesting martial arts teacher.

This section of the notebook is a great place to have short history lessons. I used to have the history of Wing Chun condensed into just a couple of pages. I also had a short biography of Bruce Lee. And I had a mini-lesson here of why Jeet Kune Do (Bruce Lee's art) differs from most classical styles.

All of these aren't just martial arts lessons. They aren't workout sessions. They are lectures. Accuracy is especially important here — you are speaking as an authority.



Brainstorms —

Have a repository for any idea you get about your martial arts classes. Before you categorize the idea into a different section of the notebook, first record it here. You need a place where you can just slop in new ideas freely, whenever and however you want. This is the spot.

Note: You'll read about doodling in **Winning Layouts**. I tend to doodle more in this section of my notebook.

It makes sense — it is a magnet for my creative thoughts. I doodle while my thoughts are coalescing. I draw whatever — it doesn't make any sense. And while I am drawing, BAM! Suddenly a completely formed idea pops out of my head.

As I write it down next to my doodle, it takes even more form — I write in more details.

This is a great section for lists. How many ways can you counter a sweep coming in from the left side, when you have a right lead? How many ways can you counter a **Double 90 Degree wrist lock** (see my book, **Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert**)? How many ways can you get an opponent to move a lead hand that is guarding the face out of the way?

If you don't like listing things, then explore the clustering technique later in this report. You can brainstorm even more freely than with lists. Still, I am a list maker — I admit it; I am addicted to making lists. I brainstorm daily.



Long-term, Big Changes —

Are you eager to make changes that you have read in this book? Have you already brainstormed some of your own creative ideas?

Before you haul off and go **change crazy** on your students, first you might want to consider letting your new ideas rest in this section for awhile.

Anything big and scary goes here. And leave plenty of room around your new idea. As more details occur to you, you'll want to record them next to the original idea. Your notes will get more and more complete.

Record your doubts. Evaluate others who have tried similar changes. Try to plan your contingencies — what will you do if some of those doubts come to fruition?

When it's finally time to implement the change, you will have a **road map** laid out in your notebook. Even if the change doesn't go 100% as planned, it will be a definite improvement over the old way. You have taken steps to insure this.



Short-term Changes —

Some changes are not big and scary. Yet you don't want to carry them around in your head. Here's the place where they go.

This is a good place to set up a priority system. You don't want to implement changes as each idea comes to mind. You need a way to evaluate the possible changes ahead of time. Organize them in order of importance. Or maybe arrange them according to ease of implementation. You could choose to organize them for the amount of time the activity takes to complete.

To prioritize, just put a letter or number next to each item on the list. Maybe a **1** is high priority, a **2** is medium priority, and a **3** is low priority. Or you could use an **A B C** system.

To rank an entire list, compare the first two items on the list. Which gets priority one? Which wins? Then compare it to item number three. The winner gets compared to the fourth item on the list, and on it goes down

the list to the end. Using this way, you quickly find the most important item. Then run down the list for the second most important item. An even faster way is to pair every item on the list with another. Compare the two for a winner. Then compare two winners. It's just like in sports bracketting.



My Ingredients List —

In this section, I list everything that I read about in books that I want to try out. I do a lot of reading. If I didn't have this section, a lot of what I read would just go in one ear and out the other. This way, I have a list of techniques that I want to try. I have new tactics to consider.

I know that a lot of my students do this with the joint locks in my book. Then, after they learn to flow from one lock to the next, and how to counter anything thrown on them, they tend to abandon this section -- they don't need it anymore.

I am happy to report that most learn eventually to trust in their feelings. They just need this section of their notebooks in the building stage.

I have a word-processor version of this file for my on-line reading. With my **Ingredients List**, I have a feeling that I will never run out of mini-experiments to try.

Note: Make sure you leave space for evaluation of each mini-experiment.



Learning from My Mistakes —

This is one place where I differ in opinion from my teacher. In his class, once he has corrected your mistake, and he gets you doing the techniques correctly, you are never allowed to try to remember the wrong way that you were doing it before.

He doesn't even want it entering your consciousness anymore. It is over. Do it the right way. If you practice the wrong way, you may do it that way sometime in the future. Nice theory — **doesn't work for me.**

I have a separate spot where I list my mistakes. I don't want to be doomed to repeat them over and over again. So I list them — and analyze them.

I don't do this as much in martial arts anymore — now my focus is on business and writing. So, I have notebooks for those areas of my life. I have a lot more mistakes to correct in those areas. I look forward to being able to close down the mistake sections of those notebooks too.

Note: Recently, I made some new goals for myself in the martial arts. Since these goals will really stretch my abilities, I imagine that I will have to start analyzing my mistakes once again. I really want to improve, so I will have to go over my technique with a fine-toothed ... **comb-bound notebook**.

I need to remember to emphasize the positive. I need 10 positives for every one negative — otherwise, I might repeat my mistake at a critical moment.



