

Filipino Martial Arts

PAMANTASA NG LUNGSOD NG MAYNILA

Digest

ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Special Edition
2009

FMA EDUCATION

THE BASICS ARE THE ROOT TO ANY ART. KNOW THE BASICS AND THE ART WILL OPEN UP TO YOU.

STUDY ALL THE TECHNIQUES AND RETAIN THOSE THAT WILL BEST WORK FOR YOU.

THE MIND IS THE MOST FORMIDABLE WEAPON
MAKE THE BODY AN EXTENSION OF THE MIND.

AQUINAS UNIVERSITY, LEGASPI, PHILIPPINES

IR AND O ACADEMY

PASAY NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

AMARA ARKANIS SISTEMANG PRAKSIYON

A SYSTEM OF SYSTEMS "FILIPINO FIGHTING ART OF EDUCATION"

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FMA Digest Archives

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Are You A Teacher or Instructor?

Unknown Pioneer of the Filipino Martial Arts

Filipino Martial Arts Digest is published and distributed by:

FMA Digest

1297 Eider Circle

Fallon, Nevada 89406

Visit us on the World Wide Web: **www.fmadigest.com**

The FMA Digest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

The authors and publisher of this digest are not responsible for any injury, which may result from following the instructions contained in the digest. Before embarking on any of the physical activities described in the digest, the reader should consult his or her physician for advice regarding their individual suitability for performing such activity.

From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

There is quite a few Filipino martial arts schools, or schools that have the Filipino martial arts in their curriculum. And the FMA Digest fully supports them in any aspect that it can.

Now if you are attending a school that teaches the Filipino martial arts, besides teaching the techniques of the art it represents, is the Filipino culture also a part of the learning experience? The FMA Digest fully believes to really and fully understand an art the practitioner should know something about the culture of the art and the country from where it came from.

Now about this Special Edition, as many might be or are aware of, before Grandmaster Remy Presas left the Philippines to come to the United States he traveled throughout the Philippines demonstrating and promulgating his art of Modern Arnis and one of his goals was to get the art of Arnis as part of the education system.

Today when visiting the Philippines one can see that Colleges and Universities have classes which are of the Filipino martial arts, also in high schools and one can also find that in elementary schools it is taught whether a scheduled class or some Organization or instructor set up a visit to teach the young ones.

It would be safe to say I think that throughout the world there are Colleges and Universities that have a program, whether for credits or just for interest that offer martial arts and in some cases the Filipino martial arts is in some way a part of the teachings.

In this issue are some of the educational institutions that offer the Filipino martial arts in some way, and usually for credit. In some of the articles it will explain how the program got started, in others it may just say what the program is about

Personally I believe there should be a program of martial arts in all schools, for students to build self-esteem, self-confidence, discipline, coordination of the mind and body, responsibility, and of course self defense. And of course it should be a program that offers aspects not to just one style of martial arts but educates the students in several of the martial arts or systems of a culture to spread the knowledge and educate the people.

I have been fortunate in being able to teach at Pepperdine University in the late 70's while overseas, and at Western Nevada College, Fallon in the mid 2000's.

Also at the end of this Special Edition is a question for practitioners that offer their knowledge, it is "Are you a Teacher or an Instructor?" There is a difference.

Remember the youth of today are the practitioners of tomorrow. And without them the art will disappear.

Maraming Salamat Po

Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila

The National College of Physical Education began as a professional class in physical education for principals and supervisors at the Teacher's Camp in Baguio City in 1932.



Mr. Serafin Aquino

In 1935 Mr. Serafin Aquino, then Superintendent in Physical Education of the Bureau of Education, organized classes for teachers in physical education at the Philippine School of Arts and Trades, now the Technological University of the Philippines on an experimental basis. These classes, being experimental, did not have the approval of the Director of Education and were, therefore, not given credit until 1937, when physical education was included in the curriculum of Public Schools.

Mr. Serafin Aquino was finally authorized to conduct classes on condition that the government would be free of any financing. So he and his supervisors gave free services and even spent for their own transportation.

Teachers from the various provinces came to the city for summer training and were charged P5.00 each for the purchase of equipment to be used in the classes.

In 1938, arrangement with Dr. Regino Ylanan, Executive Secretary Treasurer of the Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation, for the use of the facilities in the Rizal Memorial Stadium with minimum rental.

In joint efforts, the PAAF and the Bureau of Education took charge of the dual responsibilities of holding formal training in Physical Education. Each one had its own function. The PAAF was responsible in providing the needed equipment, facilities and the services of its personnel, while the Bureau of Education took charge of the supervision, instruction and encouragement of teachers to take up Physical Education. These combined efforts gave birth to the National College of Physical Education. To give more incentive to teachers, the Director of Education sought authority from the Secretary of Public Instruction to award a Certificate to students who have completed the requirement of 28 units.

By 1941 the enrollment soared to 963. The Japanese occupation disrupted the classes, but in 1947, they were reopened and were held at the war torn buildings of the Philippine School of Arts and Trades.

Enthusiasm over the Summer School made the Honorable Jorge Vargas invite and secure the services of foreign leaders in physical education to teach during the summer term. Elise N. Nelsen of Sargents College, Boston, USA was the first foreign instructor to teach at the NCPE. Other foreign instructors came after Elise Nelsen.

In 1960, due to strong demands of teachers, a Master of Arts in Physical Education was offered.

The NCPE became the Marcos Sports Academy under the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development in 1979. In 1986 it became the Philippine Institute of Physical Education and Sports. And in 1993, the said institution was transferred to Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (University of the City of Manila), a state university, thru the efforts

of Dr. Alejandro L. Dagdag, Jr., the Executive-Director and restore the original name, National College of Physical Education.

School of Arnis Professionals

It was in the mid of 1971 when Professor Armando C. Soteco, met Grandmaster Remy A. Presas, the “Father of Modern Arnis” at San Beda College, Mendiola, Manila, Philippines.

Sometimes, all it takes is a chance encounter between two people to impact on each other’s lives. The lessons they learn from each other are lasting remembrances that they surely makes one beautiful story of friendship and benefits the other way.

In their spare time, especially during weekends, Grandmaster Remy Presas, personally taught Professor Armando C. Soteco the art of Arnis, from the most basic to the most complex.

But, there was a passing of touch of some sorts when Grandmaster Remy Presas migrated to the United States in 1975. He left to him the responsibility of propagating all the more the art of Arnis while he was doing his part of introducing the Filipino version of martial arts in the United States and other European countries. When he appointed him as President of the Modern Arnis from 1975 to 1977, he also passed to Professor Armando C. Soteco his teaching load at the National College of Physical Education, wherein Arnis is a required subject for teachers taking up P.E. major, the teaching at the Armed Forces of the Philippines where Military Police took Arnis lessons and Police Officers around the country.

He is also instrumental in the inclusion of Arnis in Physical Education curriculum in High School students and supported the addition of Arnis in the College program when he participated in the 1989 Consultative Seminar Workshop of then Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS), Bureau of Physical Education and School Sports (BPES), whose aim is to make definite and concrete P.E. activities for P.E. 1, 2, 3, and 4. The BPES officials approved that Arnis be included in P.E. 3, with course description as Individual/Dual Sport.

Because the seed of love for Arnis, that planted in his heart as insatiable, he thinks of the growth and development of Arnis. Thus, in 2003, he organized and put a School of Arnis Professionals at the National College of Physical Education, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (University of the City of Manila) in Intramuros, Manila, Philippines.

He was designated as Director of this seminar type course by Dr. Alejandro L. Dagdag, Jr., the Executive-Director of NCPE.

The program was designed to prepare professional Arnis Instructors and P.E. teachers by providing scientific know-how in teaching/coaching and managing Arnis competitions. Included in the Arnis Professional Course are some theoretical subjects like:

- Sport Science (Biomechanics)
- Physiology of Exercise and Physical Fitness



Grandmaster Remy Presas

- Traumatology ((First Aid)
- Sports Psychology (Teaching Methodology)
- Nutrition and Drugs
- Sports and Recreation Management

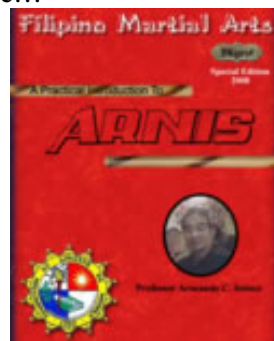
The Arnis specialization subjects included:

- Arnis 1 - **Basic:** Foundation of skills for beginners and P.E. teachers
 Arnis 2 - **Cultural:** Anyo Standard, Creative, and Classical or Traditional
 Arnis 3 - **Sport:** Rules/Officiating, Mechanics and Strategies for Competition
 Arnis 4 - **Martial Art:** Defense/Offense techniques (with and without sticks)

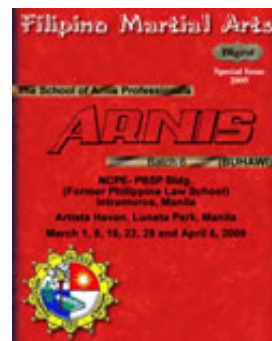


Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila
(University of the City of Manila)

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Erie Community College

By Dr. Jerome Barber

(Original article in FMA Digest Vol6 No2)

When I first found out that Professor had taught Modern Arnis at several colleges in the Philippines before he immigrated to the USA, I vowed that I would teach a Modern Arnis program at Erie Community College, where I was already a tenured sociology professor. All I needed to do before I could get started on my ECC plan was to complete my own under-belt Kenpo-Arnis training with Sifu Zanghi. When I mentioned my plan to Sifu Zanghi and Professor Presas, they both encouraged me to proceed with my project; however, neither man offered me any curriculum guidance. I later found out why there wasn't any offer of help. Professor did not have a written curriculum, nor did he have a permanent headquarters school in the USA. I would be on my own. The quick and simple solution became readily apparent. I would use my notes from Sifu Zanghi's instruction plus those from Professor's seminars and camps which I attended. In addition, I would use Professor's first Modern Arnis video tape series as my curriculum resource materials. I completed my under-belt studies with Sifu Zanghi in December 1985 and immediately began compiling my collected data. I presented my curriculum proposal to the ECC Physical Education Department Chairman, Paul Barone, in April 1986. After the necessary departmental reviews and approvals, I was granted permission to offer the first 2 courses of my ECC Tracy Kenpo- Modern Arnis Self-Defense Curriculum in February 1987.

The first of the two approved courses opened in September 1987 at Erie Community College - South Campus, Orchard Park, NY. The courses were set up to run in a sequential manner over four (4) consecutive semesters. Students could join the sequence at any point. New students or beginners would be separated from the more advanced people enrolled in the same course. I also planned for my more experienced people to mentor and coach the beginners. The ECC Tracy Kenpo-Modern Arnis Self-Defense Program had a 2 pronged approach. I was teaching all of my students both Tracy Kenpo and Modern Arnis techniques for self-defense, but I was also running a martial arts teacher training program. Once again I was following directly in Professor Presas' footsteps. He had taught Modern Arnis at the National College for Physical Education in the Philippines. Professor Presas was a 'teacher of teachers'.

