

Thoughts on **Argument Ninja** themes, branding, and martial arts methods for instructional design

Nov 20, 2017

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Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

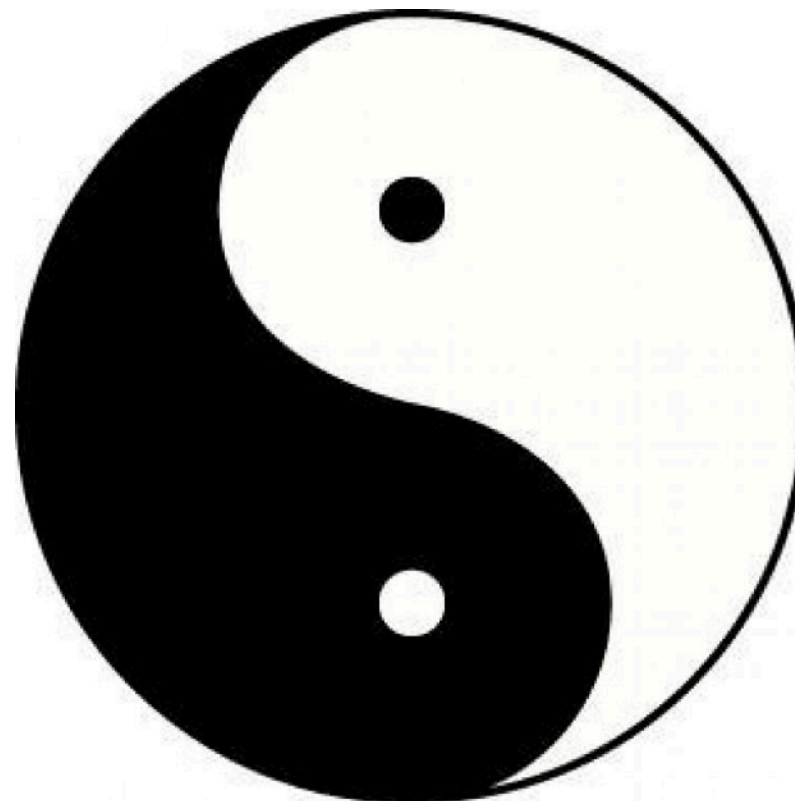
1. Theme: The Yin-Yang Symbol - Complementarity of the Light and the Dark