Winning Layouts

Left-Right Columns

On this type of page, you draw a line down the center of the paper. Record one type of notes on one side, and another corresponding note on the other.

You could record your ideas on the left side and your evaluation of each idea on the right. Maybe you take notes from a seminar on the left-hand side, and you record your reactions to each comment or sequence on the right side, next to the original note.

You could divide the page into positives and negatives. This way, you look at each change from both sides.

Any time you need to compare some technique or tactic, just draw a vertical line down the center of your page. It's as easy as that.



Lesson Plans

Make up a template for your lesson plans. Here are some common elements of mine:

- * A box in the upper right corner for the date
- * The main goal written center top of the page
- * Narrow left column for recording time of each activity (approx. minutes)
- * Name of activity in next column
- * Necessary equipment or special conditions in the next column
- * Reminder column next (jokes, anecdote, warnings, kids with allergies, etc.)
- * Finally, the evaluation column to the far right
- * At the bottom of the page I have a reminder box to list something that went incredibly well, or something that bombed.

Arrange your lesson plans any way you want. Just be consistent. Your brain will appreciate having a pattern as a reference. In fact, you will get so used to your form, that you'll feel a bit uncomfortable if you are ever taught a new way.



Clustering

I first read about this method in the book *Writing the Natural Way*. I have also seen it referred to in Tony Buzan's books.

This is the way to get really creative. You write your key concept in the middle of a blank piece of paper. Then you draw a circle around the word.

Write down any idea that comes to mind around the original concept. Draw a circle around it. Connect the circles with a straight line. As your brain makes other logical and creative connections, draw lines to the new circles.

For example, one of your classes has some problems. In the middle of your paper, you write **improving the boys afternoon class**. You draw a circle around it.

Then you think: It's not like the other classes. So you write that down. Why? The other classes have more fun. So out from **not like the other classes**, you write **other classes have more fun**. You circle them both with separate circles.

On the other side, you write down, **not fun with all of the cliques** (social groups). Out from that you write, **break up cliques**.

Near that you write, **it would be great if everyone in the class felt they were each other's friends**.

That leads you into **big group activity**. Suddenly you connect it to **other classes having fun**. It reminds you of an activity the other class did outside of class.

But you need to change the atmosphere before you propose an out-of-class activity. So, you write down **change atmosphere**.

Your brainstorm for that is to have them work in pairs, where **you** pick the pairs. So, you write down **work in pairs** — next to that, you add another circle, **take notes on the relationships**. You want some new friendships to start to form.

You also start a strand out from the center circle of activities you could do where the **students have to rely on their partners**. All of a sudden that strand/path connects to the **having fun** and the **working in pairs**, which stemmed from **breaking up cliques**.

It is all starting to interweave. Perfect. This is exactly what you want your mind to do for you. All these connections will help you to better plan your successes.

By exploring these paths in a non-linear fashion, you are allowing your mind to creatively find a solution.



The Good Old List

No proof needed here. You read about how much Schwab paid to learn about list making. You may have even read that the top 3% of the Ivy League successes are all list makers. And now, you are reading it again here.

I love lists. I **live** for lists. I find it very hard to plop down in front of the TV without my trusty clipboard in hand. Just ask my wife and daughter.

Because of my lists, I will probably never experience **writer's block**. If I have a hard time getting going on a project, I start making a list. I list anything and everything related to the topic. I don't edit — I just list. When I feel that I am all listed out, I list some more — at this point my brainstorms start getting a bit silly. That's OK — I push past that stage, until I get some really creative ideas.

Note: I love to doodle. At my silliest, I start drawing my idea out on the side of the page.

Often, the finished doodle barely has any relation to the original idea. It was just a way for my mind to shift completely over to the right brain. I start doodling away on my notes, and trust in my brain to figure things out.

It really does work, if you give it a chance. Don't worry about artistic ability. Even little stick figures can lend themselves to creativity.

I keep listing, until I am just bursting to write about it in an article, report, or book. Then I start writing — and I have a whole list of ideas to choose from. With a little organization, I have the makings of a decent article.

Oh, and I also have a section in my notebook for a list of book and article ideas. Thus, I will never run out of those either — I hope.

• • • • •

Outlines

If you have been formally educated, then you know the routine —main topics with Roman numerals, then capital letters for the main points, followed by numbers for the sub-points, etc....

We have all done them.

Still, they are useful for your notebook. Sketch out possible plans for change. Rough out a lecture ahead of time.

It's even useful on a 3 x 5 card for a quick reference to your lesson plan of the day. You can carry it as a little crutch. This is especially helpful if you are new to teaching martial arts.

• • • • •

Other Possible Layouts

Timelines/stages — If this is the way you think, you may want to break the changes into stages. Lay them out on a timeline. Examine the past — look to the future.

