

Systematized Teaching for Judo

By Hayward H. Nishioka

Did you ever stop to wonder why we teach judo? What about how we teach judo? What would be the best way to maximize what we teach? What are the things we say or not say, do or not do, that would make instruction fun, challenging, and exciting for our students? When are we ready to give instruction? Is being a black belt good enough to teach judo? Have we ever, as judoka, experienced a test to qualify us as a certified instructor, signed off by a master instructor?

In past years the rank of shodan (first degree black belt) signified a degree of excellence in the ability to execute techniques under stress conditions. In comparison to novice the physical movements were more fluid, graceful, and successful. By the time a person has attained the rank of shodan, they have some inkling of judo history, rules, philosophy, and judo etiquette. Undoubtedly, the better judoka were admired, and questioned as to their expertise. Their response to questions, most likely, gave birth to their initial teaching experience. Nonetheless, is this type of teaching experience enough to place someone into the category of "Sensei" or teacher? Is it enough when we think of maximizing our contact with our students? Is it enough to build judo into a major sport that we can all be proud of, and not be categorized as an idiosyncratic activity? How can we create an **industry** out of what many consider to be little more than a hobby?

What are some of the concepts we want to convey to our students as we make out our lesson plans and conduct our classes? Here are a few items:

1. The object and value of the lesson, be it a technique or a concept, should be clearly stated.
2. That there is a process to certification ending in a standardized examination and a signing off of the certification by the master instructor, signifying the student has passed the course with a minimum score of 70% within a specified time period.
3. That there are higher degrees and certifications to be attained through continuing education and examinations.
4. That there are products that enable us to do a better job, e.g. books, charts, videos, C D's. Pictures, uniforms, training devises, clinics, programs, training camps and of course specialized certification courses.
5. That there is a need for qualified **certificated** instructors in various areas of judo that may include, but is not limited to: certified trainer, coach, assistant coach, instructor, assistant instructor, tournament director, judo drills, teaching methods, advanced judo tactics, newaza, advanced newaza, kata, beginning referee, gokyo no waza, gripping techniques, exercise physiology, weight training for judo, judo writer, judo event announcing, biokinetics, judo scouting, judo videography, judo photography, judo nutritionist, etc.
6. That these certifications may be credited towards rank promotions.
7. That eventually a minimum scale shall be established per specific certifications.
8. Lastly that the certifications represents a standardized level of excellence achieved that will help to build judo and make it exciting, stimulating, and safe.

SELF TEST

1. The rank of black belt is enough to qualify as an instructor.
2. All that an instructor needs to teach is technique.
3. Certification is a process that encourages quality, safety, fun, and challenge.
4. There are many types of certification.
5. Products do not have a direct effect on judo excellence.
6. A score of 60% on the final examination is barely passing, but is good enough to be certified to teach.

Answers: 1. F, 2. F, 3. T, 4. T, 5. F, 6. F

The Lesson Plan

A lesson plan is a map of what you are going to teach and how you are going to teach it. It can be elaborate and detailed, but more often than not it is direct and simple, often using just a few words to remind your self of key points that you want to convey.

Included below is a recommended outline to follow, preceded by a brief discussion of the items to be included in your presentation. This outline is designed to teach judo technique and concepts. But more than teaching a technique, or concept it is designed to increase interest, judo knowledge, and membership in judo. Remember you

will be graded not only on how well you teach a specific technique but also on how many of the key points that can raise the interest level of judo. Points 1 through 5, 5 being best, are given for the following:

- Introducing yourself and what you are going to teach. If you are with a new group you may want to give them some idea of your background. For example how long you have been in judo, possibly rank, experience, etc.
- Give an example of a common denominator or historical perspective, and then state what will be taught. An example of a common denominator would be “Did you ever hit a home run? How did it feel when you felt the bat hit the ball solidly and it flew off into space? Well, when you do a perfect throw on an opponent and he goes up and over effortlessly it feels about the same.” Historical example: US Champion, Kevin Asano, silver medallist in the 1988 Olympics did this particular throw. This advanced technique fooled many a major competitor as he would lift his opponent up with one leg then swiftly bring the other leg into play and actually change the direction of the throw. His opponents never knew which way they were going until they landed on their back. The throw was the *yoko tomoe nage* or side sacrifice throw. The lesson for today is the *yoko tomoe nage*.

- Preparing a student learn may be done in various ways but the idea is to let them know that the next block of time is important and that attention must be focused on your instruction. Here are a few examples:

1. May I have your attention now?! _____ etc.
2. Lets put everything aside now and pay attention.
3. What I’m about to tell you is important. _____ etc.
4. Now I’m going to tell you the secret to success. So pay close attention.
5. Do you really want a winning technique, O.K. listen up now. _____ etc.
6. Its time to put your pencils down and your thinking caps on. Are you ready now?
7. Stand quietly staring till silence is attained. Tell them you’ll be courteous and wait till they are quiet and courteous
8. Kia loudly, now that I have your attention. _____ etc.