The Dark

*persuasion and influence
in real-world contexts*

*understanding and managing
obstacles to critical thinking*

*persuasion and argumentation
on the "street"*



The Light

*critical thinking values
and skills:*

- *true beliefs*
- *wise decisions*
- *independence of thought*

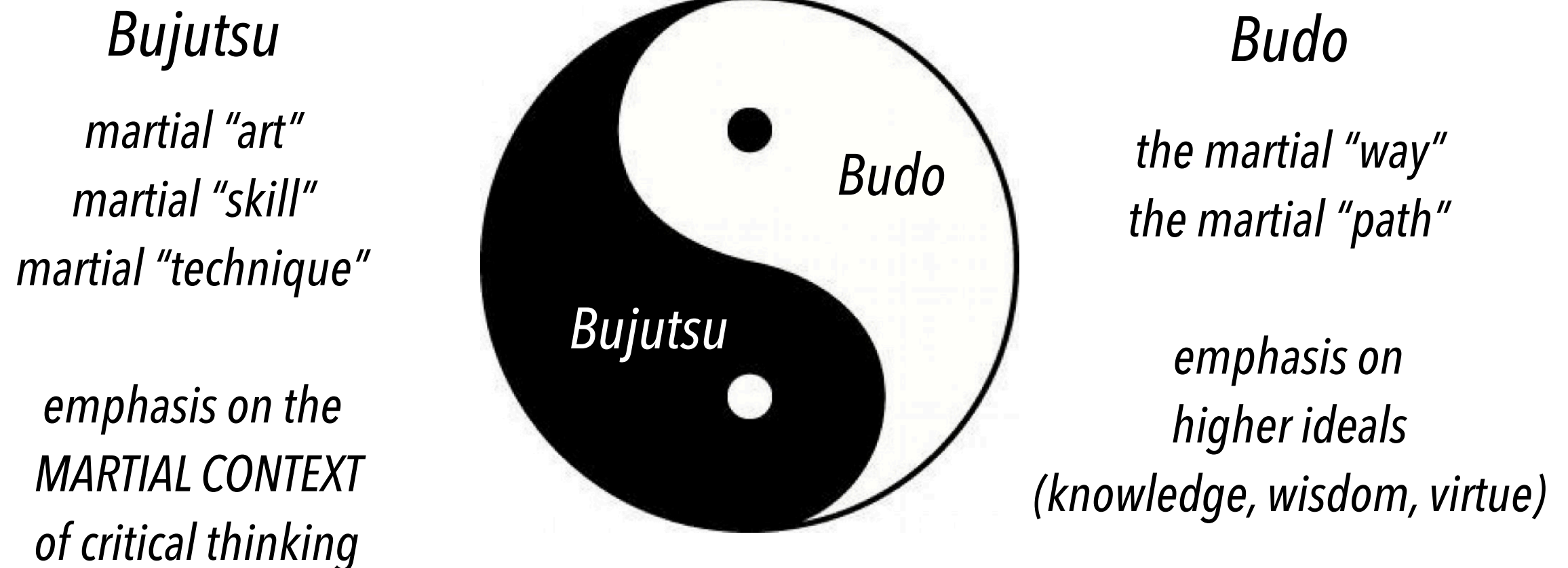
*persuasion and argumentation
in the "dojo"*

NOTE: these are mutually interdependent, complementary dualities

*You must understand the Dark to master the Light,
and vice versa*

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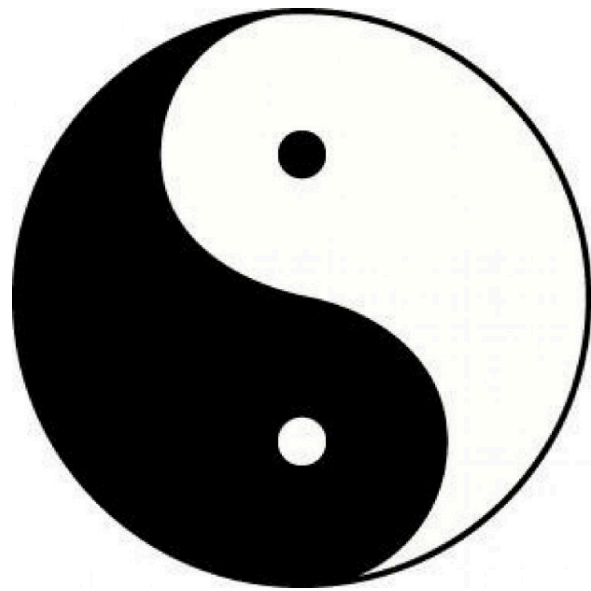
2. Theme: Complementarity of Budo and Bujutsu



NOTE: I associate "budo" with the light and "bujutsu" with the dark, but this is not to imply that the light is "good" and the dark is "bad" (just as "yin" and "yang" are not identified with "good" and "bad" in Taoism).

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

3. Theme: MASTERY



- a. to **master the light** you need to understand how the dark operates through all aspects of human thought and behavior
- b. similarly, to **master the dark** you need to understand how it relates to the light

One way to understand a **primary goal of the Argument Ninja Academy**
... as a path to **SELF-MASTERY**

Master the Light.

Master the Dark.

Master Yourself.