In March of 1989, Professor, gave my curriculum a detailed, in-depth review. It took 4 hours for him to review the entire curriculum with me. I had to demonstrate every exercise, drill, anyo (form) and technique in the exact order that each item appeared in my curriculum. I was assisted by Mr. Duane Brown and Mr. Tim Kashino, my student teaching assistants at the time. The review was exhaustive and no detail escaped Professor's scrutiny. He questioned numerous items and I had to explain each one in detail. His biggest concern was reserved for why I taught the entire first course in the sequence without giving my students any stick training. I explained that I wanted to ensure good body and hand control plus emphasize safety training among my students before allowing them to do the stick work. It was also easier to get PE Departmental approval to run the courses by delaying the stick training until the second course. On the other hand I did introduce, triangular stepping, trapping hands, the de cadena drill, empty

hand translations of the 12 stick angles of attack and defenses against 6 stick attacks in the first course. I simply made sure that only the instructor(s) used the stick.

Professor ultimately approved my curriculum in writing. I presented the signed document to the PE Department Curriculum Committee as part of the final review process for all 4 courses. The complete ECC Tracy Kenpo-Modern Arnis Self-Defense Program was given permanent status in the college course offerings beginning in September 1990. Over-all the ECC self-defense program has now run for 40 consecutive semesters or 20 uninterrupted years. To the best of my knowledge, this is the ONLY Tracy Kenpo and Modern Arnis college credit bearing program being taught in the USA or Canada. Incidentally, the ECC Tracy Kenpo-Modern Arnis Self-Defense Program has also been formally recognized in writing by Grandmaster Al Tracy and Punong Guro Tom Bolden, in 1992. Grandmaster Tracy is the Co-Founder and Director of the Tracy System of Kenpo. Punong Guro Bolden is the Founder and Chief Instructor of the American Modern Arnis Associates.

I believe that the reason I was able to secure Professor Presas' endorsement for the ECC Tracy Kenpo-Modern Arnis Program was because I included all of the salient points of Modern Arnis within my curriculum. My Modern Arnis core curriculum begins with the assumption that Modern Arnis is a fighting art that is based on the blade. I use wooden replicas of the Presas jungle bolo and the Negrito bolo in my ECC program.

I also teach Modern Arnis as a self-defense system. Further, I have adapted my Tracy Kenpo-Modern Arnis Program to fit into the American cultural context in general and New York State Penal Law in particular. Secondly, I have read and fully utilized all three (3) of Professor's books:

- Modern Arnis: Philippine Martial Art - Stick Fighting,
- The Practical Art of Eskrima,
- Modern Arnis: The Filipino Art of Stick Fighting.

My ECC curriculum is based on Professor Presas' statements and ideas as he published them in these books. The Rick Mitchell interviews published in Inside Kung Fu, merely added credence to my existing curriculum ideas.

I also used Professor's original 6 volume video tapes series to gain visual confirmation of some of his ideas. These tapes allowed me to clearly see what he was doing and review it as many times as necessary to get it right. My goal was never to mimic copy or clone his movements. I wanted to make sure that I understood what he was doing and why he did it in a particular manner. With those understandings in place I could build my Modern Arnis curriculum with confidence. By adding my own on-site training experiences with Professor Presas as well as Sifu Zanghi, I could build on the newer innovations that I was seeing and learning as Professor continued his own development within the art.

In the final analysis I have concluded that the essential principles that drove Modern Arnis under Professor's leadership can be summed up as follows;

- Modern Arnis is a blade oriented art, even though Professor presented it as a stick art in order to gain greater general public acceptance. He wanted the art to grow in size and popularity. (Presas, 1974, pg. 9)
- The weapon, be it stick, bolo, sword or knife is clearly an extension of the hand. Anything that one can do with their weapon can be approximated by the empty hand. (Presas, 1974, pg. 9)

- The single and double stick plus the espada y daga drills are taught to familiarize Modern Arnis students with some fighting styles commonly found in the Philippines. All of the stick striking patterns and drills convert to empty hand drills. All of these drills are actually precursors to some practical empty hand self-defense applications. (Presas, 1974, pg. 9)
- All weapons drills are translatable to empty hand drills and by extension to self defense applications. (Presas, 1974, pg. 9)
- Arnis can and should be taught a part of a general physical education program at schools, colleges and universities. Arnis trains students to defend them-selves against armed and unarmed attacks. (Presas, 1974, pg. 12)
- ‘Make the art for yourself’ because any martial art style or system that is fixed, rigid and tradition bound is not flexible enough to change to the times and new situations. (Presas, 1983, pg. 3)
- Body shifting and evasion are essential skills that students need to master because weapons defense require greater awareness and skill to defeat your opponent(s). (Presas, 1974, pg. 28 & 1983, pg. 26)
- The core or ‘life and soul’ of Modern Arnis are the 12 stick angles of attack. These 12 angles are paralleled by the 12 blocks, the 12 disarms and the empty hand strikes that mirror the 12 stick strikes. (Presas, 1974, pg. 32)



Outside Single Sinawali self-defense application as taught by Dr. Jerome Barber, at ECC.

By simply taking what Professor had stated in seminars, camps and conversations, plus his written comments as being reasonable and then testing everything to see if I could replicate his results, I arrived at the conclusion that Professor’s method of instruction was both sound as well as practical. As a sociologist by training and temperament, applying the scientific methodology gave me the opportunity to discover the validity of Professor’s approach. As my research results come in and were analyzed, I concluded that Professor was essentially correct. I followed his advice, tailoring everything to fit my own body and mentality. Modern Arnis is a very effective self-defense art and easily blends with Tracy Kenpo. Professor has written that everyone

should adapt “...*Arnis principles to his own feel for each technique. The method should fit the person not the other way around.*” (Presas, 1983, pg. 5)

From 1983 when I first attended a seminar with Professor, until we had our last conversation in 1999, Professor always told his students and Modern Arnis instructors that we should ‘make it for ourselves’. When he referred to the “flow” in a conceptual sense, rather than as a technique, he wanted us to find, “...*the comfortable place where the movements of Arnis and the individual human body meet for maximum effectiveness; body and mind blend to achieve the most natural fighting style based on an individual’s needs and attitudes.*” (Presas, 1983, pg. 5)

It is important to recognize that while Professor wanted his Modern Arnis students to be open, flexible, innovative and adaptable; there are, however, some very definite skills within the system that must be mastered. Modern Arnis is not based on an ‘open ended, anything goes’ approach. According to my notes and based on discussions with Professor Presas, it is imperative that the dedicated Modern Arnis student learns and masters:

1. The basic 12 single stick strikes and blocks
2. The use of the umbrella and slanting stick blocks.
3. The following traditional stick striking patterns:
 - a. figure 8,
 - b. rompida,
 - c. up & down,
 - d. banda y banda,
 - e. abaniko corto,
 - f. abaniko largo,
 - g. abaniko hirada,
 - h. abaniko double action,
 - i. double zero,
 - j. single stick redonda,
 - k. redonda x,
 - l. sinawali movements (single, double and reverse),
 - m. crossada,
 - n. palis-palis,
 - o. espada y daga
 - p. cinco tiros (five strokes).

Then the student progresses to the empty hand translations and applications of all of the above stick striking patterns along with the trapping hands techniques and the de cadena drill with applications. Subsequently still other skills are developed, including, joint-locks, spinning throws, take-downs, stick locks, empty hand and stick disarming techniques, sword and bolo disarming techniques, 6 count drill with variations off the basic drill, single stick sparring and counter for counter single stick drills and tapi-tapi drills.



Single Stick Application of block-check-counter: arm-bar to upward knee strike to opponent's chin. Single stick Self-Defense application as taught by Dr. Jerome Barber, at ECC.

Given the above mentioned skills and techniques that a student must learn and master in order to become proficient in Modern Arnis, it would seem obvious that one cannot learn this art solely through attending seminars and camps several times a year. The student must be taught thoroughly and have the opportunity to work toward refining each of these skills over a considerable amount of time.

Aquinas University, Legaspi, Philippines

Kuntaw ng Pilipinas



The Aquinas University Kuntaw was established and founded on March 25, 1998 by Michael M. Tuscano, who was a green belt that time, was very much interested to study martial arts since his childhood.

Michael has been interested in the martial arts since his childhood. He began to study Kuntaw at the age of 7 years old. However because of the constant practice he suffered a arm fracture, this caused him to stop for almost 10 years. But since his desire was strong to know and learn Kuntaw martial arts he enrolled again until such time he was promoted as a Head Instructor.

From the time he enrolled in the Kuntaw ng Pilipinas he has deeply understood that martial arts, is for self-defense and a very good physical exercise. He likes most the way of Kuntaw Martial Arts among other forms of martial arts, because of this he is encourage and inspired by his mentors to try and start a martial arts association at the Aquinas University of Legazpi where he is presently studying and working.

His main purpose is to propagate Kuntaw ng Pilipinas showing the youth that learning a form of martial arts it will build self awareness, responsibility, inner peace and have them realize using illegal drugs or being in a gang is not a wise decision. What Michael likes most about the simplest but unique style of Kuntaw in fighting, is the sweeping and grabbing techniques.

Guro Michael Tuscano is the adviser and head instructor of Aquinas University Legaspi, Kuntaw up to the present. He also teaches Kuntaw during Sundays at Legaspi Port Elementary School as their outreach program for the children. He likes to develop the true essence of a Kuntawista as far as its values and philosophy is concerned. And he also wants to teach the youth the discipline and respect that they owe themselves and to others.

In a discussion with Mr. Jesus A. Barizo, who is the Moderator of Student Affairs and is responsible in coordinating and supervising activities at the University. Mr. Barizo was looking for a martial arts program that would meet the requirements of the University, one which would abide by the University's by-laws, and in coordination with the laws of the Philippines. That the officers and members of the organization; could produce a plan of action for each semester that that their program was to be offered.

Also that the program must show how it would be beneficial to the University and the community, showing good moral character, discipline, while students would still be responsible for their academic requirements.

Mr. Barizo had for many years observed martial arts organizations come and go and was skeptic about Kuntaw, but accepted the proposal from Michael Tuscano.

With the help of Mr. Eduard Sarate; an alumni of Kuntaw ng Pilipinas, formulate a possible plan of action. They gathered all the senior members of Kuntaw ng Pilipinas and also recruit new members. And with the help of the following persons: Vicente Arias, Heide Arias, Roberto Ala, Maricel Arquero, Jannette Raña, Jonathan Raña and Master Leogildo Capistrano, a final decision was made.

His eagerness to propagate Kuntaw martial arts he immediately wrote a letter to Rev. Fr. Virgilio A. Ojoy, O.P. the Rector and President of the University, and through the help of Mr. Jesus Barizo, Moderator for Student Affairs, the beloved Rector and President approved the request to established and put a martial arts association in the University.

On March 25, 1998 Fr. Ojoy, O.P. signed and approved the letter and Aquinas University Legaspi, Kuntaw Association was recognized as the University Based Organization up to this time.



