

Increase Your Retention by Teaching with Benefits

In this month's G.O.L.D. Leadership Team Report, your goal is to learn how to teach your team members some effective ways to communicate both the mental and physical benefits of martial arts training to your students.



Until your assistant instructors acquire this ability, you run the risk of your students not understanding the real benefits of martial arts training at your school. Communication is one of the most important skills in life, so it's critical to make your helpers "Black Belt communicators" as fast as possible.

The ability to verbalize the mental and physical benefits of each classroom drill comes easier for some than others. In fact, some instructors can "do it" much better than they can "explain it." This is especially true for instructors who trained and advanced through an old-fashioned dungeon dojo, where everyone "did it" because they didn't have much choice.

Whatever the case, it's very important that you take the time to work with your assistants, and brainstorm together to determine all of the mental and physical benefits that your curriculum teaches.

Remember, brainstorming sessions tend to work best when you:

- Sit in a circle.
- Use a "no-idea-is-a-bad-idea" approach.

- Never stifle creativity with negative comments.
- Write all ideas on a big board or sheet of paper, so everyone can view them.
- Limit the session to approximately 20 minutes.

How to Teach Physical Benefits

For many assistant instructors, understanding the physical benefits of training is usually easier than the mental benefits; therefore, start with the physical benefits.

Schedule a brainstorming session with your G.O.L.D. Leadership Team members. Start the session by asking them to name your school's curriculum categories. Use a wipe-off board or a large flip chart to record those categories. Some of the categories they may name are Kicks, Katas, One-Steps, Stretching, Sparring Drills and Self-Defense Maneuvers.

When you write the categories on the board, leave enough space between them, so you can write several physical benefits for each category. Then, ask your team members to help you list all of the physical benefits students will receive in each category. To start their thinking, suggest common physical benefits, such as Increases Flexibility, Builds Strength, Improves Balance, etc.

Tell your G.O.L.D. team members that they will be able to reference the list later, during the drill portion of the leadership class, to help them teach the physical benefits of martial arts training.

Next, create a similar list of mental benefits.

How to Teach Mental Benefits

Learning and understanding the mental benefits of your classroom drills will require more thought for most assistant instructors.

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Start by clearing your wipe-off board (Be sure someone has recorded on paper the curriculum categories and physical benefits from the previous exercise.) or using a new sheet from the flip chart. Once again, leave plenty of space between the categories to write the mental benefits.

Then, ask your leadership team members to contribute to the new list with the mental benefits that they think students receive and experience during their training. Suggest a few benefits to start the conversation: Improves Self-Control, Increases Confidence, Develops Discipline, etc.

Be sure that someone has also recorded this list accurately, so it can be reproduced for your assistant instructors to use as a reference during the drill in this leadership lesson.

Conclude your discussion with a few benefits for your assistant instructors. Tell them that when they've acquired the skills to communicate the physical and mental benefits of what they are teaching, they'll be significantly increasing the value of each student's experience. Your team members also benefit because acquiring those skills and knowing how to use them makes them better and more valuable instructors. When your assistant instructors use these skills in the classroom environment, they are showing students and parents that your school is delivering on its promise to teach beneficial life skills.

Skill Building Drills For Your Leadership Team

Ask each G.O.L.D. Leadership Team member to lead a mock class through the drills listed below. Rate each team member on a scale of 1 to 10. They must score at least a seven.



1. How to Teach Physical Benefits

Create a mock class, with at least five leadership team members. The "class leader" (or sixth student) leads the group through a regular class drill. The "leader" team member should provide a brief demonstration, and then clearly explain the physical benefit(s) they will receive by participating in the drill. Position the wipe-off board or flip chart with the list of physical benefits where the "leader" team members can see it, and reference it, if necessary.

Example: "One of the physical benefits of this drill is improving your coordination skills. Better coordination can help you avoid a fall, strike with greater accuracy and increase your performance in any sport."

Rate each team member before the next assumes the role of the instructor of the mock class.

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2. How to Teach Mental Benefits

Repeat the mock-class drill exactly as above, except now your assistant instructors will explain the mental benefits of the drill during the mock class.

Create a mock class, with at least five leadership team members. The “class leader” (or sixth student) leads the group through a regular class drill. The “leader” team member should provide a brief demonstration, and then clearly explain the mental benefit(s) they will receive by participating in the drill. Position the wipe-off board or flip chart with the list of mental benefits where the “leader” team members can see it, and reference it, if necessary.

Example: “One of the mental benefits of this drill is improving your concentration skills. Better concentration will help you learn faster at school. Plus, you’ll stay focused longer and finish your tasks properly the first time.”

Rate each team member before the next assumes the role of the instructor of the mock class.

3. How to Teach Mental and Physical Benefits

Repeat the mock-class drill exactly as above, except now your assistant instructors will explain both the physical and mental benefits of the drill during the mock class.

Create a mock class, with at least five leadership team members. The “class leader” (or sixth student) leads

the group through a regular class drill. The “leader” team member should provide a brief demonstration, and then clearly explain both the physical and mental benefit(s) they will receive by participating in the drill.

The strongest emphasis should be on the mental benefits. Before each leadership team member begins, remove the wipe-off board or flip chart of both physical and mental benefits. Without that extra help, they’ll be put to the test that they’ve learned the benefits.

Example: “When you take part in this challenging obstacle course, not only are you working towards improving your stamina and fitness level, but also you are building your tenacity and determination skills. As the course becomes more difficult, you’ll have to push yourself to finish it in the fastest time possible. This course will strengthen your mind and body at the same time.”

Rate each team member before the next assumes the role of the instructor of the mock class.

In conclusion, teaching by benefits is one of the most important skills your assistant instructors can learn. It can make a huge difference in your retention. When your students are able to understand the true value of their martial arts training and how they can use it to improve their everyday lives, they’ll enjoy classes more, and want to continue training and learning...with you.