

ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK

Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Overview and Objectives	4
1.2 Role and Importance of Assistant Instructors	4
2. The Path to Assistant Instructor	5
2.1 Requirements and Qualifications	5
2.2 Transition from Student to Teacher	5
3. The Kolb Learning Cycle in Practice	6
3.1 From Theory to Practice	6
3.2 Effective Ways to Observe and Learn	7
4. Teaching and Communication Skills	8
4.1 Effective Communication - Verbal and Non-Verbal Techniques	8
4.2 Understanding Different Learning Styles	9
5. Class Management	10
5.1 Warm-Ups, Drills, Cool-Downs, and Reflection	10
5.2 Maintaining a Safe Training Environment	10
6. Building Trust and Responsibility	11
6.1 Professionalism and Student Relationships	11
6.2 Handling Difficult Situations	12
7. Preparing for Primary Instructor Role	13
7.1 Preparing for the Next Level	13

7.2 Growing into a Leadership Role.....	13
Assistant Instructor's Manual – Multiple Choice Test	15
Jiu-Jitsu Peer Observation Form.....	21
Jiu-Jitsu Observation Hours Recording Sheet Example.....	24

1. Introduction

This handbook has been carefully designed to serve as a comprehensive guide and resource for individuals stepping into or aspiring to the role of an Assistant Jiu-Jitsu Instructor. It aims to provide a clear understanding of the expectations, responsibilities, and skills necessary to excel in this crucial position within the Jiu-Jitsu community.

Key Goals:

- To outline the foundational knowledge and technical skills required.
- To offer guidance on teaching methodologies and class management.
- To emphasize the ethical responsibilities and the importance of personal development in the role.
- Achieve 80 hours of Assistant Instruction Hours (This means being closely evaluated as a student), evaluate a peer (your current Instructor), and be evaluated on with the Peer feedback form, then pass the Assistant Instructor Exam with to move on to Primary Instructor Certification where you will begin Instructing 160 hours as an Assistant Instructor.

1.1 Overview and Objectives

This manual is structured to guide you through the various aspects of being an Assistant Jiu-Jitsu Instructor, including understanding the depth of Jiu-Jitsu as a martial art, developing effective teaching skills, and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment. The objectives are to:

- Enhance your understanding of Jiu-Jitsu's history, philosophy, and techniques.
- Equip you with effective teaching strategies tailored for diverse learning styles.
- Prepare you for the responsibilities and ethical considerations of being an instructor and mentor.

1.2 Role and Importance of Assistant Instructors

Assistant Instructors play a vital role in the fabric of a Jiu-Jitsu dojo. They are not only intermediaries between students and the primary instructor but also key figures in shaping the learning experience.

Supporting the Primary Instructor:

- As an Assistant Instructor, you will support the Primary Instructor in delivering lessons, providing individual attention to students, and ensuring the smooth running of classes.
- You will act as a role model, demonstrating techniques and embodying the principles of Jiu-Jitsu.

Facilitating a Positive Learning Environment:

- Your interaction with students can significantly impact their learning experience. It's essential to create an atmosphere of respect, encouragement, and safety.
- You will be responsible for understanding and addressing the varying needs and challenges of students, contributing to their growth and development in the art.

This manual is designed to be both a starting point and a continuous reference for your journey as an Assistant Jiu-Jitsu Instructor. It will guide you through the essential steps and considerations, helping you develop into a competent, respected, and effective instructor.

2. The Path to Assistant Instructor

2.1 Requirements and Qualifications

To become an Assistant Instructor in Jiu-Jitsu, certain foundational skills and knowledge are essential.

These requirements are designed to ensure that potential instructors are well-prepared to teach effectively and safely. Number one all aspiring instructors must undergo a 50-state background check to work with minors in a trusted position.