Aquinas University Legaspi, Kuntaw Gym



Pasay North High School

The Organization was founded by the world renowned Punong Lakan Garitony “Pet” Nicolas in March, 1995 under the name of Modern Arnis De Mano, then situated in the Cosmo Pro Gym, ADR Building in Libertad, Taft Avenue, Manila. The group stayed on the same gym for the next 2 years. The Organization started out with 30 students together with the instructors under the tutelage of PL Pet back in the day. To name a few: Jerie De Belen, Antonio Coloma, Jeff Nova, Naki Makalintal, Dwight and Jojo Geronimo.



On July 1995, Punong Lakan Nicolas changed the name of the organization to which it is known now as Modern Arnis Mano-Mano Filipino Martial Arts or MAMFMA. This is now the start of the journey of an organization

in promoting the art and sport of Arnis to the rest of the world. And part of this endeavor, the group did not just stay inside the gym honing their skills. They went out to the public doing demonstrations, seminars, and actual trainings to propagate the learning of the native art to the rest of the Filipino people.

A lot of the activities of the group involved bringing the art closer to the grassroots by conducting trainings inside the school setting. One of schools who became beneficiaries of these trainings is the Pasay North High School. Under the leadership of Punong Lakan Nicolas, the students were trained in the art of Arnis and Mano-Mano.





But if you're thinking that it just stopped their, then you're wrong. It was just the beginning of a lot of participation in the spreading of the art.

R and O Academy Villamor Air Base Pasay City Philippines

R and O Academy headed by Susan Contillo School Directress proudly presented the 1st Filipino Martial Arts Festival at Villamor Air Base, Pasay City with special Guest by the Modern Arnis Mano-Mano Filipino Martial Arts headed by Punong Lakan Garitony C. Nicolas Father of Modern Sinawali and Head of MAMFMA.

Since that time MAMFMA has become the main organization teaching the students of the R and O Academy.



Parents and pupils of the R and O Academy, with the MAMFMA Group.



Punong Lakan Garitony “Sir Pet” Nicolas lining up the R and O Academy students for the warm up Exercises.



Punong Lakan teaching the students, the proper bowing of two Arnis Sticks.



From Prep to Grade Four Students of R and O Academy performing Single and Advance Single Sinawali.

R and O Academy Villamor Air Base, Pasay City, Philippines,
students from prep-grade four students, first batch, “Kid Arnisadors “.



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Filipino Martial Arts Education

Amara Arkanis Sistemang Praksiyon

By: Louelle Lledo as told to Emmanuel ES Querubin

To understand what Filipino martial arts Education is all about, it is important, first to know who Louelle Lledo is, and second to know his motives and intentions in calling his approach to teaching, Filipino martial arts Education.

What is Amara Arkanis Sistemang Praksiyon? Amara is the acronym for ama (father, male or positive) and mara (mother, female or negative). Arkanis, on the other hand means an art combining empty hands (ka for kamao) and stick fighting (ar-nis). Sistemang Praksiyon is the philosophy involved in the Bernarte Bokil system to differentiate it from the other Brokil systems. Brokil is the term for stick fighting in the province of Pampanga. Some Brokil systems are simply called sinawali. Delfin Bernarte calls his art Brokil, and his system "Sisternang Praksiyon," which came from his favorite expression, "praksiyon-praksiyon lang." This term probably comes from the fact that his blows only takes a fraction of a time to deliver. When mastership of the system was passed on to Louelle Lledo, he decided to call his system Amara Arkanis Sistemang Praksiyon Filipino Martial Arts Education, combining all the empty hand, sword, and the stick techniques he learned from the other arts.

He designed a martial arts education program for:

- Beginners in the Filipino martial arts, so they will have a concrete foundation by going through a step-by-step learning of the fundamentals.
- Advance students who did not undergo this type of training, so they will understand the underlying principles of the maneuvers they are executing.
- Prospective teachers so they can better organize a more systematized lesson plan or course of study, for a more effective and efficient teaching and learning of the Filipino martial art.

The term Filipino martial arts Education is neither an original term nor concept. The first known school where the Filipino martial arts taught were called Bothoan (Butuan), as mentioned in the chronicles of Magellan's conquest of the Pilippines.

According to the book, "Mga Karunungan sa Larong Arnis," written by Placido Yambao, published more than 50 years ago:

"In more recent history, in 1896, the Tanghalan ng Sandata (Theatre of Weaponry) was established in Manila by Jose de Azas, where Filipino Martial Arts was openly taught. Even the prestigious Ateneo de Manila started teaching Arnis de Mano in addition to European fencing.

In the 1920's a group of Arnis experts, established the Kapisanang Dunong at Lakas (Association of Knowledge and Strength), composed of Placido Yambao, Buenaventura Mirafuente, Luis Cruz, Juan Aclan and Francisco dela Cruz. In the 1940's the association was renamed Tabak ni Bonifacio. All the founders of the association were experienced fighters and recognized instructors of the art by the Magtanggol Sporting Club, headed by Joaquin Galang.

On April 29, 1954, the Tabak ni Bonifacio, then headed by Buenaventura Mirafuente, with the support of Councilor Marciano Santos of Tondo, submitted to the Municipal Council of Manila a resolution to teach Arnis de Mano to all high schools in

Manila. This resolution passed, and was enacted on August 6, 1954. This was highly supported by Antonio Maceda, then Superintendent of the City Schools of Manila.”

Founders of the Kapisanang Dunong at Lakas

(Later renamed Tabak ni Bonifacio)



Placido Yambao



Buenaventura Mirafuente



Luis Cruz



Juan Aclan



Francisco De La Cruz

Even the private colleges and universities, both in Manila, and the Visayan region took notice of the effectiveness of Arnis de Mano as a means of self-defense and physical exercise.

In the 1950's, private self-defense clubs sprouted in the different cities and schools all over the country. Aside from Arnis de Mano, Karate and Judo were taught. In Manila, the most prominent were the Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas, headed by Meliton Geronimo, a Sikaran and Arnis (Abaniko style) expert from Rizal and the Commando Self-defense Club, headed by Latino Gonzales, an Arnis expert from the Visayan region, who later on switched to Japanese Judo and Okinawan Karate. At the Far Eastern University, Lamberto Ticsay taught Arnis de Mano as a physical education curriculum. Remy Presas was also giving instructions and started working on a program, which he later named Modern Arnis. At the Philippine College of Criminology, Joe Sidlacan was teaching Arnis de Mano and defensive tactics. Another pioneer in teaching Arnis de Mano was Jimmy Galez.

Remy Presas worked with Arsenio de Borja of the Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation (PAAF), which made Arnis de Mano an approved physical education curriculum of the National College of Physical Education (NCPE).

It was during this period that Louelle Lledo moved from Zamboanga City to Manila, to further his studies, both in the academe and in the martial arts. He was already a black belt in Karate and an adept in the various styles of sword fighting, including European fencing, Visayan Eskrima and the Muslim sword fighting of Koon-tao and Silat.

In Manila, Lledo was introduced to other styles of Arnis de Mano, such as the Modern Arnis of Remy Presas, the traditional style of Porfirio Lanada and the innovative style of Daniel Rendal. But the greatest influence in his stick-fighting education, was from Delfin Bernarte, who called his technique Sistemang Praksiyon Brokil.

Delfin Bernarte, Sistemang Praksiyon Brokil

Filipino stick-fighting, or Arnis de Mano, was known under different names in different parts of the country. In the Tagalog region, the terms Arnis and Pananandata were used interchangeably. In the Ilocano region, the terms normally used were Didya or Kabaroan. Other terms used were Pagkalikali, Kaliradman and Kalirongan. In Pampanga

the terms used were Brokil and Sinawali. The Spanish terms Escrima and Estokada were other prevalent names of the art of stick fighting.

Pastor Bernarte, head of the Bernarte clan of Macabebe, Pampanga called his family art Bernarte Brokil. Being a family of merchants and peddlers, the Bernarte's were always on the move. In 1933, the family settled in Indang, Cavite for greener pastures. Pastor Bernarte passed on his skill and expertise in Brokil to his sons Delfin and Vitaliano.

During the Second World War, Delfin Bernarte further developed and refined his art in an arena where second best meant being dead. He improved, polished and perfected techniques his father Pastor developed and called sistemang praksiyon. Neither a strike, nor a thrust, this maneuver is very difficult to block or defend against. After the war, when the civilian authorities prohibited the carrying of the bolo, Bernarte fashioned and carried a walking stick made of bahi.

Sinawali, being the basis of Brokil, still played a major role in Sistemang Praksiyon. But using the stick, rather than the live blade means adjustment. He emphasized the kruzada maneuvers, combining them with simple circular movements. Rather than standing in front of the opponent exchanging blows, he favored moving to the sides in a circular movement and evading the opponent's strike at the same time breaking the opponent's balance for a "killing" sistemang praksiyon blow.

When he taught Louelle Lledo, his art, Delfin Bernarte alternated using all the weapons he used during the war.

Comparison of Teaching Approach

Louelle Lledo learned the Filipino martial arts, the way it was taught by the masters of old. Having learned the Japanese arts also, Louelle Lledo became aware of the similarities of the arts, but more important he noticed the difference in the teaching approach.

Seeing martial arts education first hand, at the Japan Karate-do College of Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi, Louelle Lledo decided that the best way to learn and teach martial arts is through the educational system of the academe. The Japanese arts were systematically broken down to basic techniques before the application of the techniques were taught. Watching the Grandmaster and the seniors of the Japan Goju-ryu Karate-do in training, he realized their emphasis was training the basic techniques in forms and drills. Training started with a lot of reverence. Before physical preparation, mental preparation came first. Before teaching the technique, the students were taught the underlying principles. The students spent weeks, just in assuming the different stances. Defensive techniques, such as evasion, blocks, and deflections, were taught, only after learning the stances. Offensive techniques were taught, but only after the student learned how to evade and block while moving from one stance to the other. Physically, this type of training prepared the student in effective evasion. Mentally, it instilled in the consciousness that the student was training in a self-improvement class first and in a self-defense class second. Months would have passed before the student was taught how to move, defend, and counter-attack. This training also served as a weeding out process for those who were not serious in learning the art.

Louelle Lledo was amazed by the very motive of the Karate-do College. The main goal was the development and propagation of Karate as an art, without regards to style or school of thought, despite the fact that there are four major styles of Karate.

Lledo envisioned a program of Filipino Martial Art Education with the same goal in mind. He even toyed with the idea of a true Filipino Martial Arts College, where students will study and graduate with a Degree in the Filipino Martial Arts, Major in Armed Fighting and Minor in Unarmed Fighting, or even a degree in martial arts healing.

In comparison, the Filipino martial arts are taught in an almost roundabout manner. All Arnis de Mano schools or styles have one thing in common - the way the art was being taught. Training starts by facing the opponent and blocking his strike. This training goes on until the student becomes an adept. Most instructors believe that this is the best and the only way to teach the fighting art - by actual exchange of blows from day one. A training session starts with engagement and ends with engagement. "No pain, no gain" seemed to be the principle on which learning Arnis de Mano revolved. Another "sorry" state of training the "old-fashioned" way, without the use of padded sticks or protective gear, is the injuries the trainees sustained. Aesthetics and good form were being sacrificed, for the sake of injuring the opponent to make him give up. More and more "one-technique fighters," and less and less martial artists are being produced. As less and less martial artists, are being produced, less and less good teachers are also being produced.

