

TSU SHIN GEN INTERNATIONAL



INSTRUCTORS MANUAL TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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TSU SHIN GEN

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Many Instructors teach movements and not fighting techniques. This is why they get bored and the students get bored. From 10th Kyu to 3rd Kyu there are around 70 techniques and 97 combinations we need to teach in detail, so that the students can perform them all in fighting by reflex action. So the Instructors should not even consider wasting valuable training time by making up their own combinations.

We have a tremendous amount of fighting techniques to teach when one considers that in boxing they have 8 punching techniques and probably the same number of blocks. Boxing coaches succeed in keeping both their fighters and themselves motivated with such a small number of techniques, so why would our Instructors find it difficult to keep themselves and their students motivated with the amount of techniques that we have?

If the Instructors make sure that the students can apply every technique and combination in fighting and know when and how to do so, then they will not feel the need to make up their own combinations. If they feel the need, it is because they have not prepared for the lesson properly or because they do not have the technical knowledge that is required to be a good Instructor and they are just teaching movement.

The Tsu Shin Gen Goal

The main goal of Tsu Shin Gen is to teach the students to fight and protect themselves. Therefore at least some sparring or fighting should be included in almost every training session.

There are three basic categories of fighting which we must take into consideration. They are Dojo sparring, Tournament fighting and Self-defence fighting. The local environment and the leadership of the Dojo may decide which category is given priority. The amount of contact during sparring or fighting varies but should be kept at a controlled level to avoid injury.

Beginners should start with controlled sparring, where the Instructor gives both partners certain assignments. For example, one partner attacks with only punches, whereas his or her opponent is only allowed to block. At a later stage the person blocking can add a counter attack.

Another example is that one partner attacks with punches and low kicks, and the other blocks and counters with punches.

There are many variations on this theme, which can gradually introduce a student to fighting. Gradual introduction to fighting is important because when two inexperienced beginners start punching and kicking wildly at each other, someone is bound to get injured. Therefore, a gradual introduction to fighting also eliminates a lot of the risk of injury, and the loss of training time due to injury. It also reduces the stress that many students experience in connection with fighting.

Giving assignments also works very well with advanced students, who need to concentrate on a certain area of their fighting.

Motor Learning

Motor learning (brain - muscle co-ordination) is an exact science, this means that you have to practise a technique exactly as it is to be applied, if you are to have any chance of performing it in a satisfactory manner in a stress situation.

There is a saying “what you practise, is what you will do”. (With luck!)

Another saying is “Practice makes perfect” this was changed by a famous American Football Coach, Vince Lombardi, to a more accurate “Only **perfect** practice makes perfect”.

So, unless the students are actually practising hitting a target or blocking a strike or kick, time is being wasted, which could have been better spent on more productive training. If the students are not blocking a strike or a kick, they are only practising a movement. Moving your arm or leg from point A to point B in the air, is only a movement. For it to become a technique, it requires a target to hit or an attack to block. It is theory instead of reality.

Although a small amount of theory is necessary when teaching a new technique, no amount of theory can ever properly prepare a person for real fighting situations.

To make a technique a reflex action takes a lot of practise. This means that it is futile to practise a technique in any other fashion than how it will be applied in fighting, because one is spending time developing a reflex that later has to be overcome in order to perform a fighting technique correctly.

Our training methods should consist of breaking a technique down into its component parts in order to make the technique easier for the students to understand and learn. The component parts of a technique have to be identified and then practised. For example, the component parts of a block are the following:

- the mechanics of the block.
- an opponent who has launched an attack.
- the conscious or preferably the sub-conscious recognition of the nature of the attack.
- the brain of the person being attacked commanding the appropriate response.
- the performance of the appropriate response.
- if the previous components result in the neutralisation of the attack, then one can say that one has performed a block.
- if it does not, then hopefully the brain can analyse the faults and store the information, so that the next time it is confronted with the same situation, it can command a successful response.

Power is usually not a main element in blocking; therefore there is not a lot of “Pad Work” involved in the training. However there should be some training where the student is struck with a Pad, so that they get used to the impact of an attack against their block.