1. **Technical Expertise:** Proficiency in Jiu-Jitsu techniques and a solid understanding of its fundamental principles. Typically, this means achieving a certain belt rank (usually at least a blue belt) that reflects both application of skill and experience. You will observe 80 hours as an assistant instructor before moving to start primary instructor certification.
2. **Teaching Skills:** Basic knowledge of instructional techniques and the ability to communicate effectively with a diverse range of students.
3. **Dojo Etiquette and Culture:** A thorough understanding of the customs, traditions, and etiquette within the dojo environment set by the Primary Instructor and Academy Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
4. **First Aid and Safety:** Examples would be certification in basic first aid and CPR to ensure student safety during training sessions.
5. **Personal Development:** Ongoing commitment to personal skill improvement and staying abreast of advancements and trends in Jiu-Jitsu.

2.2 Transition from Student to Teacher

Moving from the role of a student to that of a teacher in Jiu-Jitsu is a significant and rewarding journey, marked by both challenges and opportunities for personal growth.

- **Mentorship:** Working under the guidance of a senior instructor or mentor to gain insights into the finer aspects of teaching and dojo management.
- **Developing a Teaching Style:** Reflecting on personal learning experiences to shape a unique and effective teaching approach.
- **Practical Teaching Experience:** Starting with assisting in classes, handling smaller groups, or leading specific parts of the class such as warm-ups or basic drills. This hands-on experience is crucial for developing classroom management and instructional skills.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** Actively seeking and incorporating feedback from the primary instructor and students to refine teaching methods and approach.
- **Self-Reflection:** Regular self-assessment to identify strengths and areas needing improvement in teaching and Jiu-Jitsu skills.

The transition to teaching is a profound step in your martial arts journey. It represents not just a deepening of your technical knowledge, but also a commitment to passing on the legacy of Jiu-Jitsu and positively influencing the next generation of practitioners. As an Assistant Instructor, you are a crucial bridge between students and the art, helping to mold their skills, understanding, and passion for Jiu-Jitsu.

3. The Kolb Learning Cycle in Practice

3.1 From Theory to Practice

The Kolb Learning Cycle provides a framework for understanding and applying experiential learning in Jiu-Jitsu. This model emphasizes learning through experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation.

1. **Concrete Experience:** Engage students in hands-on experiences. This could be practicing a new technique, participating in sparring sessions, or engaging in role-play scenarios. As an assistant instructor, facilitate these experiences, ensuring they align with the lesson's objectives.
2. **Reflective Observation:** Encourage students to reflect on their experiences. Guide them to observe their own performances, feelings, and reactions. Ask questions that prompt reflection, like "What challenges did you encounter while executing this technique?"
3. **Abstract Conceptualization:** Help students in developing an understanding of what they have experienced. This involves connecting the practical aspects to theoretical knowledge, such as the principles of leverage in Jiu-Jitsu. Lead discussions that allow students to verbalize and conceptualize their experiences by utilizing open ended and Socratic questioning.
4. **Active Experimentation:** Urge students to apply what they've learned in new or varied situations. This could involve trying a technique in a different context or with a different partner. Encourage experimentation and adjustments based on their reflections and conceptual understanding in small group settings.

3.2 Effective Ways to Observe and Learn

As an assistant instructor, your ability to observe and reflect is crucial in guiding students through their learning journey.

- **Observation Skills:** Develop keen observation skills to effectively assess students' techniques, strengths, and areas for improvement. Pay attention to details like body mechanics, timing, and the application of force.
- **Reflective Feedback:** Provide students with constructive feedback based on your observations. Use specific examples and focus on both positives and areas needing improvement.

- **Modeling Reflection:** Demonstrate reflective practices by sharing your own experiences. For example, discuss how you overcame a particular challenge or improved a technique through reflection and experimentation.
- **Encouraging Peer Observation:** Foster an environment where students feel comfortable observing and providing feedback to each other. This peer-to-peer interaction can be a powerful tool for collective learning. Use the example peer observation form for students and instructors.
- **Journaling and Note-Taking:** Encourage students to keep training journals. Writing about their experiences, reflections, and learnings can significantly enhance their understanding and retention of techniques. Not all students will enjoy this, reading and writing can be frustrating for some students – so do not force the issue and cause embarrassment.

By effectively applying the Kolb Learning Cycle and emphasizing observation and reflection, you play a pivotal role in transforming theoretical knowledge into practical skill and deep understanding for your students. This approach not only fosters skill development but also cultivates critical thinking and self-awareness in Jiu-Jitsu practitioners.