A Third Option

A firm believer that there is always room for improvement, Louelle Lledo decided on a third option. He approached teaching martial arts as Martial Arts Education, just as he had witnessed at the Japan Karate-do College. He professed that if there is Physical Education, why not Martial Arts Education?

The interest in this approach became more apparent when Louelle Lledo was named Martial Arts Monitoring Officer of the Philippine Sports Commission. The PSC is the government agency responsible in monitoring the practice of all amateur fighting sports, including Karate, Judo, Tae Kwon do and Arnis de Mano, to insure a respectable showing in international competitions.

To upgrade his qualification, the Philippine Sports Commission sent him to several workshops, including the University of the Philippines Physical Education College, where he finished courses in Sports Medicine, Coaching, Officiating, Sports Management and Psychology, Competition Psychology, and Program Preparation, among others. He worked with the coaching and officiating staff of the various martial arts associations.

In 1986, with the change of administration, the Philippine Sports Commission, was abolished and replaced by another agency. This gave Louelle Lledo the opportunity to work on a program of martial arts education, using his association as the launching vehicle.

Rather than emphasizing the style of fighting, he placed the emphasis on the approach to teaching. To start with, he added "Filipino Martial Arts Education" to his association's name. Thereafter he called his school as "Amara Arkanis Sistemang Praksiyon Filipino Martial Arts Education."

Due to the different vernacular language, being used in teaching Filipino martial arts, Louelle Lledo used English terms in his Martial Arts Education Program. Use of English also became less confusing to the student and easier to understand. Every so often, Lledo throws in Filipino terminology to give his students a "taste of the original flavor." He also used English in teaching Karate, insisting that Karate is no longer just a Japanese art.

The program he instituted was simple enough. The program was so flexible, in its simplicity, that it was adaptable to different learning environments. The program worked in the settings of small sports clubs, law enforcement agencies, and even large universities.



Amara Arkanis Sistemang Praksiyon Filipino martial arts education in action. Louelle Lledo, dark pants leading the recruits at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Training Academy.

Lledo did not develop "new" techniques or a "new" style. What he did was to "re-arrange" the way the techniques were taught. The first step was to plot a course of study, which will cover all the aspects of the Filipino martial arts and set the stage for upward evolution to an exciting and aggressive but safe modern fighting art. He separated the "unarmed" techniques from the "armed" techniques, but based the training on a common platform. Comparing the techniques will show that they are one and the same. The only difference is that "unarmed" techniques use the empty hands and the "armed" techniques use a weapon. Whether the weapon is a single stick, a double stick, a knife, an alternative weapon, or even the empty hands, the maneuvers are the same.

His next step was to break down the maneuvers into their most basic elements. To achieve this purpose, the maneuvers, were classified as "basic" and "progressive." "Basic" meant executing the maneuvers in forms and drills. "Progressive" meant applying the maneuvers to various different situations or as Lledo says "situational application."

Another term he uses, when referring to "basic" is "foundation." "Foundation" included such matters as stances, breathing, footwork, basic strikes, basic thrusts, one-man drills and one-man forms, such as the classical maneuvers, and the Salpukan (Impact Training) and the palaisipan (mental game) or shadow fighting.

Application of techniques, whether in two-man drills or two-man forms were called "Progressive training". The drills or forms may be in the manner of Bigayan or Palitan (semi-free style sparring) or Sabakan (free-style sparring or engagement).



The simplicity of the Amara Arkanis Sistemang Praksiyon Filipino martial arts education was adaptable to different learning environments. Louelle Lledo, assisted by Eric Golden (kneeling), gave a crash course in the Filipino stick-fighting to these non-commissioned officers of the US Army, stationed in Fort Dix, New Jersey, prior to deployment to Afghanistan.

After laying out the program, Lledo worked on the "nitty-gritty" elements. He broke down each maneuver to its most minute element and explained the techniques in detail. Starting with stance, he differentiated stance of execution from preparatory stance and explained the proper utilization of the stance in relation to the center of gravity and proper breathing. As a natural consequence, good form and aesthetics came about. With good form, proper use of body mechanics, leverage and direct application of force came naturally.

Lledo, then selected classical maneuvers that were common in almost all the styles and schools, such as the kruzada, the single and double sinawali, the figure of eight, the redonda, the abaniko, the rompidá, the sungkiti and other variations. He broke down and explained the basic patterns of linear motion into diagonal, vertical and horizontal; circular motion into clockwise and counter-clockwise; the basic strikes into forehand and backhand; the basic thrusts into overhand and underhand; and the disarming techniques into arm turn and arm twist. He designed warm-up and cooling down exercises from ordinary calisthenics into stick-fighting specific and oriented movements. He instituted one-man, two-men and even multiple-opponents drills. The emphasis of his training method was to make every technique a "simple reaction."

Louelle Lledo adapted his program also in teaching Karate. He developed a Karate training program that laid emphasis on a very stable and strong foundation, which equated to winning gold medals in competition. Dean Ruben Estudillo, the Dean of the Physical Education Department, of the Cavite State University noticed the success of this program and hired Louelle Lledo to coach the University Karate Varsity Team.

After determining that Lledo's credentials, was equivalent to a Master's Degree in Physical Education, the Cavite State University instituted Lledo's program and named Lledo Martial Arts Education Instructor in the Physical Education Department. Martial Arts Education became a major course in the Physical Education Curriculum.

Under Lledo's leadership, the martial arts team of Cavite State University won several regional and national gold medals and honors. The State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association (SCUAA) Region IV (composed of 16 state colleges

and universities in the Southern Tagalog Region) named Louelle Lledo, Head of the Martial Arts Accreditation Team and President of the SCUAA Martial Arts Organization.

In 2002, Lledo and his family migrated to the United States carrying with him the title of Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Department of Tourism's Office of Philippine Indigenous Fighting Arts. With nobody to replace him, the Cavite State University cancelled the Martial Arts Education Program.

Louelle Lledo met Eric Golden of the Golden Martial Arts Academy of New Jersey, who offered Lledo a position to teach Karate. While teaching Karate, he also threw in some stick fighting techniques.

In January 2003, Lledo was bestowed the "Grandmaster of the Year Award of the Filipino Fighting Arts", by the Action Martial Arts Magazine Hall of Fame.



Louelle Lledo holding his Third Hall of Fame Award from the Action Martial Arts Magazine as "Ambassador of Goodwill." Behind him are his two other awards, as "Grandmaster of The Filipino Martial Arts" and the "excellence Award for the Preservation of the Martial Arts."

The following year in 2004, Action Martial Arts Magazine again honored Lledo with the coveted "Excellence Award in the Preservation of the Martial Arts."

Lledo's skill and integrity spread like wildfire in the East Coast. Louelle Lledo, Dr. Christopher Viggiano, a Chiropractor by profession and founder of the Shen Wu Dao School of Martial and Healing Arts, Sifu John Lee and Sifu Andy Cappucio, Chinese Martial Arts Masters, became very close friends and allies in the martial arts. Together they formed the Sword Stick Society, an alliance of martial artists from different arts. The Society's main objective was to bring together the various schools of martial arts in the spirit of camaraderie and unity.

Under the auspices of the Sword Stick Society, a martial arts gathering was held and for the first time different schools of Filipino Fighting Arts from New Jersey, New York and even Maryland was held in New Jersey. The first gathering was followed by more gatherings, with the last held in New York, under the auspices of Rich and Rico Acosta from the Kali, Kuntao, Kruzada, attended by members of Ultimate Eskrima, Balintawak, Doce Pares, Pekiti Tersia, Amara Arkanis, and other independent martial artists. In one of the gatherings, Leo Gaje and Dan Inosanto were also present.



Louelle Lledo, Dan Inosanto, Leo Gaje and Apollo Ladra, in one of the gatherings.

For Louelle Lledo, it was just the beginning. In 2006 the American Society of Internal Arts (Tai Chi) invited Lledo to give a workshop about Amara Arkanis. He has since then been an annual guest lecturer.

In September 2008, for the first time, Lledo bridged the gap between the Filipino Fighting Arts and Chinese Fighting Arts. The Traditional Wing Chun Kung-fu Association of the East Coast headed by Keith Mazza, with the blessings of Wing Chun Grandmaster William Cheung, invited Lledo to do a very successful joint workshop.

The success of this workshop and Lledo's expertise in the martial arts got the attention of the Wong Fei Hung Ga Kung-fu International Association and in their 13th Annual Championships invited Lledo to officiate.

On January 24, 2009, for the third time Action Martial Arts Magazine Hall of Fame honored Louelle Lledo with another award as "Ambassador of Goodwill of the Martial Arts," for bridging the gap between the Filipino and Chinese Fighting Arts.



Founders and Directors of Sword Stick Society: From Left: Sifu John Lee, Sifu Andy Cappucio, Sifu Dr. Christopher Viggiano and Mataw-guro Louelle Lledo.



Mataw-guro Louelle Lledo (in red) and Sifu Keith Mazza (in white) with some students of Traditional Wing Chun Kung-fu Association, who attended the Amara Arkanis Sistemang Praksiyon Filipino Martial Arts Education Workshop.

In 2009, Louelle Lledo published his book entitled "Amara Arkanis Fighting Art of the Mandirigma," and several Training Modules. It was also in 2009 when Steven Dowd, publisher of Filipino Martial Arts Digest, incorporated Louelle Lledo's Educational Depot as a regular column in the FMAdigest.

On October 23-25, this year, Louelle Lledo was a featured Instructor at the World Filipino Martial Arts Workshop and Tournament held in Las Vegas, Nevada, under the auspices of the World Filipino Martial Arts Association (WFMAA), headed by Myrlino Hufama. Lledo was able to present his unique approach of teaching Filipino martial arts education to the different masters of the art.

Learn more...



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This following tries to explain what it is like to be a student of Filipino Martial Arts Education with Mataw Guro Lou Lledo. After the article you can read some of the basic concepts taught by Mataw Guro Lledo and the common themes picked up by different students are clear along with individual differences. Just as in the rest of the world, simplicity and complexity coexist. One of the scientific lessons learned this century is that repeating the same relatively function over and over again actually generates what are apparently enormously complex results (chaos theory or the study of iterative functions).

This Course of Study, tested and Proven in the State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association Region IV (Southern Tagalog), is applicable to all styles and schools of the Filipino Fighting Arts. Even in the abbreviated form, this Course of Study will offer the beginner a step-by-step and methodical way of learning. Likewise, it will offer the advance practitioners a better understanding of the underlying principles of their own art.

This program of Filipino Fighting Arts Education was designed by Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo, Jr, who holds a Masters Degree in Physical Education, a licensed Medical Technologist, a Captain in the Philippine Air Force Reserves, a Master in both Filipino and Japanese martial arts and the successor to the Bernarte Brokil Sistemang Praksiyon.

Amara Arkanis: A System of Systems
“Filipino Fighting Art of Education”
By: Mantas Phil Weathers

In all their emphasis on technology, modern military forces have rarely lost sight of at least some traditional martial arts. In some surprising ways, the martial arts maintain a focus on the modern military.

