



Tips for Strong Retention

<http://www.championsway.com/consulting/articles/Martial-Arts/Articles/05-14-08-tips-for-strong-retention.html>

Student retention has been an issue with most Martial School owners for decades and the proverbial question "Why do students quit martial arts?" has plagued even the most successful schools.

Here are few guidelines to follow to help your school get over poor student retention.

1. Disguise Repetition

Students can drop out very quickly if there classes are monotonous, to develop skill students do need lots of repetition. It's your job to make the learning process exciting and fun through variation. Be creative have students work with partners, on pads, in lines, circles and facing the instructor, keep things moving.

2. Keep Your Students Progressing

The martial arts belts system is one of our biggest advantages over other activities. It helps set goals for students and gives them something new around their waist that tells them they are progressing as they succeed at each learning hurdle, which motivates and builds confidence. Make the curriculum the main focus of your school, in fact make it your responsibility to help every single person be ready to take their next test, if you do this 80% and above of your student body will be ready to take the test. We are not talking about reducing your standards we are talking about refining your focus; encouraging students to attend class consistently and practice at home. Introduce mini monthly assessments, awarding stripes to belts to breakdown the testing phase into small chunks "inch by inch it's a cinch, yard by yard it's hard!"

3. Recognize Your Students Efforts

Students must feel progress; we all thrive on someone recognizing our efforts and giving us praise, so if your student's side kick has improved tell them about it, make their day! Be honest and sincere and learn to look for the good in your students.

4. Keep Safety In Mind

Protect your students especially beginners, consider proper pairing of students, teach correct use of equipment, pre-frame control at all times, and introduce sparring gradually. Make sure you can see and maintain control of the full class at all times. Beware of any past injuries or medical concerns, and plan your classes accordingly to be within people's physical limitations. Check the floor space is clear and that people are not training too close together.

5. Motivational Curriculum

The perfect curriculum should be like a pyramid upside down, with less material at the beginning and gradual increases at each belt level. Using this method will not reduce the standards of your black belts and will dramatically increase the numbers that achieve this standard.

Having too much material at the early stages of a curriculum just overwhelms students and tells them this is too difficult for me.

6. Know Your Students

Make the effort to learn and use all our student's names every time they come to class. Make eye contact with all your students and make appropriate physical contact such as handshake or high five.

Seek out the quiet ones that disappear without anyone noticing, make an extra effort to speak to those students. Take time to develop rapport and show your students they are important to you, be careful not to overdo it, be friendly but not friends. Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!

7. Smiling Sweating & Learning

Try and achieve a balance to your classes so students can smile and enjoy themselves without losing discipline, they get a workout as well as practicing the technical elements and they learn something in every class no matter how small. Using SSL will ensure your classes have a healthy balance that encompasses all your students' needs.

8. Paint The Picture

Never assume your students know where they are going with their training, make every class encompass the theme of achieving the goal of Black Belt, this will keep your students focused. So when something comes up in their life and something has to give, it will not be their martial arts training as they will realize how important it is to achieve their goals. Help your students to visualize the mental and physical skills they will achieve through their black belt goal.