4. Teaching and Communication Skills

4.1 Effective Communication - Verbal and Non-Verbal Techniques

As an Assistant Instructor, your ability to communicate effectively is crucial. This involves using both verbal and non-verbal methods to convey information clearly and engagingly.

- **Clarity and Conciseness:** Use clear and simple language. Be concise but thorough in explanations, avoiding overly technical jargon unless necessary.
- **Tone and Pace:** Be mindful of your tone and the pace of your speech. Adjust according to the complexity of the topic and the familiarity of students with the content.

- **Body Language:** Utilize positive and open body language. Demonstrate techniques with precision, highlighting key movements and positions.
- **Eye Contact:** Maintain eye contact with students while speaking. This not only improves engagement but also helps in gauging their understanding and reactions.
- **Demonstration Skills:** Effective demonstration is key. Break down complex movements into smaller, understandable parts.
- **Questioning:** Encourage questions from students. Ask open-ended questions to stimulate thinking and engagement.

4.2 Understanding Different Learning Styles

Recognizing and adapting to various learning styles can greatly enhance the effectiveness of your instruction.

- **Visual Learners:** Benefit from demonstrations and visual aids. Use diagrams, charts, or videos to supplement physical demonstrations.
- **Auditory Learners:** Respond well to verbal instructions and discussions. Explain techniques in detail and encourage dialogue.
- **Kinesthetic Learners:** Prefer hands-on experience. Allow them ample time to practice techniques and learn by doing.
- **Reading/Writing Learners:** Provide written instructions, handouts, or recommend readings. Encourage them to take notes during lessons.

Incorporating a mix of these teaching methods can cater to a wider range of students, ensuring that everyone has the best opportunity to learn and grow in their Jiu-Jitsu journey. As an Assistant Instructor, your ability to effectively communicate and adapt your teaching methods to various learning styles is paramount in fostering an inclusive and productive learning environment.

5. Class Management

5.1 Warm-Ups, Drills, Cool-Downs, and Reflection

As an Assistant Instructor, playing a pivotal role in class management is essential. This involves aiding in structuring the class to maximize efficiency and learning.

- **Warm-Ups:** Assist in conducting warm-up exercises that prepare students physically and mentally. These should be relevant to the day's techniques and include a mix of cardiovascular exercises, stretching, and movement drills specific to Jiu-Jitsu like shrimp, breakfalls, forward and backward rolls.
- **Drills:** Help in organizing and overseeing drilling sessions. Ensure that students understand the purpose of each drill and perform them with correct technique. Provide individual feedback and adjust as needed.
- **Cool-Downs:** Lead cool-down exercises that help in muscle recovery and reduce the risk of injury. Incorporate stretching and relaxing activities to bring closure to the session and allot time for questions and answers with further demonstration of technique.

5.2 Maintaining a Safe Training Environment

One of your primary responsibilities as an Assistant Instructor is to maintain a safe training environment.

- **Safety Briefings:** Begin classes with safety briefings, reminding students of proper sparring etiquette and safety practices and to always train to train another day.
- **Monitoring Sparring Sessions:** Keep a vigilant eye during sparring or rolling sessions. Ensure that students are practicing safely, adhering to rules, and using appropriate techniques.
- **Injury Awareness:** Be aware of common Jiu-Jitsu injuries and their signs. Monitor students for any signs of discomfort or injury and take immediate action if necessary.

- **Safe Practice Advocacy:** Encourage safe practices, like tapping out, and discourage reckless behavior. Ensure students understand the importance of respecting their own limits and those of their training partners.
- **First Aid:** Be prepared to administer basic first aid in case of injuries and know the protocol for more serious incidents, including when to seek professional medical assistance.
- **Equipment and Environment:** Regularly check the training environment and equipment (like mats and training gear) for safety hazards.

Effective class management involves not only structuring the class for optimal learning but also ensuring the safety and well-being of all students. As an Assistant Instructor, your role in this aspect is invaluable, contributing significantly to a positive and safe learning experience for every student in the dojo.