Over the last decade or two, the military has attempted to merge many formerly separate enterprises into a “system of systems. This is conceived of as a force multiplier much as the Germans used coordinated infantry, armor and air strikes to wage blitzkrieg. Older separate and uncoordinated systems are often called “stovepipes.”



www.amara-arkanis.com

Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo has done the same thing for the Filipino martial arts. There are thousands of islands in the Philippines, and nearly everyone has its stovepipe martial art. Around the world in the past, martial arts and culture would vary a great deal over less than a hundred miles. After all, who might be the enemy if not people within a few days travel? It is hard to seize on quick opportunities from great distances. Secrets and differences in approach in fighting could be a matter of life or death. Stovepipe martial arts systems were a strategic requirement.

For those not acquainted with Filipino sticks, they are “700 mm of Filipino tactical diplomacy.” That is about 28 inches long and ½ to 1 inch in diameter. A long stick (5+ feet) serves to simulate any pole arm. Medium (28 inches) and short sticks together are a sword and knife or espada y daga. When enough time has been spent on the basics of stick fighting, transferring its techniques to other situations comes fairly quickly.

Despite the historical proliferation of martial arts, we all have similar bodies which work much the same way. Some themes keep recurring over and over in the basics of most martial arts. Guro Louelle’s approach starts with the idea that all of the Filipino stickfighting arts can be characterized by where they fit into four Filipino classical systems:

- **Kruzada** - This is anatomically the most straightforward and one of the more physically powerful styles. It concentrates on cross-body diagonal strikes or slashes going either up into the opponent’s legs or down across the body.
- **Sinawali** - Sinawali means weaving. Basic techniques involve changing the direction from which discrete strikes are made. Sinawali is most effectively introduced as a double stick (or “doble baston”). Strikes can come from side, top, bottom, or on any diagonal. Sinawali techniques can be and are used with single stick (solo baston) fighting, but they are easiest to understand when introduced with double sticks.
- **Redonda** - Redonda harnesses the power of circular strikes. Where sinawali employs discrete strikes, redondo strikes are a continuous slashing circular flow Redondo is often used to administer a fight-ending blow.
- **Abaniko** - Abaniko is semi-circular or fan shaped striking. Twisting of the wrist and forearm produce these blows. They are used in mid to close range often to set the opponent up for a killing blow. These strikes give up a bit of power for speed and strategic advantage. Abaniko can be like a stick-fighting analogue of some close range hand-to-hand styles.

Guro Lledo trains his students in the basics of all four of these classical systems. With knowledge of the classical system basics and training in sabakan (engagement), Amara Arkanis students can recognize the style of nearly any opponent and counter it. This program is the first portion of training in Guro Lledo’s personal Amara Arkanis style. This is the style that is a system of Filipino martial arts systems.

The basic stick techniques are extraordinarily transferable to empty hand combat and a wide range of weapons. Stick techniques in hand to hand combat look surprisingly like Wing Chun to the author who is an instructor in that style.

Guro Lledo estimates that many students can complete their study of the classic systems in as little as two years.

Instruction in gunting and a set of specific Amara Arkanis techniques follow this two-year period. Finally all the techniques of the classical systems, gunting and Amara Arkanis are interchanged and blended rigorously.

The blending process helps students in several ways. It breaks the structure or context in which the techniques were first learned. The student learns to do only what a fight situation demands and not to react with only a training floor response. Also, when a student can change the styles used in a fight, he has a very good chance in winning in short order. Even if there is no

immediate victory, the opponent has to cope with an unfamiliar and unexpected approach. Controlling the context of a fight is an advantage like controlling the range of the fight.

Context control is one advantage of a system of systems. If the opponent cannot see outside of his stovepipe, he is dangerously handicapped. Calling Amara Arkanis a system of systems is accurate in many ways. It also is a sign of respect to the classical systems. They are among its necessary components. Nonetheless, it would not be desirable to call Amara Arkanis “a stovepipe of stovepipes.”

Guro Lledo likes to call his approach Filipino Martial Arts Education.” Rather than learning by rote and learning where ability is measured by mimicry, Guro Lot wants to see his students able to explain:

- Why a technique is effective
- Why one approach works better than another in a given situation
- Why many of the traditions in the martial arts serve a genuine purpose.

After these explanations, the student will be expected to demonstrate the described techniques in action. Better form comes from this approach. Better form leads to more speed. More speed leads to more power. Better understanding leads to victory if it can be expressed in action.

Most classes end with a dedicated question and answer period. Sometimes questions are asked and answered during drills. A question that is sincere and appropriate is a sign of respect to teacher and class. There are traditional ways for dealing with inappropriate questions.

Another “educational” technique is to identify the most appropriate time to introduce new concepts. It may be quite desirable for students to learn the original terms for techniques in their language of origin. There absolutely is a most effective time to learn these terms, which is after the technique is learned. Then the foreign term is only a label. Adding an extra layer of language learning on top of physical training is counter-productive even though it may be unavoidable in some cases.

Students can pick up the foreign terms for techniques much faster and with less trouble when they have a clearly understood target for them. The mind needs labels it can understand while it is learning. Labels can be changed easily after the learning is complete. Many gifted teachers with no English did not have this luxury and cannot be criticized. We can only be grateful for their example. Nonetheless, there is no reason to continue to un-invent the wheel generations later.

Using the familiar language is only one aspect of expressing the martial arts in terms of practical daily life. People have been fighting each other for as long as there have been people. Consider the story of Cain and Abel. Even if there are mysteries in martial arts, demanding practice, much less combat, is not the time to consider them. Heaven and earth are not different realms, just high and low when fighting. A Chinese ba gua symbol is used for a physical frame of reference like the directions North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southeast, West, and Northwest on a compass. An 8-sided STOP sign can serve the same function if the principle is understood. Simpler is faster, and faster is stronger. Unnecessary complexity is no gift to the student.

Stovepipe systems are passed on by rote and ancient example, which is often misunderstood and can be lost. Topics are often limited to what is “our way.” The tradition of secrecy, however important it may have been in the past, leaves some traditional systems in the position of handicapping themselves. An “educational” approach, no matter what the cultural context does these things:

- Develops the individual without ignoring discipline
- Is open to all relevant topics
- Encourages articulate understanding of the martial arts in as many forms as possible
- Continually applies and recombines basic techniques in a wide range of uses
- Is lots of fun

The course of study in Amara Arkanis goes on for quite a while. When students have worked to master what has already been described, they are also expected to teach. Guro Lledo is fond of noting that a teacher can fight if he produces fighters, but a fighter cannot necessarily produce other fighters, much less teachers. One learns immensely from teaching. The opportunity is not to be missed when it comes.

Still, there is continuing instruction in empty hand and a variety of weapons. There are flexible weapons such as ropes, chains, whips, and sectional staves and nunchako. Soft weapons include fabrics in many sizes. Slings, rocks, bows, blowguns, and firearms are some projectile weapons. Anything at hand can be turned into a weapon of opportunity such as pens, beverage bottles, and so on. Stick techniques can be applied to all of these. Even if the martial arts were of no interest at all, the sheer versatility of Filipino stick techniques is amazing.

Using a relatively small set of techniques in so many applications means that those techniques become very practiced and quick. Guro Lledo often tells his students "There are no advanced techniques, only refinements of the basics." As mentioned before, extensive practice in different contexts produces a quick, highly drilled response that is not bound to a limited context or structure, the variety of circumstances in training makes otherwise repetitive drills interesting. In the last analysis, martial arts education is like the ultimate academic skills of reading and writing. The same set of very powerful basic techniques can be used to become proficient in subject after subject and applied to language after language.

Basics

Lesson one: Breathing

Proper breathing in any martial art, or any physical activity for that matter, is of utmost importance. However, most teachers of the Filipino fighting arts have relegated breathing in the background. There are even some who have ignored teaching proper breathing altogether. In Amara Arkanis, proper breathing is the first priority.

Breathing may be simply defined as a process made up of inhalation (taking air in) and exhalation (expelling air out).

In Amara Arkanis, the process may sound more complex. Instead of just taking the air in, inhalation is drawing into your body the universal energy, forging that energy in your personal anvil of training and expelling it out as a destructive or constructive force, depending on the need and intention. This exhalation may be vocalized, called *bunyaw* in Filipino. At this very instant all the energy of the body must be concentrated in the center of gravity transforming the whole body into a one solid unit by tucking the buttocks, pressing the shoulders, tightening the abdominal, back, sides, chest and leg muscles.

Training in proper breathing:

- Stand in natural parallel toe stance, feet spread hip width with hands hanging on the side
- Turn palms up and slowly inhale through the nose to chest level
- Hold breath for 5 seconds
- Turn palms down and slowly exhale through the mouth as you bring your hands down and bend your knees as you bring your center of gravity down
- When you have exhaled all the air in your body force one last exhalation
- Hold your breath for 5 seconds

- Straighten your knees as you turn your palms up to the level of your chest inhaling slowly through the nose
- Repeat the process
- As you progress increase holding your breath up to 10 seconds

Lesson Two: Stance and Center of Gravity

There are three components of a stance. It must be comfortable so one can assume the posture without undue fatigue. It must be stable so proper traction is achieved for a fast and powerful technique. Finally, it must be flexible so mobility is never hampered.

Understanding of body mechanics and knowing what muscles are involved and how and when they play into action must all be considered. Placement and maneuvering of the center of gravity completes the equation. There are two main stances – the natural knees straight stance and the knees bent one foot in-front fighting stance.



Natural Stance



Right Fighting Stance



Left Fighting Stance

Characteristics of all stances:

- Center of gravity falls within the stance
- Feet are spread hip width

Characteristics of fighting stances:

- Both knees bent slightly and tensed outwards
- Weight evenly distributed on both feet
- Feet are spread hip width
- Toes of trailing foot is in line with heel of leading foot
- Leading foot points directly forward
- Trailing foot points about 15 degrees to the side

Exercise: From natural stance:

- Move right foot forward to assume right fighting stance
- Move left foot forward to assume left fighting stance
- Move left foot backward to assume right fighting stance
- Move right foot backward to assume left fighting stance
- Move left foot forward, turn 90 degrees to the right to assume left fighting stance
- Move right foot forward, turn 90 degrees to the left to assume right fighting stance
- Move right foot to the right, turn 90 degrees to the right to assume right fighting stance

- Move left foot to the left, turn 90 degrees to the left to assume left fighting stance

Grip and Strikes

There are about 90 dialects in the Philippines, give or take a few. It is safe to assume that there are as many styles or schools of thought of the same fighting art with different vernacular titles. These arts were given a collective, generic name by the Spaniards. They were simply called Armas de Mano, later Filipinized to Arnis de Mano.

Before the development of Arnis de Mano, when real broadswords were used, the knife was held tightly on the handle. The butt of the handle extended about a couple of inches to secure the blade to the handle. The butt was not intended for any tactical purpose. In present day Arnis de Mano, the stick is held about a couple of inches from the end of the stick, first as a carryover of the old practice and second to be used for disarming techniques, an innovation of the 20th century.