It is more important to teach the students to move away from the power of a technique, than to meet force with force, but that is not always possible. One of the main exceptions being shin blocks (Sune Uke).

The Basic Teaching Procedure

The basic rule of teaching is quite simple. First you demonstrate the technique for the students at half speed and then you let them try it for a little while without correcting them. After that you show them more details and then demonstrate the technique at full speed at first then very slowly.

It is very important at this point that you demonstrate the technique as correctly as possible because the students have the subconscious reaction to try to imitate their Instructor. Do not go into too much detail at this time, let them practise the technique first.

During this part of the training you should stop once or twice to show details of the technique or correct errors. Do not correct too many details though because it will just confuse or overload the students. If you give the students too much information at one time they will forget everything BUT it is very important that you do not allow students to continue making mistakes without explaining what they are doing wrong and that they know how a technique should be performed before the end of the lesson.

If practising kicks in the air, with speed and power, one follows through placing the kicking leg down in front, with control and in a strong fighting stance. Kicking out in the air with power and then pulling the leg back at speed puts a great deal of stress and strain on the lower back, especially if hip rotation is involved, this can result in injury. Practise on Pads or Air Shields.

With attacks it is very important that the students are taught to aim at a target, and hit it with power! Just punching and kicking in the air does very little to develop the ability to hit a moving target with power.

After the initial learning period, the students move around, so that they also learn to be able to perform powerful attacks from all angles and against a moving target.

This requires a combination of good balance, timing, distance and reflexes that can only be developed, if the training is realistic. These skills can't be acquired attacking a stationary target.

Many students can hit a stationary target with great power, but are unable to do the same in fighting because it takes them too long to "set" themselves and their opponent has moved before they are able to launch a powerful attack.

To develop reflexes and explosive power, the person holding Striking Pads, holds the striking surface against their body and then quickly lifts them up for the partner to strike. The striking surfaces are then returned to their original position as soon as the combination is completed.

Techniques and combinations should feel as natural as possible. If the students have great difficulty performing a combination in practise, it will never work for them in fighting.

When practising techniques, the students who are attacking, attack with speed and power, after which they try to react in a natural manner and return to their fighting stance. They do not just stand in a passive fighting stance after attacking, or just freeze in position and wait for the partner to counter attack.

You should follow the basic teaching routine for attacks:

1. Demonstrate the technique or combination.
2. Practise a little in the air. If you have mirrors encourage the students to use them.
3. Practise on Pads with the Instructor counting.
4. Reflex training with Pads.
5. Practise the technique in a sparring situation.
6. Put the technique into a combination and go through steps 1 to 5.

You should follow the basic teaching routine for blocks:

1. Demonstrate the block.
2. Practise a little in the air. If you have mirrors encourage the students to use them.
3. Practise defence against the relevant attack with the Instructor counting.
4. Practise the block in a sparring situation.
5. Put the attack into a combination and go through steps 1 to 4.

A Teaching Guideline

To maximise the amount of information that you give to a student during a training session, so that they remember it, is not an easy task. The human brain is a delicate tool and it sometimes needs a lot of repetition in order to learn a new technique. As an Instructor one often wants to teach the students as much as possible during a training session. This is a mistake and it will have the opposite effect. Remember the human brain can only absorb a limited amount of information during a training session, especially when the student is trying to learn something new or correct mistakes.

If we try to teach the students a whole Fighting Drill or Kata in one session they will not be able to remember it. Most of the students will also have a few personal problems with the way they perform the techniques, so this complicates matters even more.

Another thing that really complicates the teaching is that the students do not come to every training session. This is why it is important for the Instructor to encourage the students to practise what they can at home using the texts from the Grading Syllabus and the Instruction DVDs.

The general guideline is that you teach or practise six techniques or combinations in one lesson and maximum four of these should be new techniques or combinations, the rest should be revision.