6. Building Trust and Responsibility

6.1 Professionalism and Student Relationships

An Assistant Instructor must navigate the delicate balance of being approachable yet maintaining a professional demeanor.

- **Boundaries:** Clearly understand and maintain the boundaries between instructors and students. Foster respectful relationships based on trust and the mutual goal of learning Jiu-Jitsu.
- **Confidentiality:** Respect the privacy of students. Confidential matters shared by students should be handled with discretion and professionalism.
- **Fair Treatment:** Treat all students equitably. Avoid showing favoritism, as it can undermine trust and create discord within the class.

- **Role Modeling:** Be a role model both on and off the mat. Your behavior sets a standard for students, and acting ethically and respectfully encourages them to do the same.

6.2 Handling Difficult Situations

Conflicts, whether between students or involving an instructor, are inevitable. Handling these effectively is crucial in maintaining a positive training environment.

- **Active Listening:** In conflict situations, listen actively to all parties involved. Understanding each perspective is key to finding a fair resolution.
- **Neutral Stance:** Maintain neutrality and avoid taking sides, even if you have a closer relationship with one of the parties involved.
- **Problem-Solving Approach:** Focus on resolving the issue rather than attributing blame. Encourage constructive dialogue and help those involved to find a mutually acceptable solution.
- **De-escalation Techniques:** Learn and apply de-escalation techniques. Calming the situation can prevent conflicts from escalating and leading to more serious issues.
- **Policy Enforcement:** Be knowledgeable about the dojo's policies regarding conduct and conflict resolution. Ensure these policies are fairly and consistently enforced.
- **Seeking Assistance:** In cases where conflicts are beyond your experience or ability to resolve, don't hesitate to seek assistance from the primary instructor or other senior figures.

Building trust and handling responsibilities ethically are fundamental to the role of an Assistant Instructor. Your ability to manage relationships professionally and resolve conflicts effectively contributes significantly to creating a harmonious and productive learning environment in the dojo. Your actions and decisions should always align with the highest standards of ethical conduct, reflecting the values and principles of Jiu-Jitsu.

7. Preparing for Primary Instructor Role

7.1 Preparing for the Next Level

Transitioning to a Primary Instructor role requires a deeper understanding of teaching methodologies and a refined approach to instruction.

- **Enhanced Pedagogical Skills:** Develop a comprehensive understanding of advanced teaching techniques, including differentiated instruction and adaptive learning strategies and chaining different techniques together, preparing you to instruct higher level students.
- **Curriculum Development:** Gain insights into how to develop a structured and progressive curriculum that caters to different skill levels and learning objectives.
- **Assessment and Feedback:** Learn advanced methods for assessing student progress and providing constructive feedback that encourages growth and improvement.
- **Innovative Teaching Methods:** Stay abreast of innovative teaching methods and technologies that can enhance the learning experience, such as incorporating multimedia tools or interactive learning platforms.

7.2 Growing into a Leadership Role

The role of a Primary Instructor is not just about teaching Jiu-Jitsu; it's about being a leader and mentor to students.

- **Leadership Skills:** Cultivate key leadership qualities such as confidence, empathy, effective communication, and decision-making.
- **Mentorship Abilities:** Develop the ability to mentor students not only in Jiu-Jitsu skills but also in their personal development and growth within the art. Students will look to you for answers to everything while serving in this role.
- **Building a Positive Dojo Culture:** Learn how to foster a positive and inclusive dojo culture that encourages respect, hard work, and a sense of community.

- **Conflict Management:** Enhance your skills in managing conflicts, not just between students but also in the broader dojo environment.
- **Professional Development:** Pursue ongoing professional development opportunities to stay updated with the latest trends and developments in Jiu-Jitsu and martial arts education.
- **Networking and Community Involvement:** Engage with the wider Jiu-Jitsu and martial arts community to build a network of peers and mentors who can provide support and guidance.

Preparing for the role of a Primary Instructor involves a commitment to personal and professional growth. As you advance in your teaching career, focus on enhancing your instructional skills, developing strong leadership and mentorship qualities, and contributing positively to the dojo and the wider Jiu-Jitsu community. This journey requires dedication, continuous learning, and a passion for not just practicing Jiu-Jitsu, but also for sharing its rich legacy with others.