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

4. Martial Arts Training as a PATH to MASTERY



- a. incremental, cumulative progress over extended period of time
- b. martial arts training as art of "concealed repetition" (drills, kata, etc.)
- c. pacing is controlled to balance challenge, effort, success and satisfaction
- d. gamification elements are built in
 - a. status/proficiency indicators (belt colors)
 - b. "leveling up" to unlock new training, new skills, new challenges
 - c. stripe systems
 - a. colored stripes put on end of belts
 - b. intermediate markers of progress through a belt curriculum

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

5. Martial Arts Training Elements as Tools for Complex Skill Development

a. **fitness/conditioning**

- a. mental/physical preparation that facilitates skill training

b. **kihon (basics)**

- a. repetition of basic skill elements of the martial arts style

c. **kata (forms)**

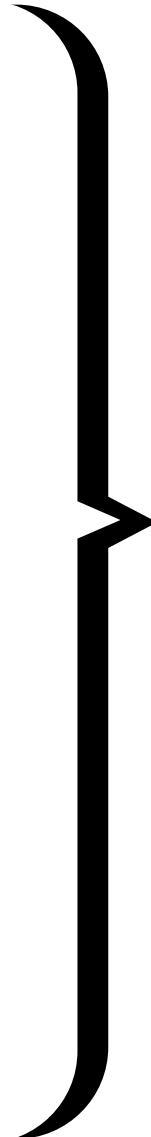
- a. solo practice that integrates basic skills into more complex patterns of action/response

d. **kumite (sparring)**

- a. pair or group practice
- b. progression from compliant to non-compliant (resisting) opponents

e. **self-defense**

- a. training for real-world scenarios; focus on avoiding or minimizing harm, self-protection



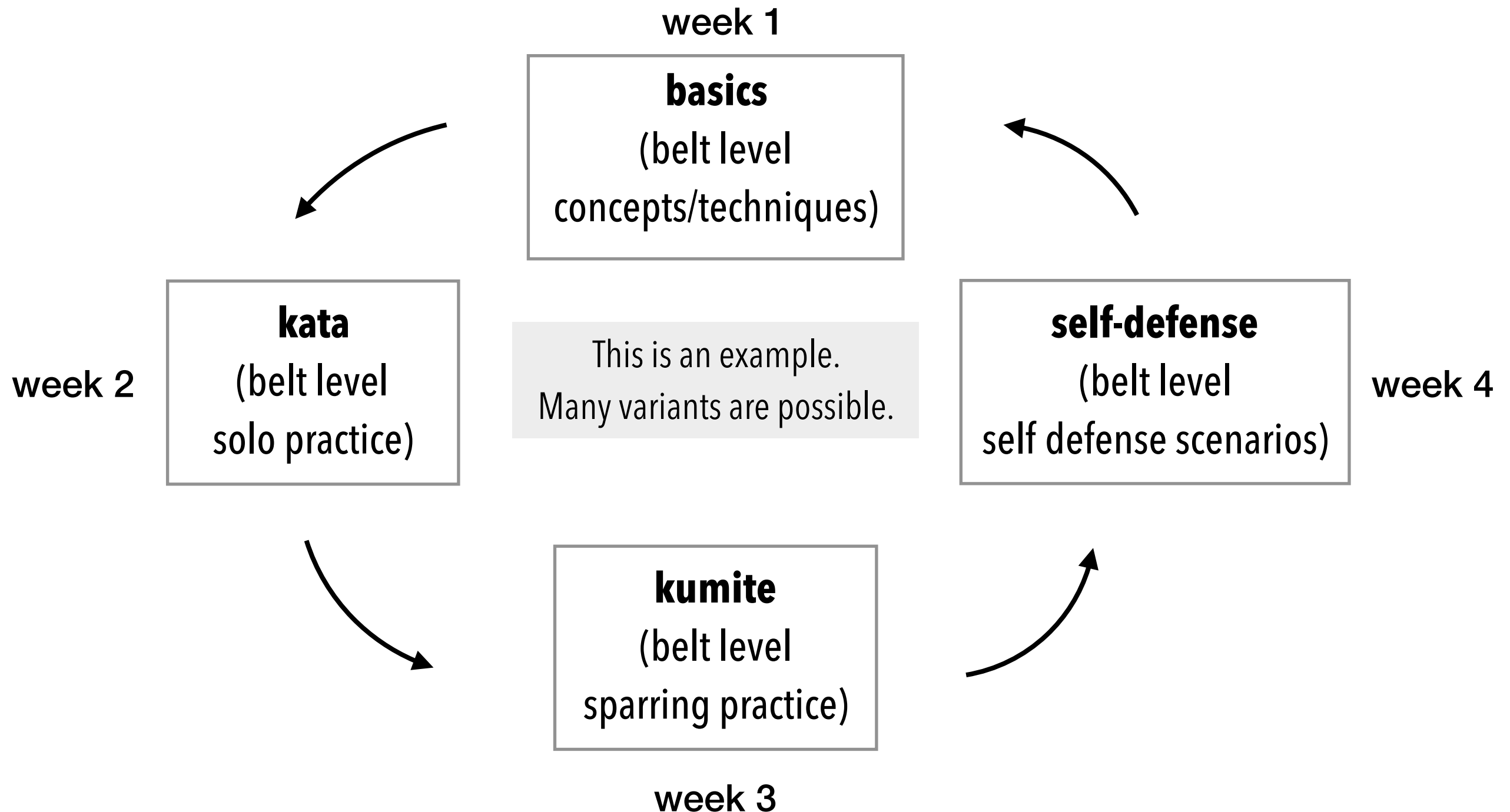
Classes are assembled from these training elements

