

# 21st Century Learning and the Martial Arts

## About the

### 5th Dimension Institute

Our mission is that of a pebble in a pond. Every person who commits to reaching out and making a difference causes a ripple effect. We want to help magnify those ripples. There are a lot of ways to make a difference. There are a lot of passionate individuals committed to making a difference. This is our way of lending weight to those efforts. This is our unique voice, our commitment to making a positive impact in the world.



## About the Author

Master Caputo has studied extensively in areas such as communication, personal achievement and motivation. His goal is to use the martial arts as a catalyst to effect positive growth in students of all ages. To this end, he developed "Creative Connections" a multifaceted program designed to impact students of all ages both within a traditional martial arts setting and out in the community. He is a contributing author to the book "Helping Boys Succeed in School" and is currently authoring a second book dealing more fully with the topic of bullying. He is also the author of the children's book "The Adventures of Jay and Tay".



The world has changed. Want to learn more about "21st century learning"? Google it. Fifteen years ago that term didn't even exist. Now it is representative of how quickly we can access information in an instant. Knowledge is now more abundantly available than at any other time in human history. We know what happens on the other side of the planet an instant after the event occurs. We are in constant communication with each other. We live our lives much more publicly than ever before. We publish our thoughts for the world to see. In many ways, the world has become a much smaller place.



All of this amazing technology, abundance, and global connectivity does not, however, help bridge the gap between knowledge and the wisdom of how to use it affectively and appropriately. Google reveals information, but it does not create an experience. That's what 21st century learning is about. It's about creating an environment where knowledge meshes with application. The teacher's job is to create opportunities for the student to discover on their own. They ask questions which allow students to make connections which are multidimensional. They encourage exploration and right brain creative thinking to compliment traditional left brain sequential understanding.



The martial arts have been around for thousands of years. They are constantly changing to meet the needs of different cultures and time periods. The 21st century martial arts format is a result of that phenomenon. The world has changed. So have we.

## What to expect in every class:

- **Developing the body-mind connection**

Students in a martial arts class will be moving most of the time. They will be asked to memorize sequences of movement, then repeat them until they become ingrained in their muscle memory. At times, the mind will understand, but the body will not be willing. Other times, the body will be ready, but the mind will not. As time passes, students will learn to create a balance, allowing their mind and body to work as one.

- **Instilling structure while encouraging creativity**

A martial arts class is very structured. Following directions, observing personal space, and controlling impulses are all developed during class. There is also plenty of room for students to be creative, work independently, and develop visualization skills. We learn best through play, and students will be able to tap into their imagination in a variety of ways to make class fun, interesting, and exploratory.

- **Promoting teamwork while recognizing personal achievement**

When moving through a martial arts class, often commands are given in a group setting. Students work and move together, and also develop partnering skills. The goal when partnering is to help develop each other's skill level, as opposed to competing against or trying to outdo the other person. Individual achievement is recognized by working towards a personal best. Each student will develop in skill differently, and the emphasis is placed on maximizing one's individual potential.

- **Connecting the benefits of the martial arts to life off the mats**

The lessons of the dojo have tremendous value in other areas of life. Strong shape of the body can help us demonstrate confidence when we are nervous. Partnering skills can be easily related to social skills. Concentration and memorizing sequences of movement can be translated into better study habits. Throughout class, connections will be made between how lessons can be applied on and off the mats.

## **The Four Phases of Class:**

### **Phase 1: The Foundation**

- Establish focus through diaphragmatic breathing
- Range of motion stretching also encourages whole brain synchronization
- Stances and footwork for balance and strengthening
- Strike, kick and blocking mechanics for bilateral coordination

### **Phase 2: Core Curriculum**

- Traditional martial arts Kata for mastery of self
- Traditional techniques for partner application
- Three-tiered teaching approach blends visual, auditory, and kinesthetic principles
- Emphasis on learning through doing

### **Phase 3: Reinforcement and Exploration**

- Repetition through use of interactive drills and use of equipment
- Exploration of various applications of curriculum skills
- Cardiovascular conditioning exercises
- Personal safety skills through partnering

### **Phase 4: Triple Play Fitness**

- Continuation of cardiovascular conditioning
- Full body strengthening exercises
- Stretching for both muscles and connective tissue
- Chi Kung breathing cool down

### **Additional Class Component: ETA (Experience Through Action)**

- These are brief independent work times where students "practice practicing". Students will work on anything learned in class under the guidance and encouragement of the instructors.



Creative Connections is woven throughout the class, including the six "Safer, Healthier, Happier" topics. These six character-building life skills are built in to every class. Each month one of these topics gets a little extra attention, allowing the student to squeeze additional benefit from their martial arts experience

Discover more at [www.CreativeConnectionsTTMA.com](http://www.CreativeConnectionsTTMA.com).