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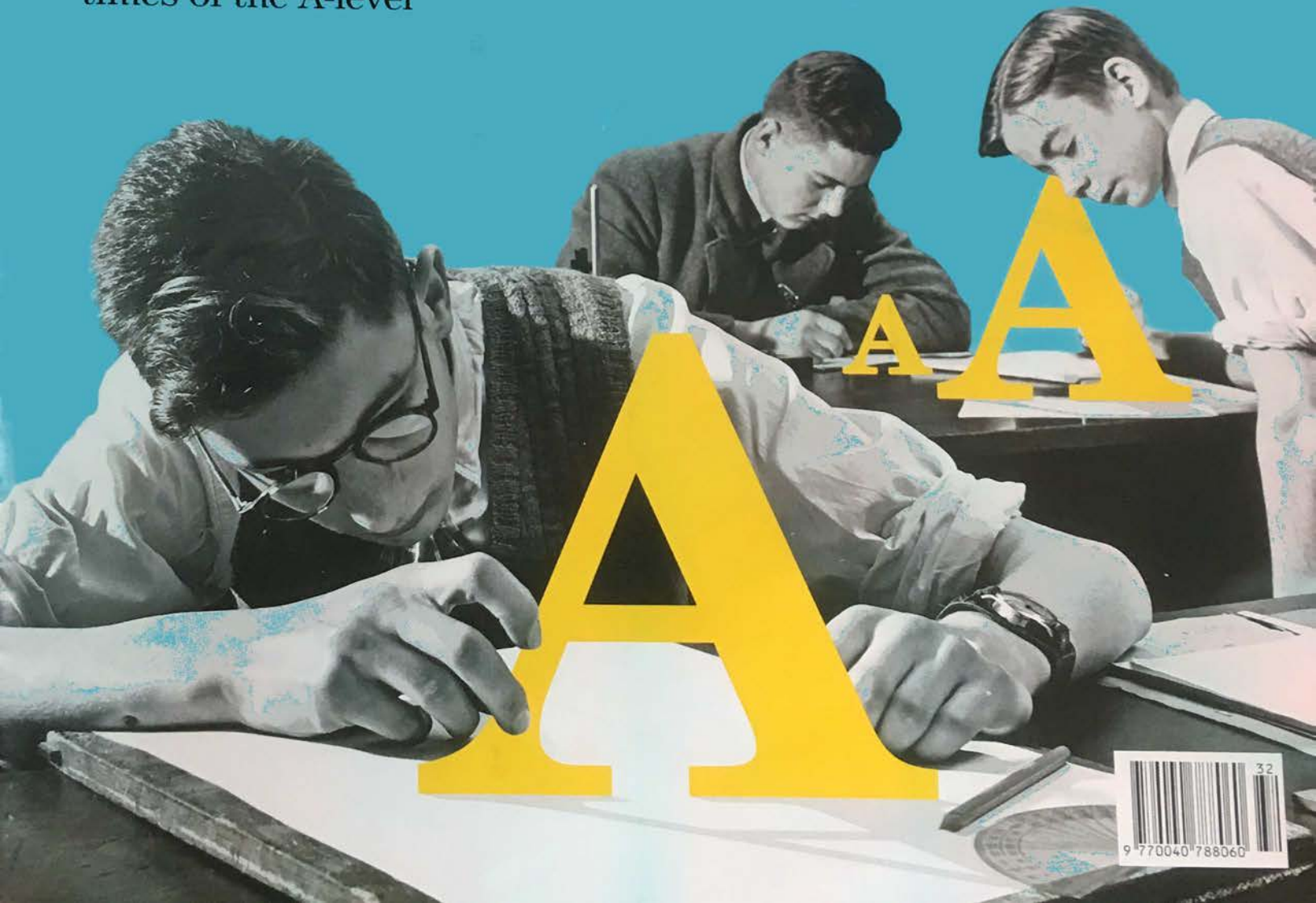
Why martial arts lessons should be girls' first line of defence

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BEHAVIOUR

The best offence is a good self-defence class

Young women in particular are at risk of assault. One teacher argues for martial arts lessons to be rolled out across schools

ALI BAYLEY

Brazilian ju-jitsu is perfect for women because size and strength aren't important. I soon recognised its potential for schools

MUCH BEHAVIOUR management in schools revolves around prevention and sanctions, and it is easy to see why: this is an effective strategy for weeding out negative behaviour. And yet, successful as it is, it will never completely prevent our young people from experiencing abusive behaviour inside or outside school. Why, then, don't we spend more time teaching them

how to react to such situations when they occur?

I want to change that, for young women in particular. They are too often at risk of assault. The Office for National Statistics reported that there were 536,000 victims of sexual assault and 2 million victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales in 2011-12. Clearly we need to help young people, especially girls,

What else?

Statistical Bulletin: focus on violent crime and sexual offences, 2011-12, Office for National Statistics.
bit.ly/GovtStats2011

Get advice on setting up a club from the British Ju-Jitsu Association Governing Body.
www.bjjagb.com

LEARNING FROM THE MASTER:

Royce Gracie, whose family developed Brazilian ju-jitsu, teaches a class to students



to protect themselves. That's why I have started teaching self-defence to female pupils at my school.

It always baffles me that self-defence lessons have never been a priority for schools. Some put on after-school clubs teaching martial arts, but these are often sport-based and can instil a false sense of security in young people. Attendees are also predominantly male and not much is done to encourage young women to join in.