Bullseye — Draw a target in the center of the paper. The bullseye is the 100% — accurate, desirable behavior. As you move outward towards the outer edge of the target, each ring represents a less accurate performance of the tactic or technique.

Of course, you are working with your students from the outer circles inward. Your performance is getting ever more precise.

Place to Break it Down — Consider leaving blank pages after each main idea. You need a place to break the main idea down into more manageable components. This is especially important if you are using permanent pages.



The Right Notebook — The Right Use

Should you buy a fancy bound, blank book to record your notes? Will you be happy with a spiral bound notebook that students often use?

Do you need a 3-ring binder, so you can remove papers? This is always helpful, if you destroy a lot of pages.

In my pre-black belt stages, I used to record notes on light-green steno pads. It's what Mom had around for me to use.

Then I went fancy. I made the ultimate notebook. It was every bit as fancy as the business planners that executives purchase for big bucks. It had sections, tabs, extra paper, a ruler, a place for pens ... everything.

I used my system for years.

Now, my notebook isn't really a notebook. I have found that I don't like working out of a book. I prefer writing on a clipboard with unbound sheets of paper. And if that isn't quirky enough, I don't like to take notes on **lined paper**. I want plain white copy paper.

But all of those loose sheets of paper would make me truly organizationally challenged ... well .. at times, I am.

But to get the **paper tiger** more under control, I have switched to file folders. Each section of my notebook has been replaced by a manila file folder.

And instead of a filing cabinet, I put my folders and my micro-office in my canvas briefcase. It's a system that works for me.



And you have to find a system that works for you.

You have to pick the right notebook.

- Don't pick a fancy, hardbound book if you are going to be too timid to write in it.
- Don't keep your notebook on a computer, if you need to take notes while out in the dojo.
- Don't use a big notebook, if you won't carry it around because of its bulk.

- Don't use a notebook that's too small to record your complete thoughts.
- Get one that's just right for you.

As long as you're at it, get one that has the right look. Others may see the outside of your book. Do you want a sleek black one? Do you need the school symbol hand-drawn on the cover? Maybe just a simple yin-yang symbol?

Note: Are you going to print your phone number and e-mail on the inside cover with the offer of a reward if someone finds your **lost notebook**? And while we're at it, how devastated would you be, if you did lose your notebook? Do you have a way to back it up?

Once you have your notebook, rough out some possible sections. Don't make a specific section of your notebook just because I suggested it. Make this book useful to you.

Experiment with the section at first. Go ahead — it won't take you long to figure out which ones you aren't using.

If this is going to be your secret weapon, you have to make it yours. Forge your sword into a mighty weapon. Guard your magic secrets. Learn from your notebook ... but ...

Please, please, please, **don't become a slave to it**. Don't avoid learning by using it as **a tool for procrastination**. Don't spend all of your time with your nose buried in your notebook. **Keep your life**.

Sure, the notebook is a great tool. It almost has magical qualities, but always remember ...

It's just a notebook!

You are the master!



Appendix B

A Brainstorm of Possible Evaluation Questions

What is your favorite activity in this class?

What is your least favorite activity in this class?

Do you feel safe from harm in this class/school?

Do you feel comfortable with your teacher?

Are you treated fairly and with respect?

If you could change one thing to make this class better, what would it be and why?

Do you feel as though the class is too long or too short?

Are you improving at a good rate? If not, what could be a possible explanation for this lack of improvement?

Are you planning to continue classes over the summer?

Have you ever been in a fight? What happened?

Do you feel loyal to this martial arts school? (If so, why? If not, why not?)

What is something in the martial arts that you have always wanted to be able to do, but have never been successful up to this point in your training?

Have you ever studied another martial art? What are some of the differences? What are some of the similarities?

Do you prefer small group activities or whole-class exercises?

What's some technique that you are having problems mastering?

How much do you practice outside of class?

Where do you practice?

Do you train alone or with a partner?

How many martial arts training videos do you own?

Which is your favorite? Why?

How many martial arts books do you own? Which are your favorites? Why?

Are you more interested in competing or self defense?

What is your deepest fear concerning self defense?



You have reached the end of this book.

The learning doesn't have to stop here. You can continue reading articles and reports by Keith Pascal.

Just sign up for the Free Weekly Newsletter

Martial Arts Mastery

A Tell-All of Tips, Tactics, and Techniques

Click here to go to the information page:

Martial Arts Mastery

(<http://www.kerwinbenson.com/mastery.html?secrets>)



Click over to Kerwin Benson Publishing's web site to see their latest martial arts books and information products.

There, you are guaranteed to find the **Hidden Gems of Martial Arts**.

Find the secrets of martial arts that you can't get anywhere else.

Kerwin Benson Publishing

(<http://www.kerwinbenson.com?secrets>)



And, as always ... if you have questions for the author, yours truly, please direct them to

questions@kerwinbenson.com