Several elderly masters of Arnis de Mano, however have a disdain for disarming techniques, claiming that if your stick can be disarmed you are not good enough to be called an arnisador. The ancient disarming technique was to cut off the arm or to hit the hand so the opponent will automatically drop his weapon.

Whether you hold the stick at the very end or two inches from the end, the stick must be held tightly and securely with the thumb over the forefinger.

In Arnis de Mano, there are two types of blow, the strike (*hablig*) and the thrust (*ulos*). In the English terminology these terms may be used interchangeably. In Filipino terminology, however, these terms convey two different actions. A strike (*hablig*) is normally delivered in an angular cutting, slashing or snapping motion (like a whiplash). A thrust (*ulos*) is normally delivered in a straight forward stabbing, piercing motion.

In this section we will only deal with the primary blow of Arnis de Mano, that is strike or *hablig*. Thrust or *ulos* will be dealt with in another appropriate section.

With the different named styles and countless techniques of Arnis de Mano, there are only two classifications of strikes. They are the *hablig na palabas* (outward strike) and the *hablig na papasok* (inward strike). To better understand this concept, one has to think in tennis terms. In tennis there are the forehand (inward strike) and the backhand (outward strike). In more technical terms, forehand strike is also called medial strike and the backhand strike is called lateral strike.

Like in tennis, the strikes are oriented from the perspective of the person delivering the strike which is determined by the grip on the stick in relation to the direction of the strike.

The body is hypothetically divided vertically in the middle. This hypothetical division is called the vertical midline or the center line of the body. Any strike directed towards the vertical midline is called *hablig na papasok* (inward strike, forehand strike or medial strike). Any strike directed away from the vertical midline is called *hablig na palabas* (outward strike, backhand strike or lateral strike). Strikes, whether offensive or defensive, fall under the category of forehand strike or backhand strike. In simple terms when you strike with your right hand in the direction of your left side it is a forehand strike. When you strike with your right hand in the direction of your right side it is a backhand strike. This is also true with the left hand. When you strike with your left hand in the direction of your right side it is a forehand strike. When you strike with your left hand in the direction of your left side it is a backhand strike.

No matter what maneuver one executes, whether it is the up and down vertical strikes, the side to side horizontal strikes or the circular or roundabout strikes, the strike is either a forehand or a backhand strike.

A forehand strike may be delivered with the leading hand or the trailing hand. Likewise, the backhand strike may be delivered with the leading hand or the trailing hand. Both strikes may be delivered from a regular stance (leading hand is the same side as the leading foot) or the reverse stance (leading hand is the opposite side of the leading foot).

In Amara Arkanis, all basic exercises are performed with two sticks. This is to instill in the student the need and importance of developing both the strong and the weak hand from the very onset of training. If only one stick is used, the student will favor one hand over the other and lose the fundamental nature of being able to fight with either hand, or just the “weaker” hand in case the “strong” hand is incapacitated. This is a condition that is called a “one-sided fighter” which may be a fatal flaw.

The most important factors in any strike, whether forehand or backhand, are form and technique. There was a time when a Filipino warrior depends solely on sheer brute strength. They did not have any style or form.

With the evolution of the art, body mechanics, leverage and utilization of the center of gravity have elevated the strikes to a higher and more powerful level. Proper style or form eliminates “wasted movements” increasing speed and energy.

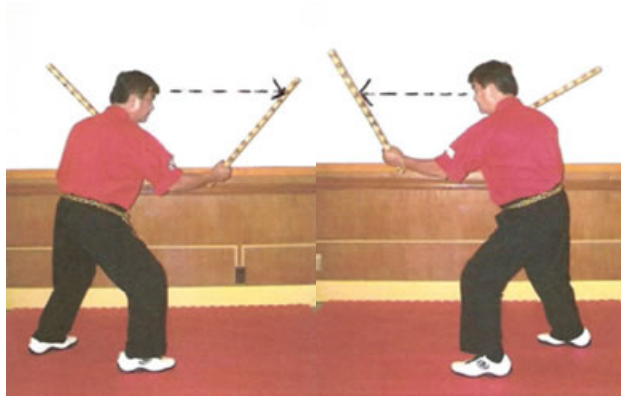
There are three levels of target of both forehand and backhand strikes; they are: upper, middle and lower. In the upper level, the most common strike is a strike to the head, the neck, or the shoulder in a downward motion. A deceptive strike in this level is a strike to the head or the neck in an upward motion. In the middle level, the most common is strike to the arms, sides or the hipbone in a sideward cutting motion. In the lower level, the most common is a strike to the knee in a downward motion. A deceptive strike in this level is an upward strike to the groin.



Forehand strike directed towards vertical centerline from regular stance.
Right foot forward - Left foot forward



Forehand strike directed towards vertical centerline from reverse stance.
Right foot forward - Left foot forward



Backhand strike directed outwards the vertical centerline from regular stance.
Right foot forward - Left foot forward



Backhand strike directed outwards the vertical centerline from reverse stance.
Right foot forward - Left foot forward

Manners of Striking

There are three manners in delivering a strike: with the flick of the wrist (like European foil fencing); the elbow bend (like tennis); and with the twist of the hips with follow through (like a slugger hitting a baseball). These motions should not be confused with range of fighting (short, medium and long range). All Amara Arkanis strikes utilize these three movements in every strike in conjunction with the stance, breathing and body tension.

Exercises and Drills:

- From natural stance move left foot forward to the left oblique to assume left fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (left) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (right) hand
- Move left foot back to natural stance
- From natural stance move right foot forward to the right oblique to assume right fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (right) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (left) hand
- Move right foot back to natural stance
- From natural stance move right foot to the right and pivot on left foot to face 90 degrees to the left to assume left fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (left) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (right) hand
- Move right foot back to natural stance, pivoting on left foot to face 90 degrees to the right (original position)
- From natural stance move left foot to the left and pivot on right foot to face 90 degrees to the right to assume right fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (right) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (left) hand
- Move left foot to natural stance pivoting on right foot to face 90 degrees to the left (original position)
- From natural stance move right foot back to the right oblique to assume left fighting stance then deliver a forehand strike with the leading (left) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (right) hand
- Move right foot forward to assume natural stance

- From natural stance move left foot back to the left oblique to assume right fighting stance then deliver forehand strike with the leading (right) hand
- Follow with a forehand strike with the reverse (left) hand
- Move left foot forward to assume natural stance

NOTE: First set of exercises will be upper strikes
 Second set of exercises will be middle strikes
 Third set of exercises will be lower strikes

Progression of Training:

- Move the foot to assume the stance, then deliver the first strike bringing center of gravity down and exhaling through the mouth then go back to original position.
- Move the foot to assume the stance as you deliver the first strike bringing center of gravity down, hold your breath, then deliver the second strike exhaling through the mouth then go back to original position.
- Move the foot to assume the stance as you deliver the strikes in quick succession at the same time bringing center of gravity down and exhaling through the mouth then go back to original position.

Move the foot to assume the stance as you deliver the strikes in quick succession with bun-yaw at the same time bringing the center of gravity down. The moving to the stance, the strikes, bringing down the center of gravity and exhalation (bun-yaw) must all end at the same time. Then go back to original position.

Basic Thrust (ULOS)

In Filipino Fighting Arts, a thrust (*ulos*) is different from a strike (*hablig*). While *hablig* is an angular, cutting, slicing, slashing or hacking maneuver, *ulos* is basically a forward stabbing, piercing, penetrating tactic. *Ulos* (sometimes also known as *saksak* or *tusok*) is delivered using the tip of the knife, the end of the stick or the butt of the stick. When a knife is used alone, it is sometimes also used for slashing. But whether the knife is used for thrusting (stabbing) or slashing, the main pattern of motion is the multiplication sign or the **X** pattern.

Originally used exclusively in close range knife fighting, the *ulos* became part of *Arnis de Mano's espada y daga* (sword and dagger) system. In *doble baston* (double sticks) system, the tip and the butt are used as a knife.

There are two directions of *ulos*, overhand (*pabulusok*) and underhand (*paahon*). Overhand is executed normally in a downward motion with the hand raised above the elbow or the arm raised over the shoulder like a baseball pitcher throwing a fast ball. Underhand is executed normally in an upward motion with the hand below the level of the elbow or the arm below the level of the shoulder as a softball pitch.

Any part of the body that is hit with a knife, the end or the butt of the stick will cause injury, however, since the Filipino fighting art's principle is one-strike-one-kill, there are specific targets to achieve this goal.

The two main targets of an overhand knife thrust are the carotid arteries on the sides of the neck. Cutting or severing the carotid artery causes severe bleeding, depleting blood to the brain and other parts of the body that will have fatal result.

The two main targets of an underhand knife thrust are the heart and the liver. Injury to the heart disrupts the efficient pumping action of the organ. When the heart is damaged, blood supply is disrupted which normally have a fatal result. Damage to the liver may cause both external and internal bleeding which likewise may be fatal.

Injury caused by the end or the butt of the stick may not cause bleeding but may cause severe trauma that is just as deadly and fatal as an injury caused by a knife.

The underhand thrust to the heart was the thrust of choice when live blades were used. With the advent of the use of sticks, several variations were adopted. Thrust to the eyes, and thrusts to the other parts of the body were added to the repertoire of stick-fighting blows.

A thrust, particularly the underhand thrust is a very deceptive maneuver. In tournaments, the thrust is rarely used or allowed despite its effectiveness and speed of delivery. In defensive situations, the thrust stands out as a decisive blow that is quick to employ and not easy to block or defend against. The downside of the thrust is it is practical for close in and middle range of fighting but impractical for long range fighting unless using a sword or a long stick.



Underhand thrust with stick to the heart and the eye.

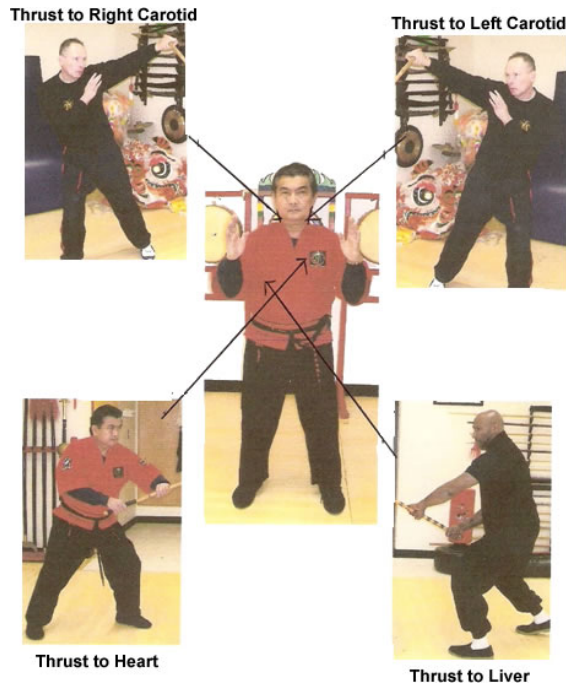


Double underhand thrust to the heart.



Combination overhand and underhand thrust to the heart.