Correcting Incorrect Movements and Reflexes

When we teach the basic techniques the hardest thing to do is to correct incorrect form or reflexes that the student has already acquired, for example a student who always drops his guard when performing a kick.

To correct an incorrect reflex takes a long time and requires a lot of work. This is why it is so important that the beginners have the best Instructors we can give them. Otherwise when they have come up in the grades valuable time will be spent trying to correct mistakes they picked up as beginners.

A new reflex normally takes a long time to develop and during this time the student needs to train regularly and they need to be constantly reminded about it or it will take even longer. Speed and power should be limited when trying to correct an incorrect movement. One must give the brain time to get used to the new movement and the best way to do this is by practising the technique in slow motion.

New students the first 1 - 2 months:

Each training session should be focused on six techniques, for an example one punch, one kick, two blocks, one takedown and one follow up. The punch can be trained first as single technique in the air, and then against each other's hand or a small punching mitt. After that one can apply the adapted block so it will become a short combination. Then one follows the same procedure with the kick and adapted block.

Teach the takedown as a single technique first and then you do the follow up. After that you put the techniques together as a combination. To make a total break when you are teaching, put in some fun exercises. This will make the students more alert and keep the training from becoming monotonous.

Another thing that is important during the training is to keep the tempo relatively high. One can achieve this by practising techniques and combinations to a count. This will all so build a group feeling and discipline among the students. As soon as possible you should start with light sparring but with new students it should only be with specified techniques in the beginning.

New students the first 3 - 4 months:

As the students become more experienced you can start with the Fighting Combinations. It is important that you get to the details of the techniques as soon as possible because we do not want the students to develop an incorrect movement into a reflex.

New students the last month before grading:

The students should have the ability to perform all the techniques for their grade as well as the complete Fighting Combinations. You should concentrate on revision but put the techniques into realistic fighting situations.

During the last month the light sparring should not be restricted to certain techniques, let them have fun.

In order for the Instructor to be sure that they have covered all that is required in the Grading Syllabus for each grade, they **MUST** write down everything that they have taught in **EVERY** lesson!

This is also very helpful in situations where more than one Instructor shares a group. A copy of the notes can be stored in the Dojo so that they each know what the other has taught.

New students after the grading:

Start with the techniques from the next grade as soon as they have passed their grading test.

NB! The progress of the groups is very individual depending on age, former experience and more, so this timeline is only a guideline!

10th and 9th Kyu - White Belts

The general rule for the training is the same as for new students but the time spent on basic single techniques should not be as much as before. The pace of the teaching now increases because the students have a lot more to learn during the next section of their education.

You can use revision of what they have already learnt as part of their warm up. This way you achieve two things at the same time. The first is revision of previous techniques and combinations. The second is the actual warm up.

One thing that is new for the group is the Fighting Drill or Fighting Kata. You should now start to include some training based on the combinations from the Fighting Drill or Kata from the beginning. You can take one or two combinations from the Fighting Drill or Kata at a time and plan your training around them.

Teach all of the combinations first and only when the students can perform the combinations well should you start to put them together in the Drill or Kata form. This will probably take a couple of months. The important thing is not to be able to string together the movements of a Drill or Kata, it is to train up the reflexes so that the students react instinctively to the attacks and can perform the counter attack in fighting.

There are many techniques and combinations from the previous grade that require constant revision so you must keep a detailed record of each lesson otherwise you will miss things that need to be practised.

At least a few minutes light Sparring should be included in every training session. The emphasis should be on relaxing and not applying force and strength.

White belts the last month before grading:

One month before the grading test the students should know everything that is required of them. The last month should be used for revision and correcting any mistakes that the students have.

Give the students time for their own practice during this time in some part of the training session. This should give them self-confidence and they will learn to take responsibility for their own learning. It is important to keep the tempo up and not allow the training to become a discussion between the student and their training partner.

Coloured belts

This is the group that is usually the most difficult to teach because of the number of various grades that can be in the group and also the number of techniques and combinations that have to be taught and practised. Hopefully the students have learnt to take some responsibility for their own learning process and use the text in the Grading Syllabus and the Instruction DVDs to learn new Drills, Kata and Combinations so that the Instructor only has to correct any mistakes the students make.

