

Tips for Taekwon -Do Training and instruction

Ms Terry Woods

Introduction

In an ideal situation every club should have a 4th Dan instructor (Choi Hong Hi 1995). In reality this is not always possible, and certainly where I live in the South Island of New Zealand it is not uncommon to find low ranking instructors. Having gained my 1st degree black belt in April 1997, in June 1998 I found myself in charge of a small club. This was a huge learning curve for me, and often I felt my organisation skills, and my little knowledge of Taekwon-Do being tested to the limit.

Being in a leadership role like this means being one step ahead of the students as much as possible, to avoid the embarrassment of not having quite enough information about what it is I want them to learn. My advice to new instructors is keep your knowledge up to date, and where possible do some training for yourself. That way you will feel more confident with your students.

The first lesson I learned was to delegate jobs wherever I could to prevent myself from burn out. So I gave one of my trusty mature students the job of treasurer, ordering of uniforms and equipment. Secondly I began to plan my classes, as this took away the anxiety of keeping the class interesting by not repeating the same things at each one. Thirdly I separated the beginners from the seniors, to give me the freedom I needed to concentrate on the specific techniques according to rank.

This essay will suggest a few points that a potential or current instructor may wish to consider in their teaching.

The Do-jang

Having a fancy Do-jang is of little consequence, (Choi Hong Hi 1966) but to have a small affordable one that suits the club budget is more than sufficient. Fund-raising can be tedious and frustrating but is very worthwhile if it means unburdening your students of the stressful financial costs of a fancy hall.

Sparring

Some people believe themselves to be too old, too young, or too unfit, to learn to spar but I believe these are only excuses, and that any one of us can do it. But we do need to discipline our mind and body (DePasquale, 1985). Training transforms various parts of the body into weapons to be used freely and effectively. The quality necessary to accomplish this is self-control (Nakayama 1990).

I believe a person can be excellent at sparring without being too aggressive, but by displaying their skills while treating their opponent with respect and dignity.

By promoting a non-violent sparring style in your Do-jang you create more controlled techniques; therefore keep the “art” in martial arts.

How often do we hear of people leaving clubs because they sustained a serious injury that has put them off? Good protective sparring gear is accessible in most towns, it is inexpensive, and easy to use.

Fundamental movements

It might look good for a club to have young flexible students who can do very impressive high kicks but often this is at the expense of their fundamental movements. This is the shortcoming of some instructors who overlook the basics for fear of boring the student. Unfortunately the basic techniques can be seen as tiresome to learn as they can only be mastered by perseverance and continual practise.

Virtually every great teacher and coach throughout history has stressed the importance of fundamentals in all aspects of personal and professional life. You must decide which areas are the most important for you to develop and then remember that “repetition is the mother of skill” (Biro1997).

Good Communication

To get the best from a student the use of positive feedback, and treating them as individuals and with respect, will create better relationship and you will find you are respected in return. The instructor who is rude, or uses bad language will find the student quickly loses their respect for him or her. Most of us respond much more positively when we are made to feel good about ourselves and the things we are doing, rather than when we have been put down or made to feel degraded in some way.

Those in a position of authority (teacher, doctor, sports coach or parent), may feel that criticism ‘keeps ‘em on their toes’ and use it as a form of motivation. I personally believe that this is unproductive in the long term and that it only serves to make criticism the shattering experience that it so often is....

Criticism can create more barriers between people if not used in a constructive way. Examples of this are criticise the person directly, only criticise things that can be changed, and be specific. Avoid using exclusive words such as ‘always’ and ‘never’ and avoid using emotive words, labels, and exaggerations, as they can cause defensiveness in the other person (Manthei 1992).

The Tenets of Taekwon-Do

“Taekwon-Do can have a strong influence on a person’s life. This would be the case whether he is actively participating in the art, has suspended his training temporarily or has completely retired from Tekwon-Do altogether. The affect and influence is always there.

This I believe, can be seen in how an individual uses, applies and interprets the tenets of Taekwon-Do, not only in their training but also in their everyday life” (Bell1998).

Having an indomitable spirit is a great motto in life and can help a student to achieve his/her goals, allowing nothing to stop you, nor get you down and to overcome any obstacle (Baillie 1999) no matter how difficult or unachievable it may seem.

Psychological training

I am always struck by the startling differences between people who are doing well in life and those who are not. I think the ones who are not doing so well have every reason to be successful, but they are too busy waiting for their success to come to them. What these people have not grasped is that they already have everything they need to be successful (Hanna 1997).

In almost all problem areas of your life, you are the problem and you are the solution. It may not seem that way, but you are encountering your resistance not from outside sources, but from inside yourself – from your beliefs (Kehoe 1996).

Conclusion

Taekwon-Do is a way of life for many that dedicate time and energy into it. By incorporating the tenets of Taekwon-Do into your life and by respecting others, by using the powers of your mind and body together, you can achieve everything you want to. Hours spent on training will not be wasted; for surely you will reap a rich reward in the form of speedy reactions and deadly blows to rain down upon your enemy or in any case to save a life if and when the need arises (Choi Hong Hi 1995).

References

Baillie D. (1999). Putting it all into words. The Official Magazine of the International Taekwon-Do Federation, 3rd ed. Vol. 4.

Bell R. (1998 September). The tenets of Taekwon-Do and their effect on life. The Official Magazine of the International Taekwon-do Federation.

Biro B.D. (1997). Beyond Success: The 15 Secrets of a Winning life! Hamilton, Montana: Pygmalion Press.

Choi H.H. (1995). Taekwon-Do: The Korean art of self-defence(4th Ed.). New Zealand: Taekwon-Do Federation.

De Pasquale M.Jr.(1985) Step by step guide to the martial arts.Twickenham, Middlesex: Hamlyn publishing.

Hanna P (1998). Believe and achieve! Australia: Penguin books.

Kehoe J. (1996). Mind Power: into the 21st century. Canada: Zoetic Inc.

Nakayama M.(1990).Best karate: Bassai,Kanku. Bunkyoku Tokyo: Kodansha international.

Manthei M. (1992). Positively Me: A guide to assertive behaviour. (Rev Ed). Auckland: Reed books.