Classes usually emphasize ONE of these elements; not all elements are present in all classes

Classes are on a rotation schedule

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

5.1 Lesson Rotation Schedules - one element is given more focused attention in a class



Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

5.2 Stripe Systems: tools for managing progress through belt level requirements

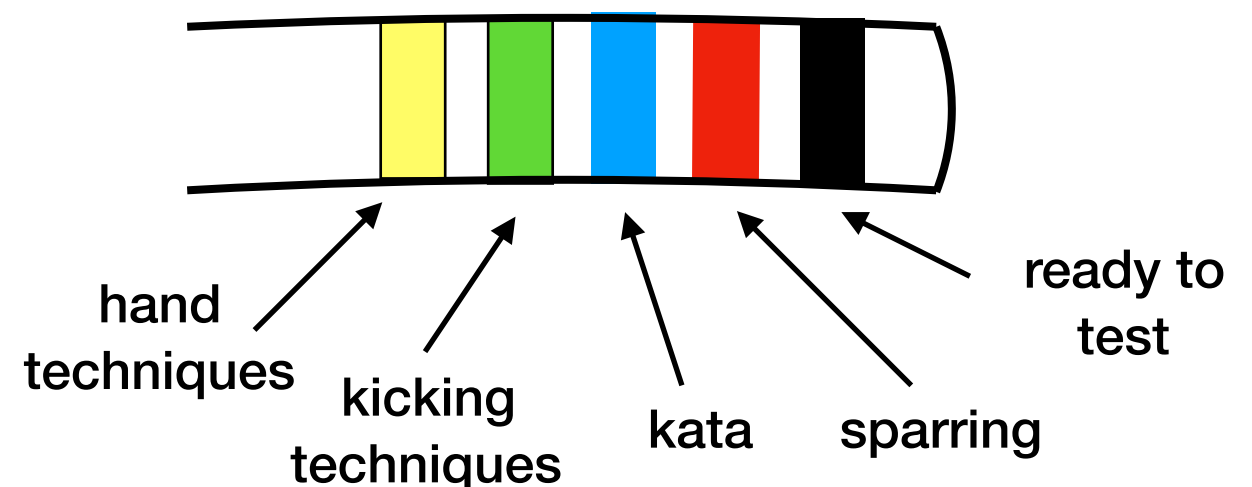


No consistent way these are used; different schools are free to choose if and how stripes are used

Some use different colored stripes to indicate proficiency at different belt level skill elements.