Assistant Instructor's Manual – Multiple Choice Test

1. **What is a key principle of Jiu-Jitsu?**
 - a) Aggression
 - b) Speed
 - c) Leverage
 - d) Strength

2. **The term 'Jiu-Jitsu' in Japanese translates to:**
 - a) Gentle Art
 - b) Hard Technique
 - c) Martial Way
 - d) Swift Movement

3. **Which of the following is essential for an Assistant Jiu-Jitsu Instructor?**
 - a) Black belt level
 - b) First Aid Certification
 - c) 10 years of teaching experience
 - d) Karate background

4. **In the Kolb Learning Cycle, what immediately follows Concrete Experience?**
 - a) Active Experimentation
 - b) Abstract Conceptualization
 - c) Reflective Observation
 - d) Theoretical Discussion

5. **Which type of learners benefit most from demonstrations and visual aids?**
 - a) Auditory Learners
 - b) Kinesthetic Learners
 - c) Visual Learners

- d) Read/Write Learners
6. **During class, what is the primary role of an Assistant Instructor?**
- a) Leading the entire class
 - b) Observing and taking notes
 - c) Assisting with drills and providing feedback
 - d) Only demonstrating techniques
7. **Effective communication as an instructor includes:**
- a) Using complex terminology
 - b) Clear and concise instructions
 - c) Speaking in a monotone voice
 - d) Only demonstrating without explaining
8. **What is important to consider when planning a Jiu-Jitsu class?**
- a) Only advanced techniques
 - b) Students' skill levels
 - c) Length of the class
 - d) Both b and c
9. **A respectful training environment in Jiu-Jitsu is fostered by:**
- a) Strict discipline only
 - b) Open communication and mutual respect
 - c) Ignoring mistakes
 - d) Focusing on competition
10. **What should an Assistant Instructor do in case of a student injury?**
- a) Ignore it
 - b) Provide immediate first aid and seek further help if necessary

- c) Ask another student to help
- d) Continue the class and check later

11. Conflict resolution skills for an Assistant Instructor include:

- a) Taking sides
- b) Active listening
- c) Ignoring the conflict
- d) Encouraging arguments

12. Which is NOT a characteristic of an effective Jiu-Jitsu Assistant Instructor?

- a) Empathy
- b) Favoritism
- c) Patience
- d) Knowledgeable

13. How should an Assistant Instructor approach the teaching of complex techniques?

- a) Quickly, to cover more content
- b) Breaking them down into smaller parts
- c) Only verbally explaining
- d) By demonstration only

14. The primary focus of Jiu-Jitsu's philosophy is:

- a) Aggression and strength
- b) Speed and flexibility
- c) Technique and efficiency
- d) Fitness only

15. Which method is effective for kinesthetic learners in Jiu-Jitsu?

- a) Extensive reading
- b) Hands-on practice
- c) Listening to lectures

d) Watching videos only

16. As an Assistant Instructor, managing a safe training environment involves:

a) Overlooking minor safety hazards

b) Regularly checking equipment

c) Allowing all types of sparring

d) Not intervening in sparring sessions

17. The term Jiu-Jitsu is primarily associated with which of the following?

a) Stand-up fighting

b) Ground fighting

c) Weapon-based combat

d) Solo forms

18. A key aspect of the Assistant Instructor role is:

a) Always leading the class

b) Providing occasional assistance

c) Supporting the primary instructor

d) Focusing only on advanced students

19. What is essential in the transition from student to Assistant Instructor?

a) Competing internationally

b) Developing a personal teaching style

c) Learning another martial art

d) Only focusing on personal training

20. Which of these is an important quality for an Assistant Instructor when giving feedback?

a) Criticism

- b) Specificity
- c) Vagueness
- d) Generalization

21. **What does active listening in conflict resolution involve?**

- a) Interrupting to give advice
- b) Hearing without responding
- c) Understanding all perspectives
- d) Quick problem-solving