It is important that the Instructors of the Coloured Belt groups continually remind the students to prepare for lessons by studying the Syllabus. They can even tell them which combinations will be practised at the next lesson so that the students can prepare themselves.

It is extremely important that the Instructors of the Coloured Belt groups make notes of what they have taught in every lesson. There is no other way to know what you have taught and what you have not taught.

Those Instructors who are lucky enough to have the advantage of Assistant Instructors can simplify the task of teaching by delegating some of the students to the Assistant Instructors. However the main Instructor has the responsibility of making notes of what the Assistant Instructor has taught.

The emphasis for the coloured belts training should be on the Fighting Drills and Kata. This can be difficult if you are trying to teach several Fighting Drills or Kata at the same time, especially if it is a new Drill or Kata for each of the grades in the group.

One way to approach the problem is to have a theme for each lesson and find combinations for each grade which fit into the theme. One example is to practise all the combinations which include a Mawashi Geri or it could be a particular block or Takedown. Working with themes show the students the various ways a technique may be applied.

TSG Junior Syllabus

The TSG Junior Syllabus is designed for children and youths between the ages of 6 and 14 and has been adapted to their physical and mental capabilities and characteristics. Certain techniques and combinations that are unsuitable for younger students have been removed.

Children are not fully developed in their joints and muscles and therefore there is a risk of injury with certain techniques.

Allowances must even be made within this age category because there is obviously a great deal of difference between a 6 year old and a 14 year old. For the younger students the emphasis is on fun and games which help to develop their Budo ability. As the age and grade of the students increases so too does the seriousness of the training, so that when they go over to the senior groups they are prepared for the increased tempo and discipline. Traditional Budo values such as discipline, respect for each other and for elders are also an important part of the training.

The Junior groups are a lot more demanding on the Instructors because not only does the age of the student play a major role in the content of their training but also the various grades within the group. This is another motivation for reducing the requirements.

An Example of a TSG TRAINING PLAN

	<u>60 minutes</u>	<u>90 minutes</u>
WARM UP	5 minutes	10 minutes
NEW TECHNIQUE	5 minutes	10 minutes
TECHNIQUE REVISION	5 minutes	5 minutes
NEW COMBINATION	10 minutes	10 minutes
COMBINATION REVISION	5 minutes	15 minutes
COMPLETE DRILL OR KATA	15 minutes	15 minutes
SPARRING	10 minutes	15 minutes
STRETCHING	5 minutes	10 minutes

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In Dojos where one training session immediately follows after another, the lesson should be shortened so that one group finishes approximately five minutes before the next lesson is due to start.

ABBREVIATIONS THAT CAN BE USED WHEN MAKING NOTES:

K = KYU

FC = FIGHTING COMBINATION

FD = FIGHTING DRILL

FK = FIGHTING KATA

TSG 60 MINUTES LESSON

Instructor _____

Group _____

Date ____/____/____

5 minutes - WARM UP & STRETCH

5 minutes – NEW TECHNIQUE

1 _____

2 _____

5 minutes – TECHNIQUE REVISION

1 _____

2 _____

10 minutes – NEW COMBINATION

1 _____

2 _____

5 minutes – COMBINATION REVISION

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

15 minutes – COMPLETE DRILL or KATA

1 _____

2 _____

10 minutes - SPARRING

5 minutes - STRETCHING

TSG 90 MINUTES LESSON

Instructor _____

Group _____

Date ____/____/____

10 minutes - WARM UP & STRETCH

10 minutes – NEW TECHNIQUE

1 _____

2 _____

5 minutes – TECHNIQUE REVISION

1 _____

2 _____

10 minutes – NEW COMBINATION

1 _____

2 _____

15 minutes – COMBINATION REVISION

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

15 minutes – COMPLETE DRILL or KATA

1 _____

2 _____

15 minutes - SPARRING

10 minutes - STRETCHING