The basic pattern of motion of the thrust is the multiplication sign or the **X** pattern.



Study all the Techniques and retain those that will Best Work for you.

Mindset

The dictionary defines mindset as attitude. It is also defined as state or frame of mind. There are those who call it determination or motivation. Others use more colorful terms as “never-say-die,” even “do-or-die” and other descriptive terms. For our purpose, we will simply call it mindset.

More than good technique, more than proper conditioning, mindset is the most important factor in any encounter. A fighter less skilled and less conditioned but possessing the proper mindset can beat an opponent who does not have the appropriate mindset.

There are individuals born with a positive mindset and are ready and willing to face any type of confrontation head on. These people have self-confidence, self-reliance and the determination to be steadfast.

Unfortunately there are those born with a negative mindset and hide their weakness behind the cloak of pacifism. They mistake timidity and fear for peace and even godliness. They mistake docile submission as cooperative endeavor, not realizing or perhaps refusing to admit that it means crushed spirits and unhealthy attitudes.

Opposition to the use of force under any circumstances may be a noble ideal. However, in the real world where “dog eats dog,” it may be an empty talk that may cost an individual his life or the life of a loved one.

Skill in Amara Arkanis or any fighting art in itself may not alter an individual’s mindset because mindset comes from within the individual. However, Amara Arkanis will build self-confidence. This self-confidence will help the individual turn fear into an unwavering and resolute spirit, the main ingredients of a positive mindset.

Self-confidence and self-reliance create a positive mindset. With this frame of mind, an individual is ready and willing to stand straight and face the world head up high against adversity. Positive mindset in itself is a firm strategy.

A positive mindset must not be confused with haphazard aggressive action. A positive mindset is the product of proper training. A well-trained mind cannot be overwhelmed by fear or defeat. A well-trained mind will enable an individual to execute techniques and maneuvers without consciously thinking about it. In this state of mind, an individual will have no doubt or hesitation. With a positive mindset, the inner self (mind) and the outer self (body) work together in harmony.

It is sometimes possible to diffuse hostile intent when you project an aura of self-confidence. Sometimes though you may have to take a more positive and proactive step when an antagonistic attitude portends an impending confrontation.

In this type of situation, you must always take advantage of your opponent's initial move. Aside from the motivation of avoiding being struck, you must have the willingness to strike back, strike hard and effectively and completely neutralize the threat. Some even claim that the "taste of blood" only makes them bolder and stronger. Proper training will give you the ability to gauge your opponent's intentions. Proper training will enable you to form strategies against an opponent's attack. When your opponent takes the initiative to strike first, proper training will enable you to avoid being struck by striking your opponent faster and harder. Do not allow your opponent to recover from your strike. Do not take it for granted that once you hit your opponent you must stop your attack. Do not dwell on your first strike or it will lose its effectiveness. Keep on striking never giving your opponent a chance to gain his composure. If your opponent is as skillful as you are, shift your strategy. Use broken timing never giving your opponent the opportunity to figure out your own rhythm. Always keep your opponent off-balance. Always strive to end the confrontation with one strike, if possible the first strike. After all the Filipino martial arts is based on the principle of one-strike-one-kill. All these put together is what positive mindset is all about.

Mindset makes the difference when the requirement is above and beyond the common experience.

"Limitations are only mental blocks and hurdles that can and must be overcome."

Student Comments on FMA Education

Student: Phil Weathers

The more complicated things get, the more important it is to keep things as simple as possible. Meeting this goal is not at all easy, but it pays off in a big way. Martial arts education starts with a student's untrained capacities and tries to expand them as much as possible through simple steps to devastatingly effective thinking and techniques. Along the way, many details are discarded or postponed for later training. Only correct performance is crucial at the beginning.

From the beginning, the student has strengths and limitations. The student has to be taught to work with or around his strengths and limits. Otherwise the art will never be simple for him. If it is never simple, it may not help him when he needs it most. Instead of adapting the student to the style, martial arts education adapts one or more styles to the student. This is going with the flow of the student for the best training results. The student still has a lot of work to do, but much less of it will be wasted.

Simply staying in the same place is of little value. Progressive addition of small steps moves the student along further than he may realize at any given moment. The complicated part of being simple is maintaining simplicity and relevance through an entire training program.

Knowledge of anatomy and physiology is another important source of simplicity. When choosing among techniques, even from different disciplines, those that conflict with science and sports medicine need to be discarded. Movements need to be performed consistently with natural operations of the body to have power, speed, and safety for the practitioner.

In the past, many people did not live long enough to suffer the results of bad exercises. Even if they did, the connection between pain in old age and martial arts in youth might go unrecognized. Guro Lledo and many martial artists of his generation have a number of problems due to improper practice in an earlier day. Now with many students pursuing martial arts for their health, a teacher could be taken to court (at least in the USA) for requiring practices contrary to the nature of the body.

The nature of the body imposes many common patterns on combat techniques. Going from style to style, it may be easy to get lost in the welter of details and apparently different techniques. Learning patterns common to defending oneself or attacking another is an invaluable approach to reacting quickly in a complex chaotic street situation. There is no loss in trading the dictates of styles for the dictates of science. In fact, there is not much conflict between the two. Each can illuminate the other.

I have worked as a public school teacher and a software engineer. I never felt too limited by my job description. Working with Mataw Guro Lledo, I feel even less limited by many new topics and situations. I had three separate, serious health problems the first few years of studying Amara Atkanis. This was in addition to a fairly normal bad knee. Guro Lledo's knowledge allowed him to recognize my limits before I did. The limits were simply allowed for when required and ignored as much as possible. End of story.

There were periods of several months where just turning up and keeping going was all I could do. As I got stronger, the training progressed rapidly, but in small simple steps. My classmates were generous with their time practicing things they already knew with me.

Oddly enough, seeing changes in the skill level of myself and other students after so much "simple" instruction makes me more patient. The lessons I have learned?

- Work with what you have and what is real
- Keep it simple
- Focus on basic patterns common to many arts
- Keep progressing in simple steps
- Share freely
- Progress and recovery happen through no accident

Student: Christian Herrera

Kamusta Po sa lahat!

Arnisador. We all have experiences in our specific group and relationships with other comrades, and a special bond with our Teacher. I would like to share one thing that may set us apart. As I progress in my training with Amara Arkanis: Systemang Praksiyon, I have realized the importance of FMA Education and that... as much as I get better, I know Nothing!

I met Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo 3 yrs ago, and from the very first meeting he has blown my mind in his vast knowledge and experience in martial arts. His past accomplishments as a Philippine National Team Champion, International Karate Referee, Military and Law Enforcement careers has lead him to becoming a Professor of Martial Arts for a University. What does that mean? It means he has studied various martial arts and has applied it to real life situations and then learned to break it down as a College Course! This is what sets him apart from other teachers. He makes it so simple but very effective with no nonsense. Amazing how simple instruction leads to progression and the refinement of basics leads to advancement.

Mataw Guro Lledo always emphasizes that he wants us to be teachers and not just fighters, because not all fighters can teach. By teaching Filipino martial arts as an Education you learn it as a whole and not just one System. He focuses on Education to better understand the underlying principles similar to all styles and systems - regardless of what country the art comes from. When you fully comprehend something and want to share it, then teaching comes naturally. It makes perfect common sense! You don't want to be just a Black Belt in one System, but a Black Belt in Filipino martial arts. Since Filipino martial arts, is a System of Systems - you become a Black Belt in all fighting forms!

Another added value to education is it brings all the different styles together and removes the political differences. This will help Filipino martial arts grow and evolve. Amara Arkanis has sponsored 6 FMA Gatherings in NJ and NY, bringing together several different major styles who wish to share and learn from each other. This assists in evolving the Filipino martial arts. I have seen Mataw Guro Lledo make changes in the middle of class and implement something new he realized or a student suggested. He is constantly learning and evolving his art! It's unfortunate that so many schools/instructors out there are stagnant and unable to expand their skills. Many are close minded and think they already know everything just from taking several seminars. This is very sad and I feel bad for their students.

Therefore at this point in time of my training, what I have learned from Mataw Guro is the importance of a good education. It definitely sets you apart in your knowledge, understanding, demeanor, and movement. You can always spot a strong group and teacher by observing their students, nothing worse than seeing a 15 year student of Arnis with poor mechanics and unable to apply techniques.

Mataw Guro Lledo has truly changed the way I view and learn any martial art. His son Punong Guro/Renshi Mark Lledo was also very influential in my development and continues to inspire me. I will truly miss him (RIP). I have a long way to go in this journey and I look forward to learning as much as I can. I'm very fortunate to have a great teacher lead the way!

Salamat Po,
Christian L. Herrera
Amara Arkanis: Systemang Praksiyon
FMA Education - New Jersey

Student: Ron Parente

It is with great honor that I take this opportunity to share my perspective as a student of Mataw Guro Luelle Lledo in the art of Amara Arkanis.

It was 1 year ago that I first submitted a brief letter to your wonderful publication as a new student to Amara. I was already an experienced martial artist at that time, but new to the Filipino martial arts. It has been an eventful year.

I had known Mataw Guro for several years prior to training with him in his art. When I first witnessed him in action, I thought him capable of sheer magic, the sort of inexplicable feats that I thought I could never be capable of. Despite this view, I trained, albeit not as regularly as I should have.

However, as time passed, my perspective changed. As I listened and observed and tried my best to emulate, I came to understand that Mataw Guro was not performing a magic act; he was embodying the art he developed, a skill set that could slowly, carefully, deliberately be learned. Yes, Mataw Guro is capable of mystifying me with the beauty and power of his technique, but his greatest genius lies in his ability to convey that beauty and power layer by layer to his students. Amazingly, this occurs in a fun, safe, almost effortless fashion. There is never any anxiety, animosity or arrogance in the school. The positive mindset that permeates the air is a direct extension of our teacher.

And so, I came to learn that Mataw Guro Lledo is not only a warrior capable of extreme violence but even more, truly, a master teacher. There are many warriors in the world, capable of spilling blood, whether they do so or not. A chosen few of those have crafted and honed their skills into an art of their own, superior in its entirety to the parts from which it came. Precious few of those are able then to retrace their steps and devise a curriculum such that others may follow and ultimately achieve the same state of being.

We, the students of Mataw Guro, are taught the very basic foundations of the classical Filipino systems, over and over. These fundamentals are slowly honed over time and refined. There are no advanced techniques, no disjointed topics. All are refinements of the basic, each leading clearly to the next, like bricks on a solid foundation, ultimately building a house, secure in its footing. As such, one never gets lost. Yes, the next brick in the wall, so to speak, might seem confusing or feel awkward at first, but Mataw Guro is always there to show you how all techniques are interrelated.

I believe it was Mataw Guro's intention to pass down his art to his son, Punong Guro Mark Lledo, to ultimately step aside. Tragically, this was not to be. Punong Guro Mark Lledo passed away one evening, nearly a year ago, in his sleep. This sudden loss, understandably, left Mataw Guro devastated. It also left his art without, an heir in the United States, for none of his current students are yet at the level of a teacher.