22. **Which is NOT a part of the Kolb Learning Cycle?**

- a) Concrete Experience
- b) Reflective Observation
- c) Passive Participation
- d) Abstract Conceptualization

23. **In Jiu-Jitsu, the principle of 'leverage' allows:**

- a) Stronger opponents to always win
- b) Smaller individuals to overcome larger ones
- c) Use of weapons
- d) Avoidance of ground techniques

24. **For an Assistant Instructor, maintaining professionalism includes:**

- a) Forming close personal relationships with students
- b) Keeping boundaries between personal and professional interactions
- c) Avoiding any communication outside class
- d) Focusing solely on technique

25. **An Assistant Instructor should handle student mistakes by:**

- a) Ignoring them
- b) Offering constructive feedback

- c) Singling out the student
- d) Discouraging further attempts

Answers

1. c) Leverage
2. a) Gentle Art
3. b) First Aid Certification
4. c) Reflective Observation
5. c) Visual Learners
6. c) Assisting with drills and providing feedback
7. b) Clear and concise instructions
8. d) Both b and c
9. b) Open communication and mutual respect
10. b) Provide immediate first aid and seek further help if necessary
11. b) Active listening
12. b) Favoritism
13. b) Breaking them down into smaller parts
14. c) Technique and efficiency
15. b) Hands-on practice
16. b) Regularly checking equipment
17. b) Ground fighting
18. c) Supporting the primary instructor
19. b) Developing a personal teaching style
20. b) Specificity
21. c) Understanding all perspectives
22. c) Passive Participation

- 23. b) Smaller individuals to overcome larger ones
- 24. b) Keeping boundaries between personal and professional interactions
- 25. b) Offering constructive feedback

Jiu-Jitsu Peer Observation Form

Observer Information

- **Name of Observer:** _____
- **Date:** _____
- **Session Observed:** _____

Instructor Being Observed

- **Name of Instructor:** _____
- **Class Level (e.g., Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced):** _____

Observation Focus Areas

1. **Technical Skill Demonstration**
 - Clarity of demonstration

- Accuracy of techniques
- Adaptability to student needs
- Comments: _____

2. Communication and Interaction

- Effectiveness in communication
- Engagement with students
- Responsiveness to questions
- Comments: _____

3. Class Management

- Organization of class structure
- Time management
- Managing different skill levels
- Comments: _____

4. Safety and Environment

- Adherence to safety protocols
- Monitoring student safety
- Maintenance of a positive learning environment
- Comments: _____

5. Teaching Methodology

- Use of varied teaching methods (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
- Ability to cater to different learning styles
- Encouragement of critical thinking and problem-solving
- Comments: _____

6. Student Engagement and Motivation

- Methods of motivating students
- Building student confidence

- Comments: _____

7. Feedback and Improvement

- Provision of constructive feedback
- Encouragement of peer feedback among students
- Openness to receiving feedback
- Comments: _____

Overall Impressions

- **Strengths:**
- **Areas for Improvement:**
- **General Comments:**

Observer's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Jiu-Jitsu Observation Hours Recording Sheet Example

Assistant Instructor / Student Information

- **Name:** _____
- **Date:** _____
- **Belt Level:** _____

Observation Record

Date	Position/Submission Observed/Taught	Duration (Hours)	Notes on Learning/Performance	Assistant Instructor's Signature	Primary Instructor's Signature
12/30/2023	Example: Armbar from Guard	1.5			
01/01/2024	Example: Armbar from The Mount	1.5			
01/07/2024	Example: Far side Armbar from Knee on Belly	1.5			
01/08/2024	Example: Armbar from The Rear Mount	1.5			

Total Hours Observed: _____ Total

I hereby confirm that the above records accurately reflect the observation hours completed by the student/assistant instructor.

Assistant Instructor's Name, Rank and Signature:

- **Name:** Jesse Hull Brown Belt
- **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Primary Instructor's Name, Rank and Signature:

- **Name:** _____
- **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Notes:

- Use this sheet to record observation hours for Instructors Hours, Student Hours to identify gaps in training.
- Ensure both the Assistant and Primary Instructors verify and sign after each session.
- Maintain this record as part of the training and certification process for both students and instructors.