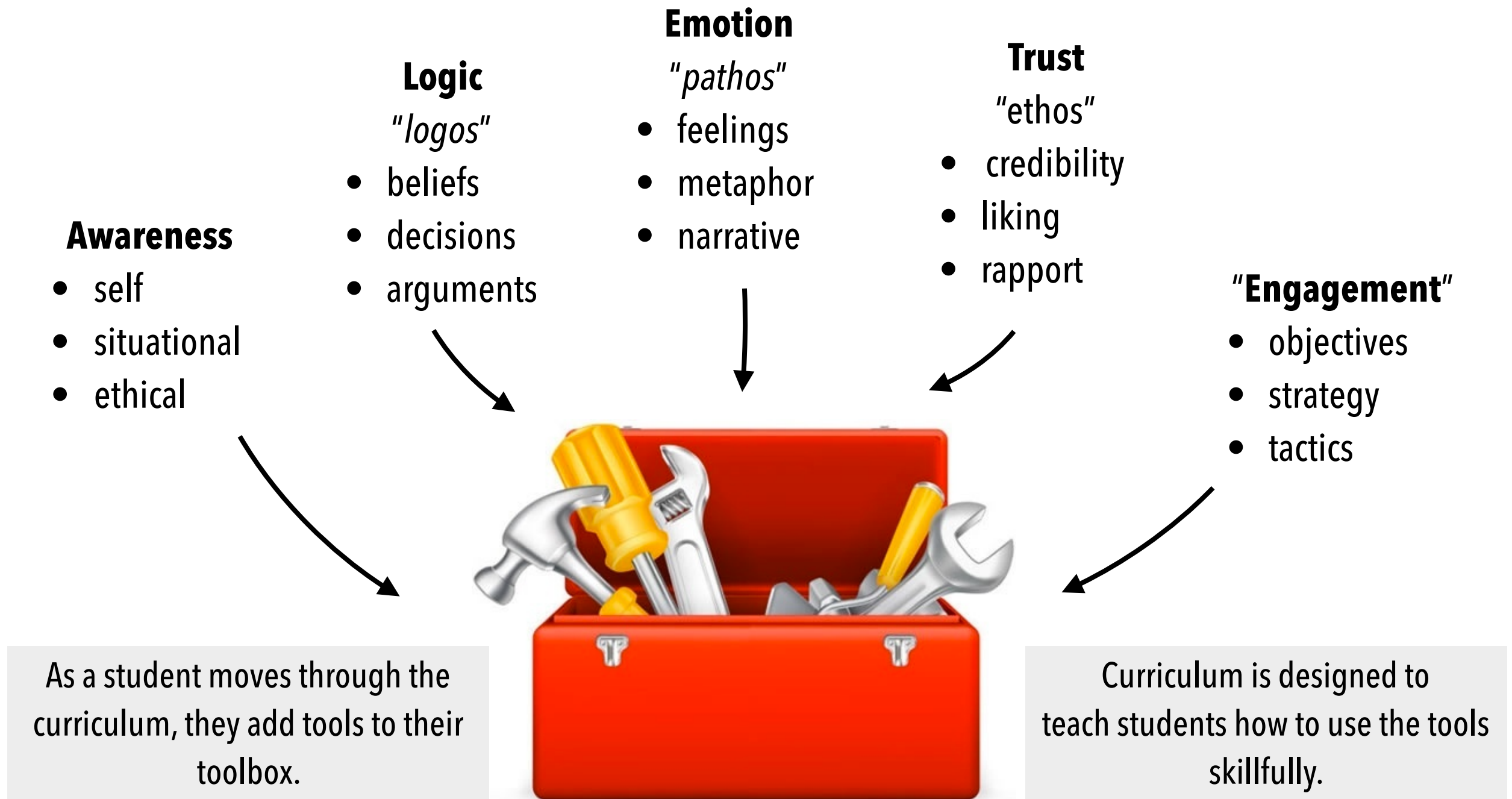
An example of a stripe system

- stripe indicates the student has demonstrated a level of proficiency at the corresponding skill element that would result in a "pass" during a belt test



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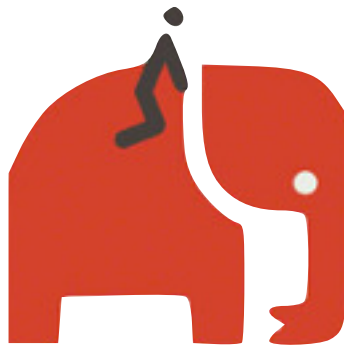
6. Core Argument Ninja Skill Elements (as of the second last meeting)



Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

7. Mastery Sequences: Paths to Skill Mastery

e.g. Elephant & Rider



call this a "mastery sequence"

