

## Teaching Kids Martial Arts | How to Boost Retention

Teaching Kids Martial Arts is a Business and like all businesses you are better off keeping the customers/students that you have than you are spending time and money finding new ones to replace the ones that drop out. It is important for everyone involved that the kids stick with their training and grow into becoming a great martial artist.

For the student it means that they will truly learn skills that will give them a strong character, discipline, loyalty, respect along with better health, confidence and generally a host of other good habits.

For the parents it will be a satisfaction that they see their child develop into a confident teen and a respected adult. Many parents are truly disappointed when their kids drop out. Let's be honest, most kids join a martial art program because the parents want them to. The parents have to pay for the lessons, drive them there, pay for uniforms, sit through gradings/etc. The Parents want their kids to do it because they know the advantages it will give their kids as they grow up.

For the instructor there are two motivations. The first is money because the students help pay the bills and like it or not money does help make the world go around!

BUT, I recently ran a survey to ask instructors what their biggest concern was about teaching kids martial arts and not a single one asked how they could make more money. The most common question was "How do I keep them coming back?" and the reason for that is because we want to see them succeed.

Having a new student drop out in the first few months is disappointing but having one drop out just before they get their first black belt is devastating. All that time and energy that they have spent learning the art and the time and energy that the instructor has given to teach them is just thrown away. It can really take the wind out of you.

Now I guess that explains why I'm writing this article so now down to the practice part of it!

Creating longevity with your students starts at the first lesson and continues for the rest of your teaching career. You need to build in elements into your daily lessons, your weekly challenges, your monthly themes, your gradings/rankings. Try to step back from the daily activities and look at your school as if you were a fly on the wall. Your lesson plans for teaching kids martial arts should be setup like the structure of a long running TV soap opera. I can already see the guys scrunching their faces and thinking about clicking off to another article, but please stick with me on this.

A TV soap opera is successful because it captures the attention of a crowd and keeps them coming back for more day after day, week after week, for months, years, even decades. Personally I'm not a big fan of TV and I hate soap operas but they teach a valuable lesson. They have elements or triggers built into each section of their daily show that drag the viewers back for tomorrow's installment. We all know the term "cliff-hanger" and it comes from TV. They would literally have a main character hanging from a cliff at the end of an episode so you had to tune in the next day to see if they climbed back up or fell to their death. I remember an old favorite show of mine was "The Dukes of Hazard" where almost every commercial break showed the General Lee jumping a creek and you had to wait through the ads to see if it made it to the other side. I always knew they'd make it but there was no way I was going to miss the spectacular landing.

The human brain just has to know answers to the questions that it receives. If you tell someone part of a puzzle or pose a question to them they will come back to you for the answer. So my point is this, when teaching kids martial arts think about how you finish your lesson. Do you say "Well that'll do it for this week, good job everyone, come back on Tuesday and we'll do some more" or do you say "Great job everyone, now that you have those basics I can finally show you a special move that will double the power of that technique and I have a new martial art game for you to play at next week so don't miss training next week".

It is almost ridiculous how simple this is to do at the end of every session. You should already know what you're going to teach them so now you just have to phrase it the right way. Instead of saying "Next week we'll concentrate on kicking" you can say "Next week I'll show you 3 kicking techniques that will frighten off a bully" or "Next week I'll show you my secret kicking combination that you have to promise not to use outside of this room". Do you think the last two suggestions have a better chance of getting the kids back next week? They don't want to be the only kid in class that misses out on the special info you're going to teach them.

This article is just a starter for "How to keep them coming back". I will post some more simple but powerful tips soon so keep in touch with this blog for more insights on teaching kids martial arts.

I appreciate your feedback so be sure to leave a comment below and if you haven't done it already visit my blog then enter your name and email

in the box up on the top right to get a special bonus gift for teaching kids martial arts

## About the Author

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