Safe getaways

I first got interested in self-defence 12 years ago when I started studying Brazilian ju-jitsu. I quickly realised that this martial art is perfect for women because size and strength aren't important. Soon after, I recognised its potential for schools.

I approached my headteacher and explained my reasons for wanting to teach ju-jitsu. Thankfully, she agreed to put it on the timetable for Year 11 girls within the PE curriculum. So now students can take self-defence alongside the usual fitness, football and water sports options. I realise I am fortunate to be in such a forward-thinking school.

I teach the Women Empowered programme that was devised by the Gracie family, who are the pioneers of Brazilian ju-jitsu. It covers how to neutralise the most common attacks, from having your hair pulled to being pushed to the ground by an attacker with a weapon.

Unlike with many martial arts, the focus of this programme is about getting away safely, not fighting back. There are offensive techniques to use in the worst-case scenario, but for the most part it is about how to escape.

We also teach girls how to employ strategies aimed at manipulating an attacker's ego. One of these is a false surrender, where you say things like: "I'll do anything you want, you've totally controlled me", so that the attacker relaxes enough to provide an opportunity to get away.

We teach prevention through the programme, too. We tell the girls to be aware of their surroundings and not to walk along the road wearing headphones. A lot of attacks take place on people who have no idea what's coming because they cannot hear what is going on around them.

Of course, training and reacting to a real situation are two different things. So another skill we try to instil is the ability to remain comfortable in uncomfortable situations. Regardless of your ability level, if you panic your training will go out the window. If you can't breathe, you can't fight and you can't escape. You've got to learn how to stay calm and ju-jitsu can help with this.

The lessons are very physical. When I first encouraged the girls to try to attack me, they were anxious – after all, PE doesn't normally involve a teacher asking you to grab their hair. But the students are smart and they understand that sometimes they need to be put outside their comfort zone.

Eager to learn

The impact of the classes has been incredible. I teach on Friday afternoons and we have a packed class of 25 girls every week. They are all really keen to learn and have been brilliant at following instructions because they can see the value of what is being taught.

But one school is not enough. All schools need to focus on self-defence. And they need to do so not by teaching a few moves as part of a PE class but through a well-planned, organised and rigorous programme.

We need to take self-defence for female students seriously and I have shown that it is possible to do so within the confines of the school timetable. If every girl could be taught ju-jitsu from the age of 13, then their ability to protect themselves would greatly increase. What more incentive do you need? 9

Ali Bayley is assistant principal at Rye College in East Sussex. She was speaking to Rob Griffin



To download the resources in Professional, type out the full bit.ly link into the address bar of your internet browser

WHAT'S HOT?

From food technology projects and rebuilding data lost to an elevenses accident to Desmond Tutu's fight against apartheid, this week's pick of resources from TES Connect takes the biscuit

1 EAL of approval

What is it? Vocabulary-building activities for speakers of English as an additional language

Who is it for? 5-12s

Why is it hot? These colourful worksheets are ideal for children who have just arrived in an English-speaking country.

bit.ly/EALofApproval

2 Making the biscuit

What is it? An extended food technology project in which children design and make biscuits

Who is it for? 7-11s

Why is it hot? It includes market research, encouraging children to ask their peers what they look for in baked goods.

bit.ly/MakingTheBiscuit

3 Apartheid activist

What is it? A presentation for an RE or citizenship lesson, introducing former archbishop Desmond Tutu and discussing his influence during South Africa's era of apartheid

Who is it for? 7-11s

Why is it hot? It pulls together some of the clergyman's most famous and inspiring quotes.

bit.ly/TutuResource

4 Throw in the vowels

What is it? Activities for practising sounds including "ai", "ou" and "ue"

Who is it for? 5-7s

Why is it hot? These simple worksheets include attractive cartoons to inject a sense of fun.

bit.ly/ThrowInTheVowels

5 Part and parcel

What is it? A maths investigation in which children look at the weight and size of parcels

Who is it for? 5-7s

Why is it hot? It ties into a project on *Wind in the Willows* but can be adapted easily.

bit.ly/PartAndParcel

6 Coffee crisis

What is it? A group maths challenge on two-way tables

Who is it for? 11-16s

Why is it hot? Coffee has been spilled over a school computer containing important information – students must help their teacher to reconstruct what has been lost.

bit.ly/CoffeeCrisis1

7 Darwin days

What is it? A biology lesson on evolution

Who is it for? 14-16s

Why is it hot? It explains both Lamarckian and Darwinian theories of evolutionary change.

bit.ly/DoingDarwin

8 Perfect pets

What is it? Everything you need for an English lesson on persuasive writing

Who is it for? 12-14s

Why is it hot? Students are assigned a mystery animal – such as a pig, a shark or a snake – and have to convince their peers that it would make the perfect pet.

bit.ly/PerfectPetTask

9 Sacred textiles

What is it? Textiles project booklets for design and technology students

Who is it for? 11-14s

Why is it hot? Exciting challenges include making a hat for a fancy dress shop, a cushion cover for a twin school in Africa and an educational toy for very young children.

bit.ly/SacredTextiles

10 Core knowledge

What is it? A game to introduce the topic of plate tectonics to geography students

Who is it for? 11-14s

Why is it hot? A lot of information is conveyed in this simple game, in which students must get from the Earth's crust to its core.

bit.ly/CoreKnowledge