Watch a model
Internal practice
Internal practice with own example
Watch sparring - structured
Watch sparring - free
Sparring - individual structured
Sparring - individual structured
Sparring - individual free
Sparring - witnessed structured
Sparring - witnessed free
Reporting back on IRL observations or performance
Observation of examples
External planning
External performance

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7. Mastery Sequences: Paths to Skill Mastery

Instruction Design Challenge

Design a system that uses the training principles and methods just reviewed to carry students through this sequence (or some version of it) in a reliable way, while being challenging, engaging and motivating.

call this a "mastery sequence"



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7. Mastery Sequences: Paths to Skill Mastery

Important:

Progress down this path will take TIME ...

... expect the sequence to be spread
across belt levels.

call this a "mastery sequence"



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Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

8. Proposal: Use Color Stripes to Represent Categories of Core Skill Elements

note these
additions



Stripe System		Core Skill Categories
white stripe "Budo"	↔	The Argument Ninja "way", or "path". Principles, values and virtues that promote critical thinking goals (true beliefs, wise decisions, and independence of thought)
yellow stripe "Logos"	↔	Classical principles of good reasoning with respect to forming beliefs, making decisions and crafting/evaluating arguments
green stripe "Ethos"	↔	Your audience's attitude toward you -- trust, credibility, rapport, likability -- and how it affects the success or failure of communication and persuasion
red stripe "Pathos"	↔	Your ability to evoke certain emotions and feelings in your audience, and how it affects the success or failure of communication and persuasion
black stripe "Bujutsu"	↔	Argument Ninja "skill", "technique", or "art". The application of Argument Ninja skills to self-defense and persuasion scenarios on the "street", in the real world.

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

9. Assign Skill Elements from the Toolkit to Build a Belt Level Curriculum

Stripe System	BELT
WHITE stripe "Budo"	
YELLOW stripe "Logos"	
GREEN stripe "Ethos"	
RED stripe "Pathos"	
BLACK stripe "Bujutsu"	

No more than 5 new skill elements per belt level, one for each stripe.



Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

10. Example - A White Belt Curriculum

Stripe System	WHITE BELT	Description of Skill Element
WHITE stripe "Budo"	Truth	A first introduction to the concept of "truth" and its important role in critical thinking.
YELLOW stripe "Logos"	Arg (I)	The definition of an argument. How to recognize the parts of an argument. How to tell if an argument is being given or not.
GREEN stripe "Ethos"	Liking	Introduction to the psychology of likability, and how to increase one's likability (similarity, familiarity, mimicry, etc.).
RED stripe "Pathos"	Elephant & Rider	Introduction to Haidt's metaphor of the Elephant and the Rider as a model of the psychology of behavioral change
BLACK stripe "Bujutsu"	Attention	How competition for our attention, especially from digital media, undermines our ability to think for ourselves. Strategies for regaining control of our attention.

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

11. Use Stripes to Visually Indicate Partial Progress through a Mastery Sequence

(display on some kind of student dashboard)

% Complete

WHITE "Budo"					% 75
YELLOW "Logos"					% 100
GREEN "Ethos"					% 25
RED "Pathos"					% 75
BLACK "Bujutsu"					% 25

(connect progress to completion of learning activities)