I thought at first Mataw Guro would close the school and return to the Philippines in his despair; leave Amara in the US to wither on the vine. And no one would have blamed him. He would have had every right. But he did not. Instead, he seemed to rededicate himself to teaching the art in earnest. Again, he is the warrior.

As I previously alluded, I initially trained rather haphazardly in Amara, not for lack of desire, but rather due to my hectic work schedule as a chiropractor. However, after gaining a deeper understanding of the art and enormous respect for my teacher, I have since truly dedicated myself to Mataw Guro Luelle Lledo and Amara Arkanis. I now routinely attend class and regularly train at home. I feel a sense of simultaneous humility and pride in what I consider our mission... to embody Amara Arkanis and pass the genius of Mataw Guro Luelle Lledo onto the generations to come. After all, an art only lives within the movements of its practitioners. Wonderful pieces of music are just ink blots on a page until played by the musician. I feel a sense of responsibility to ultimately become a teacher for my teacher.

One of Mataw Guro's favorite slogans is "It's not the style but the person that makes all the difference". This is certainly true of Mataw Guro Lou.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ron Parente

Student: Mark Manning

I was recently asked to write a few words about Amara Arkanis and about Mataw Guro Lou Lledo ('Guro Lou'). I have, as of the time that I wrote this letter, been training with Guro Lledo for almost a year, and I feel that I have learned a tremendous amount about the Filipino martial arts, as well as learning a few things about myself.

I clearly recall my first conversation with Guro Lledo. I was impressed by his depth of knowledge and by his resume of training partners, teachers, experience, and accomplishments. I was also impressed by how generously and patiently he answered the many questions that I had about his system. Because I studied a system of Filipino martial arts in the past, I was asking questions to find what Amara Arkanis had in common with the other art that I had studied. He was not dismissive in his answers, and he humbly encouraged me to try his art. I have been a student of Amara Arkanis ever since.

Something that has stood out consistently since my first conversation (and my first lesson) with Guro Lledo is that his personal approach to teaching the art to the student is more of an educational approach. Instead of teaching a personal system of fighting, the student is led by concepts and principles which guide the art, and which the art is built upon. He contended that by approaching Filipino martial arts in this manner, that one will learn not only the technical aspects of his or her own system, but will learn the underlying principles which transcend individual techniques and systems, and lead to a greater understanding of other systems and the common principles that guide them. Within this approach, he encourages his students to not only become fighters, but also to become teachers and pass on this educational approach for the continued progress and evolution of the art of Amara Arkanis, and Filipino martial arts in general as well as the progress of the individual.

I am also an educator (a high school physics teacher), and having the teaching experience that I do, I respect and admire Guro Lledo's ideas, determination, passion, and openness in his sharing of information. Never once in the time that I have been a student of his did I feel that he was hesitant to teach or share a concept, principle, or technique. Although he encourages patience and diligence on the part of the student, as well as slow and deliberate practice and conscious effort to continue to hone and refine the basics, one question can open the door to fascinating insight on intermediate and advanced tactics, strategies and principles of the art. He has inspired me as a teacher to closely examine my own teaching methods and lesson structure.

His methodology is a reminder of the value of patience and practice. I have, at times, shared his words of wisdom with my own students. He is an inspiration not only because of his ability to instill information, but also because of his patience, his humility, and his passion not only for the art, but also for the students that he teaches. I feel very fortunate that I am training with Mataw Guro Lou, and look forward to my continued journey in the art of Amara Arkanis.

Salamat Po,
Mark Manning

Are You A Teacher or Instructor?

In the English language, the terms teacher or instructor are used interchangeably and are synonymous with each other. In Filipino, these terms are both translated as Guro.

However, in Filipino, the term teacher is normally used in an educational institution, and carries a deeper meaning. A teacher builds character and attitude. A teacher invokes virtues that make a good individual great.

In martial arts, the term usually used is instructor. An instructor drills students in techniques and maneuvers. An instructor's goal is to make a better practitioner of a particular system or art.

In Amara Arkanis, the term used is teacher. An Amara Arkanis Teacher, teaches an individual not only to be a good fighter, but more important to be a better person; a fighter, who not only can execute the techniques skillfully, but also understand how the technique can be skillfully executed; a fighter who can execute a maneuver with minimum effort but with maximum result. A teacher must be a technician of skill and a designer of growth and development.

A teacher must cultivate the student's mind, not only to be excellent in the performance of the techniques, but also to be an exceptional strategist. The teacher must always impart to the student the desire to always strive for perfection by diligent and constant training and endeavor to build a solid foundation, both mentally and physically. A teacher must instill in the student the importance of accurate performance rather than just a demonstration of power. A Teacher must teach individuality of behavior.

Learning is much easier than teaching the fighting arts. To be a teacher one must have learned the art in a level that must be greater than ordinary. Having learned the art, one must be able to put the techniques into practice and believe in what he teaches. Finally, one must be able to realize and work on an individual's characteristics and learning habits.

A teacher must understand and master the principles and the techniques himself and then be able to impart this knowledge and mastery to the student. The teacher must always remember that teaching is also a process of learning.

Patience is a virtue that all teachers must possess and practice. Not all students have the same learning ability. There are students that are fast learners and naturally gifted. There are students that are slow and awkward. A teacher must always base the techniques on correct principles, no matter how uncoordinated the student may be. The teacher must adapt the art to the physical limitation of the student. The teacher who follows this attitude will himself make great progress in the techniques he is teaching. A teacher must constantly strive for correct progress.

A teacher must not try to stand out as compared to his students by showing off his strength or skill. Strength and skill are different from being a good teacher. It is very desirable to be technically skillful and be a good teacher at the same time, but sometimes a teacher may not be skillful at the techniques himself but can successfully teach others to be skillful. Sometimes a practitioner may be very skillful, but cannot successfully teach others, hence is not qualified to be a teacher.

A good teacher must not teach students to imitate the techniques alone, but must make the student understand the techniques with each bodily movement which conforms to the correct principles. By striving and devising a system to teach a slow learner, the

teacher develops discipline and leadership in the basic principles and finer points of his art.

A good teacher must have the genius to bring out the students' talents and abilities. He does not need to either justify or promote his actions. He must be respected and not feared by his students.

A good teacher must always motivate his students to strive for superior performance and be able to unleash all of the student's physiological reserves of energy at the right instance.

A student's spirit is a mirror image of the teacher. If the teacher has a humble spirit, the student likewise will have a humble spirit. If the teacher is conceited, the student will also be conceited. A mediocre teacher produces a mediocre student, a good teacher produces good students and an excellent teacher produces an excellent student. Conversely, an excellent student brings out the excellence in a teacher.

Professor Jose N. Sidlacan **Unknown Pioneer of the Filipino Martial Arts**

By: Emmanuel E S Querubin

The 21st century marked the proliferation of new and young masters of the Filipino martial arts. This is evidence that the Filipino martial arts, have come to its own. The popularity of Arnis de Mano is evident in the written media, the digital media, the television, and the movie industry. Whenever there is action, Arnis de Mano is in the forefront.

In the process, some pioneers of the art are fading away, without getting their due recognition. The lucky ones are now household names in almost every country of the world.

One of the pioneers who did not make it "big" in the world of the Filipino martial arts is Professor Jose N. Sidlacan. When the term "cross-training" was not yet even coined, Jose N. Sidlacan was already a proponent of what he calls "combination training." When he uses the term, he meant training in the different arts "to form your own style of fighting."

At 80 years of age, Jose N. Sidlacan, has not shown any sign of slowing down. He currently holds an 8th Degree Black Belt in Sikaran, and a 4th Degree Black Belt in Kodokan Judo. But his love of the martial arts started when he received his Arnis de Mano



Jose N. Sidlacan (right) with Sikaran Grandmaster Meliton Geronimo. Sidlacan was one time Kapatirang Sikaran ng Pilipinas Director for Educational Institutions.

Instructor's Certificate from Master Viray of Pampanga Brokil. He also had the opportunity to train with the Canete clan (Dionisio, Ciriaco and Filemon) of Doce Pares of Cebu.

Sidlacan started his martial arts teaching career in the late 1950's at the YMCA of Manila Students' Judo Club. He taught and coach the most prolific Judo player of the 1960's and 1970's, Geronimo "Ronnie" Dyogi.



Jose N. Sidlacan, holds an Instructor's Certificate from the Viray School of Brokil. He also trained with the Canete Clan of Doce Pares of Cebu.

In 1960, he was hired by the Philippine College of Criminology, as Defensive and Combative Instructor. Not satisfied with just a Master's Degree in Physical Education, he later graduated with a Master's Degree in Criminology. He became a full-time Professor in Criminology and wrote several books in Corrections and Penology, which now are required textbook in several criminology colleges.

He retired from the Philippine College of Criminology after 44 years of teaching Criminalistics and Combative Arts. When I asked him how many people learned the martial arts from him, he did a quick math and said: "I taught for 44 years. Every year there are two new classes. Each class has about 40 new students. I probably taught about 3,500 students, not including the police trainees at the Police Academy."



At 80, Joe Sidlacan has not shown any sign of slowing down. He is here performing a technique from Balangkas ng Rumagit.



Learn more about Sikaran
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In 1978 to 1991 he was concurrently a Probation Officer and at the same time was also an instructor at the Philippine National Police Academy in Tagaytay City.

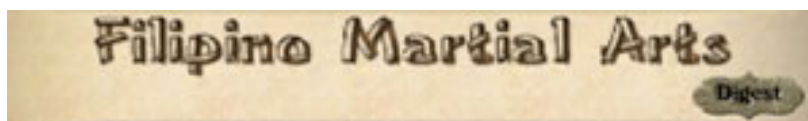
Retirement did not go well with Joe so he went back to teaching Criminal Justice System, Forensics, Corrections and Penology at the Philippine National Police Academy in Tagaytay City.

A belief that the FMAdigest promotes:

1. The following are not only key concepts in the philosophy underlying the practice of martial arts, but serves as basic ground rules that student and instructor alike should follow.
2. He who gives respect, gains it. Willing acceptance of the prerogatives of higher rank and support of a lower ranking individual's human dignity and self-esteem is necessary. The practitioner must be aware that many other legitimate martial art styles are not deserving of ridicule. One must search for the points of commonality, and value differences, to cooperatively coexist.
3. Martial arts seeks' to develop an individual's self-confidence. Practitioners must realize that given a wide variance in individual capacity, each person has a unique potential to fulfill. Belief in one's ability to exceed his achievements can facilitate the process
4. No one is perfect. Accepting one's own imperfections eliminates a roadblock to progress.
5. Every practitioner must strive for excellence in everything they do. Being the best is not the objective. Rather, doing the best one can is the goal. This is the only way an individual can discover their full potential and therefore their limits.
6. Be patient. Do not laugh at the mistakes of others. Training teaches that errors should result in growth experience, not a humiliating one.
7. Enthusiasm benefits everyone. Helping others, encouraging participation and serious practice promotes the art and develops the person.
8. Cleanliness, other than its social significance, also says something about an individual's self-respect.
9. Determination often represents the difference between success and failure. Each practitioner should strive to develop their endurance, and to build a capacity for calmness in the face of adversity.



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