



AMP

Management

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Encouraging Reading

Habits are a hard thing to break, whether they are good or bad. Reading is a great habit to have in the information age. It is important to acquire a habit of reading because without this skill your students will be severely handicapped. Most martial arts programs SAY that studies are important, but in the AMP we are going to SHOW them that reading is important by setting aside time every day to read. This article contains several ways that you can encourage reading during your summer program to develop the good habit of reading.

Children can get bored very easily if they are not stimulated when reading. It is important for you to provide them with good books which will keep their interest for the half hour scheduled in the AMP Summer Camp. Because children are not all alike, you will need to have a wide variety of reading materials to cover their differing interests.

To know what kinds of books you should get there are a few things you can do:

- ask teachers what kinds of book children like to read;
- ask librarians;
- ask your students directly.

Providing a wide variety of children's books and magazines (make sure there aren't any suggestive ads in the magazines) will certainly encourage reading.

Having books and magazines on hand means you have to build a library. Building a library of good children's books and magazines doesn't need to cost a lot. Appropriate books can be found at garage sales, thrift stores, and

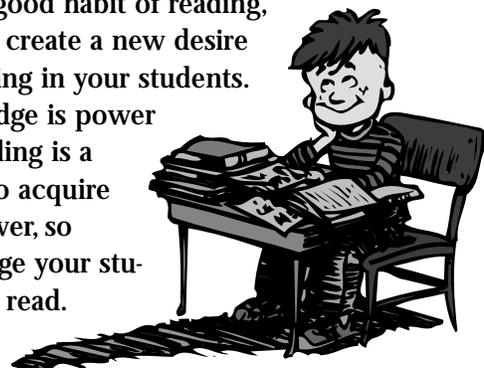
second hand bookstores for a very small investment. Book donations from your student's parents can also help. You will need to purchase some inexpensive shelves so the school remains tidy and so the books remain in good condition.

Occasionally, having guest readers rather than having the children always reading silently can be fun. You can use your staff members, or you can get parents, or even community leaders like police, fireman, local theater companies, or a local sports hero to come and read for the children.

Certainly you and your staff should provide a model of the good habit of reading when it's time for silent reading. Since they look up to you, anything you do will have a very powerful effect on them. Because the staff are the individuals that students are around most of the time, their actions are being watched to model. Children do what you do, not what you say, so when it comes time to reading, you and your staff should sit down and read with them.

By providing good reading materials, creating a library, having guest readers, and modeling the good habit of reading, you will create a new desire for reading in your students.

Knowledge is power and reading is a means to acquire that power, so encourage your students to read.



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Internal Tournament

The internal tournament is a great idea for a field trip that has a wonderful “ripple effect” on your program. Just like a tiny stone thrown into a quiet pond, it can create a ripple that affects every corner of the pond.

In the first place, tournaments increase retention. There’s nothing like winning a medal to build a child’s self-esteem and therefore win a parent’s loyalty. For some children, this medal may represent the first time they were good at anything, or at least the first time anyone told them they are good at something. That creates the desire to get better, to train harder, and stay with your program.

In addition, it’s simple human nature to train harder when you know you have a competition coming up. If you have had even the slightest problem motivating students to focus or pay attention to what they are doing, training for a tournament may be just the motivation you need.

Here’s What to Do:

1. Choose a Date. We recommend about 4 weeks into your Summer Camp, so that it is far enough away for even beginners to learn their forms and breaking techniques, yet near enough to be motivating.

2. Choose a Place. We recommend your school because it is free, but any other place that is available for a very low price is a possibility. However, when you hold it at your school, it solves lots of transportation problems.

3. Decide who will attend. The obvious answer is all of your AMP students, but what if there is another school with an AMP program in your area? If you have several branch schools, or a neighboring AMP school,

why not combine your students and cut your work in half? One school can visit the other, or both can pool their resources to rent a larger facility.

4. Make copies of the flyer. We recommend you copy the provided flyer on brightly colored paper.

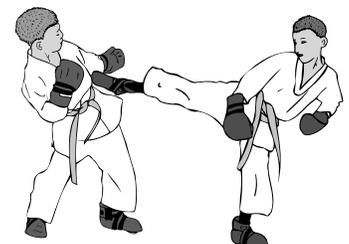
5. Order awards. You can buy medals, trophies, or ribbons from Vision, USA at 1-800-424-KICK, or your local trophy shop. Because we recommend that there be NO entry fee, you want to keep the cost down to about \$3.00 per student just like any other field trip, so ribbons are a good choice. Another cost effective alternative is a certificate.



6. Begin Promotion. Hang a poster-sized version of the flyer in your lobby. Place flyers on the counter next to the sign-out sheet, and then on a specific day, give one flyer to every parent as they pick-up their children. Most parents will be working on the day of the tournament, but a few may make arrangements to come (some might even try to get the day off).

7. Tell the students about the tournament in class, and begin practicing for it.

As we mentioned on the *Talking News* in April, we are recommending two in-school tournaments for the summer: the first covers forms and breaking competitions, and the second covers sparring. This plan allows students to warm-up to the idea of a tournament without the added fear of injury involved in sparring. Once they have a



Internal Tournament

successful experience, they will want to participate in the second tournament, and then we can introduce the sparring competition.