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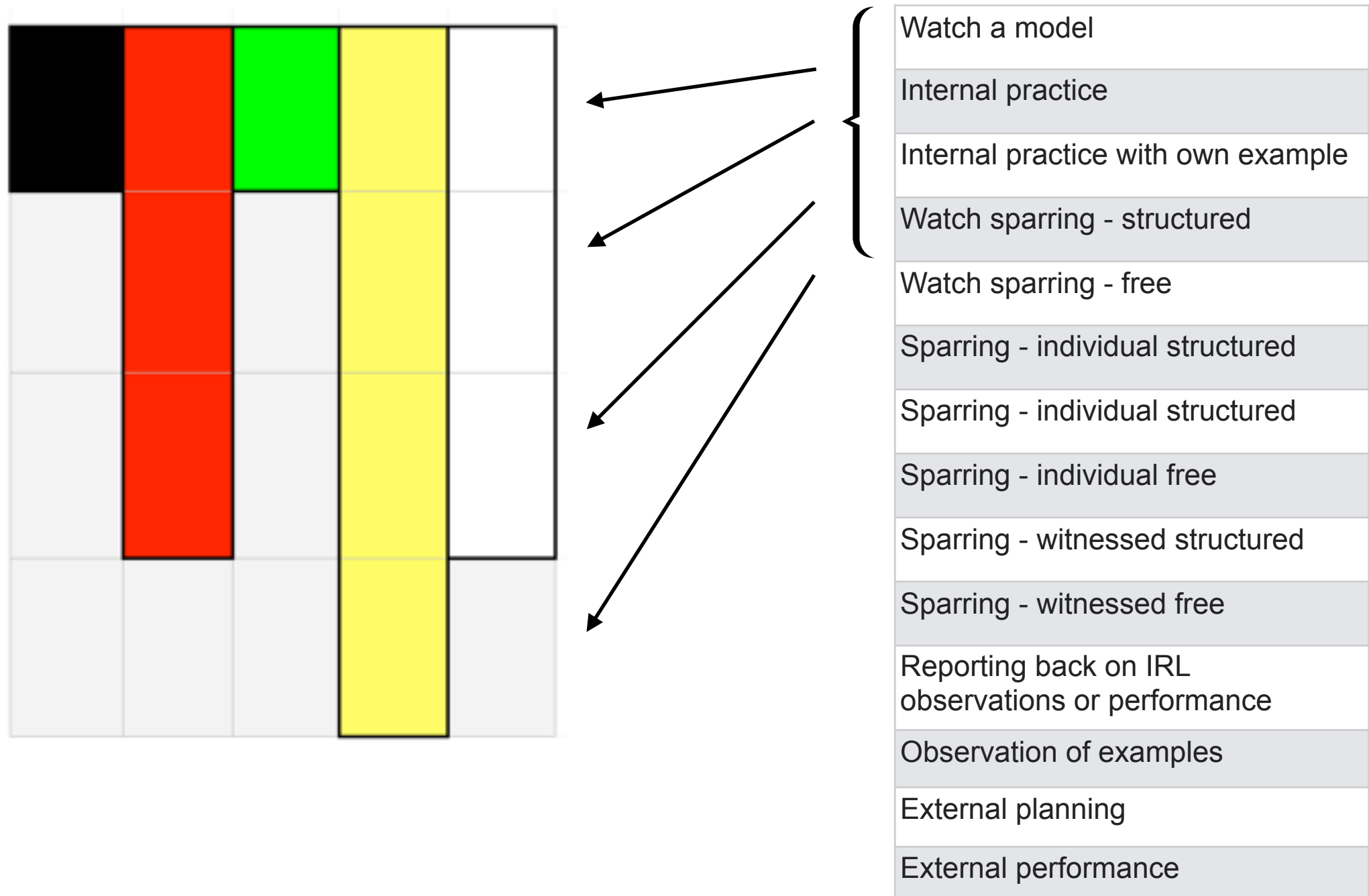
12. Completing All 5 Stripes Indicates Readiness to Test For Next Belt Level

Ready to test for YELLOW belt

WHITE "Budo"					% 100
YELLOW "Logos"					% 100
GREEN "Ethos"					% 100
RED "Pathos"					% 100
BLACK "Bujutsu"					% 100

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

13. Remember: Stripes Indicate PARTIAL Progress Through a Mastery Sequence



Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

14. Need to Construct a Mastery Sequence that MAKES SENSE For a Given Skill Element

Can't treat all skill elements the same.

e.g. training to develop ...

self-awareness skills

vs.

dialectical reasoning skills

... will look different.

But they will fall into categories with common properties, so won't need to reinvent the wheel every time.