- Demonstration of the specific technique and state the objective and its value or relevance. When demonstrating a technique it should be executed in a picture perfect manner. It is also a good idea to do the technique several times and change the angle of view for the students. Emphasize important aspects of the technique that may make a difference for the student. Give an instance where either you or someone you know was able to utilize this technique successfully. Ask the students if there are any questions. Lastly, restate the objective and its value, eg. “The objective is to be able to execute the _____ technique so that you can easily throw your opponent”. “The objective is to count in Japanese so that when you are called upon to do so you can”. “The objective is to explain the four level of scores in judo so that you will know who is ahead and by how much”. etc.

- There are various prescribed methods of instruction that have previously been discussed such as the command style, show and do, whole part whole, guided discovery, cognitive dissonance, conceptual learning, etc. Any of these methods may be employed to get your message across.

- Use of visual aids or referencing books, magazines, or prior experiences. The use of visual aids like posters, pictures, charts, videos, DVDs, CDs, and books help to reinforce learning. Stories also paint a visual image of what is considered valuable to the group. Remember, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” In addition, the more visual aids out there, the more advertising and exposure of judo is occurring. Help stimulate the judo experience.

- Weather you are demonstrating, or lecturing, it is wise to leave time for participation. If demonstrating don’t forget to give ample time for the participants to try master the technique. If lecturing leave room for discussion of the topic matter.

- Correcting the technique or concept where needed. It is always a good idea to start out with a positive note whenever possible. “ You have very good balance.” “ Here’s something that will improve your judo, Pull your opponent forward as you step in with the right foot, and as you shift your hip across bring the left foot in deeper than the right foot as you pivot counterclockwise. This will allow you to get your hip across better.” Or, “I like your enthusiasm, but, slow down, don’t always think that a work out is a National Championship match.” Encouraging students elevates self-esteem and retention. Obviously, if a situation warrants quick action in order to avoid a faulty or dangerous situation there may not be time for niceties, and a terse “Stop! Don’t do that! No! or *Matte!* (Japanese word for wait or halt)” would be in order.

- Encourage other certification and continuing education. Each contact with students is an opportunity to make judo better. There are special instances where judo can be improved dramatically. One of the best places is in a certification program. A certification program standardizes procedure that encourages excellence and assures safe, fun learning to occur. But, unless we promote programs they are less likely to occur. Also preview the next lesson. Letting your students know what they will experience the next lesson prepare them in advance. You may also suggest books, articles, videos, etc. that may prepare them for that next lesson. Previewing may also include the need for purchasing equipment or materials to be used or submitted.

- Summarization. In the summation you should review the objective of the lesson. Review the important points of the lesson. Review the value of the lesson. Promote continuing education. Promote products and the organization.
- Overall presentation. Here we are looking at the quality of the presenters demonstration, presence or countenance, voice, enthusiasm, appropriate use of time, and the presentation of the requisite materials necessary for a proper lesson; introduction, common denominator, objective and value, use of visual aids, promotion of continuing, proper correction procedures, promotion of books, judogi's, charts, video's, etc., preview and summation. Although it is not listed here there should be some self-evaluation of your own performance at the end of your lesson. This will enable you to do a better job for your students in the future.
- Proper use of time. Time is a limiting factor therefore it is important that you do not waste time with extraneous materials that have nothing or little to do with the objectives of the lesson plan. Most classes last about one to one and a half hours long. Within that time there are announcements, warm ups, uchikomi drills, randori time both standing and on the mat, cool downs, and ending ceremonies. Somewhere in the midst of those activities you may want to conduct a timely lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. A common denominator is like a story that enables a non judoka to better understand a judo concept or technique through a common everyday experience.
2. Stating the objective of the lesson is unimportant as long as the technique is accomplished.
3. Giving an example of how a concept or technique was successfully utilized adds value.
4. Visual aids in judo do very little to enhance learning.
5. Negative reinforcement is the fastest, most efficient way to correct judo techniques.
6. If there is an unsafe situation it should be dealt with immediately.
7. Previewing for the next lesson has little effect on preparing or building interest in the student.
8. In summaries you need not mention key points, continuing education, and product promotion.
9. Critiques by others should be added to your self-evaluation of the lesson.

Answers: 1. T, 2. F 3.T, 4. F, 5.F, 6.T, 7.T, 8.F 9.T

Lesson Plan

Introduction Lesson Topic: _____ **Date** _____

Self Introduction

Common Denominator, what is to be taught, and the objective.

Demonstration / Lecture

Key points

Audio/visual aids

Possible corrective measures to anticipate or take.

Promotion of continuing education

Preview of next lesson

Summarization: the lesson, its objective and usage. Mention continuing education and product availability and upgrade

Self-assessment of time usage

Self-assessment of the lesson