

STRUCTURE AND RUNNING A CLASS

UNIT 6

Combat Academy Instructor Training Programme

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Learning Outcomes

The aims of this unit are to enable you to:

- To understand how to run a class using academic models and processes.
- To understand the motivations and reasons why someone would like to learn self defence.
- To run a class safely and compliantly to cater for all demographics and abilities and understand specialised needs where they may occur.

Diversity

Running your own self defence class is a truly exciting and nerve racking prospect for most of us. Even if you have had coaching and teaching experience, the nature of the audience and their reasons for learning self defence need to be recognised and understood as being different from a mainstream audience or mainstream subject.

At the start of the course, you need to recognise that your students will be from a variety of

TUTOR TALK



It is essential to understand the motivations behind students learning self defence. Consider that many people who have been victims of crime may want to learn self defence and that delaing with this sensitively and responsibly is essential. You must also consider that the skills taught are to be used for self defence only and that certain individuals or groups of people may have the potential to abuse this.

backgrounds and cultures and that this may require some careful structure, planning and consideration of the following:

Their Reasons for Learning Self Defence

Many people will learn self defence after a traumatic attack situation. This may have been witnessed or even experienced first hand. The nature of an attack could be as simple as being burgled or having something stolen. The effect of this should not be underestimated even though they may have not been physically damaged, the emotional scars can take their toll! The situation may have been as horrific as a life changing assault or sexual attack, they may have even known someone who has lost their life in traumatic and violent circumstances. On the other side, you may have a recreational audience. This also needs to be considered as they may react badly to things that they hear from others on the course.

How you approach and handle these delicate situations needs to be collaborative and you need to understand that whilst some will want to share with others, some will require and demand confidentiality.

It is important that you make everyone aware of the sort of subjects that you will be discussing prior to the course and ensure that you ask them if there are any special needs or considerations.

Their Cultural Backgrounds

The nature of a reality based self defence course is that people will be getting close and personal. Some cultures may have an issue with this. Touching a member of the opposite sex for Muslims for example may be a taboo subject and similarly, mixing men with women may cause issues for some. It is often best to let students select their own partners in the group as they will tend to pick someone that they initially feel comfortable with.

Their Mental State

An assessment of the mental state of the student is important. As above, protecting them is important but the other side of the coin is protecting the public from dangerous individuals who may use the tactics, techniques and understanding for the wrong reasons.

Their Physical Ability

Pairing people up, pushing people within their limits, accounting for any injuries and assessing people dynamically is a crucial part of your duty of care to your students. A health questionnaire should be filled out by each and every student together with a declaration that they are fit to train and training at their own risk. Whilst self defence is not a sport, it is similar in risk to many contact sports and the expectation of cuts and bruises is high and par for the course. Of course, the risk must be managed and any injuries treated and reported adequately.

Catering for a range of abilities within the group is important. Pushing those who are fit adequately whilst being sensitive and inclusive where those who are not as fit and agile need to be considered. Everyone should be made to feel valued and that they are doing well and improving.

Running a Class

Setting the scene, breaking the ice and everyone getting to know each other is important. Start the session by getting everyone to introduce themselves one by one. Try to focus on something interesting that they say and feed it back to the group. Encourage them if they fumble or find it difficult to introduce themselves.

Set the scene and make everyone feel at ease by telling them a bit about the course and what to expect. Tell them it is ok to be nervous and ask the group who is nervous. Putting your own hand up is always a good ice breaker and builds a rapport.

Ask if anyone has any injuries and ask the group to take notice so that when and if they are paired with the individual who is injured, they can work around it. Explain to everyone that they must look after each other and also their own injuries by feeding back to their partner and the instructor.

Risk assess the area that you will train in as a group, looking for hazards such as needles, glass and sharp stones (particularly outside).

You should understand your audience and should have pre-planned the physical part of the session in advance. If necessary, you may have to make dynamic changes

based on the students on the day. In the case of a regular class, you will get to know your students and their limitations very quickly.

You should balance instruction and participation and keep bringing the group back together, keep swapping partners and changing the pace.

Dealing with Difficult Student/s or Issues in the Class

Depending on the age and demographics of your students, you will from time to time have issues and arguments. If this happens, you need to split the individuals up and away from the group. A judgement needs to be made whether to get the two parties together to discuss or completely split them up. Whilst this is more common with a younger audience, it is not exclusive to them. The issue cannot be ignored and must be dealt with and not ignored. If you are being observant, this sort of issue will rarely occur and paring people up well in the first place helps to avoid any issues. If you control the activities and the pace, keeping constant control then you will almost guarantee that this sort of thing doesn't happen.

If one student assaults another, you have to realise that this is actually a crime and as such, it may be necessary to call the police.