We strongly recommend that your in-school tournament be an “everybody wins” event. Because our goal is to increase self-confidence and not to establish a world champion, we can allow more winners. In order to accomplish this goal, divide students according to rank then according to age, into groups of four. Each group of four will compete for first, second, third and third. Everybody wins a ribbon or medal. If you want to be even more vague, you can award Best Technique, Superior Technique, and Excellent Technique instead of first, second, and third, and most kids will only know that they won, and not get hung up on who beat whom.



Older, higher ranking students can learn to be judges, and you can spend some time during class teaching them how to judge properly. Not only will this plan help your tournament run faster and smoother (how many staff members do you have who could be judges?), but the added responsibility will help your higher ranking students learn maturity and judgement.

During the tournament, have everyone compete in forms first, and award all ribbons or medals immediately at the ring. After all forms competition is finished, then begin breaking competition. You may use real wood, but we recommend re-breakable boards for convenience and cost effectiveness.

Classroom Procedures

On Monday and Wednesday mornings, we have included a breaking competition and a forms competition (white belts do basics competition) to help students focus on improving technique and get ready for the tournament. During these practice competitions, students learn the tournament format, so they become comfortable with it. Unlike a tournament, though, these sessions offer an opportunity for coaching and improvement. Take the time after each round to offer direction and advice.

These competitions are also the best place for older and higher-ranking students to practice judging. Judging is usually a matter of education and experience, so this is a great place to educate these students and help them gain experience.

Depending on how many higher ranking students you have, you can assign two to four to each “ring” to practice judging for these competitions. Just as you coach the students after the competitions, you may also coach the judges, helping them understand what to look for.

Many styles believe it is NOT proper etiquette for a lower ranking student to sit in judgement of a higher ranking student (how can they judge a form they have not yet learned?). If your style believes this way, be aware of the situation, and teach your staff and students proper etiquette.

After the first tournament is over, we will switch gears and begin practicing for the sparring tournament in class. We will still do breaking and forms competition in the mornings to keep our technique sharp, but we will also practice tournament sparring throughout July and August.

Once again, we recommend that you train your higher ranking students to be corner judges and perhaps even center referees. Every student can practice and learn the referee procedures, if only to learn the rules better. Only older and higher ranking students may actually get the opportunity to be officials at the tournament, but everyone can practice those roles.

The internal tournament has great potential for your summer camp. It will help motivate students to improve their technique and their attitude toward training, it will improve student morale and retention, it will build self-confidence in all your students, and it will develop better judgement and maturity in your senior students who learn to be tournament officials. This one tiny pebble of an idea creates a ripple that can affect your entire summer camp in a positive way. Make plans now with your staff to begin preparations for your first tournament.



Positive Discipline

This month we continue our positive discipline series by addressing an in-class problem that can be a thorn in your side: the classroom bully. What makes this kind of student difficult is not just his behavior, it is the fact that he has taken on a role within your school community, and he truly believes that this role will empower him. If you are trying to redirect him, you have to compete with his established beliefs about how he becomes powerful.

A bully has experienced a loss of power in his life that he is trying to regain. He may feel neglected at home, he might struggle with understanding his schoolwork, or maybe he has a trait that diminishes his popularity among his peers. Since a child does not have the maturity to grieve such losses, he will seek a way to compensate for the loss. If he is physically powerful, he will use his strength to intimidate other children and feel better about himself. If he is a bright child and can insult other kids in a humorous and witty manner, this will be his crutch. In the long run, these behaviors disrupt your class and they sabotage the bully's hopes of feeling powerful in a healthy way.

When a classroom bully acts out, it's easy to react in the moment without thinking of the big picture. If you buy into that, the bully's power structure stays in tact because he is not encouraged to think about the big picture either. He is feeling the rush of knowing he disrupted you and other students instead.

To help him think in larger terms, take him aside where you can speak to him privately. Remind him of his history in your class, and your interest in his future in your class. This helps him think in terms of your vision for him. One way to do this is by asking questions like, "What are our goals in the AMP? How have you pursued these goals so far?" Once he is actively engaged in the conversation, your communication is more likely to sink in. Then you can explain that his particular behavior that day has not helped him or the other students reach for their goals, and that he should consider that next time he makes a decision about how to act in class. Tell him to apologize to you and the student he offended before continuing with class.

When your conversation is over, allow the student to return to class, but put him in a group or a section of your room where he is less likely to bully others. He'll be surrounded by students who are his size or larger, or even students who relate in a confident manner that he can emulate.

Finally, provide him with some positive ways to experience a sense of power. Make him a special helper who gets materials for you, or puts them away. You can also make him a team leader so he can develop a better sense of judgement.

Remember that changes are going to be slow, and they will happen as the bully begins to believe he can have power without hurting others. The more effective your program is, the greater the changes will be in his life.

Check next month's *Management* to read about how you can effectively communicate with parents about their problem children.



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