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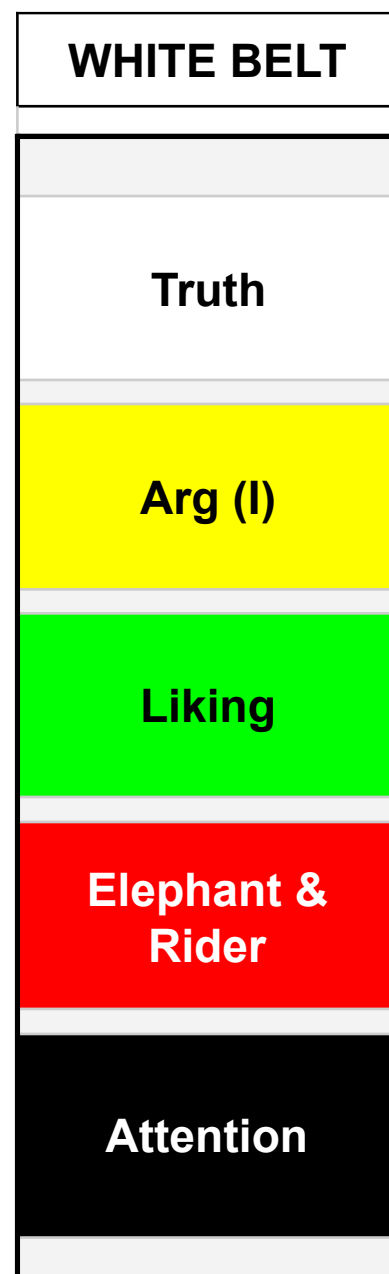
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16. Proposal: For each skill element in a belt level, start at the **END** and work **BACKWARDS** to construct a mastery sequence

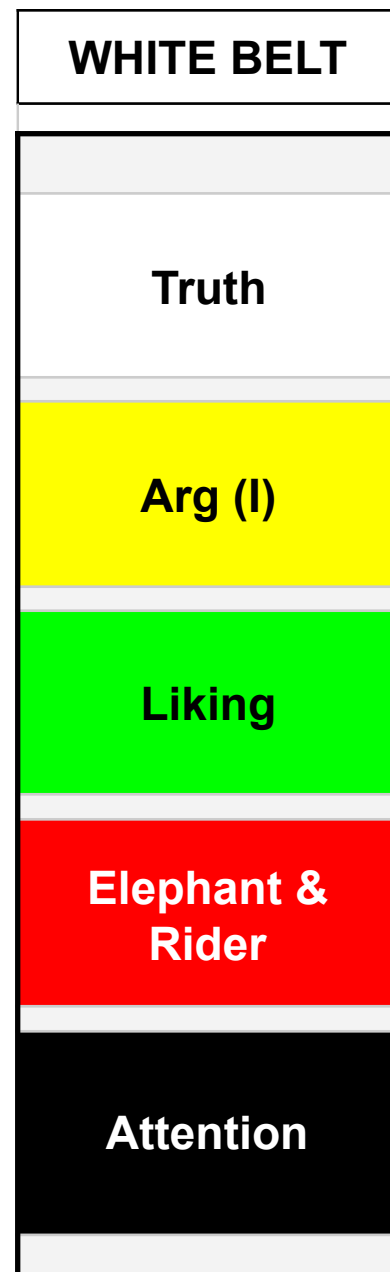


- For each of these we need to give a rich description of the **behaviors** that we would associate with **mastery of that concept or skill**.
- In writing this description, I propose that in each case we consider what mastery would look like in our two core domains:
 - **Budo**: in relation to **critical thinking** goals
 - **Bujutsu**: in relation to **persuasion** and **communication** goals
 - (Note: Some concepts or skills will naturally be more oriented toward one domain or the other)
- This exercise will give us a good idea of what behaviors we want to see by the time a student gets to the **END** of the mastery sequence.
- From there we can **work backwards** and construct a sequence that leads students toward this end point.

Some recent thoughts on Argument Ninja themes, branding, and instructional design:

17. Example : The Elephant & the Rider

Q: Is something like this specific enough, or does it need more?



The Elephant & the Rider

A student who has mastered this concept is able to

- articulate the key thesis of the metaphor (what the elephant represents, what the rider represents, what claim is being made about the nature of human behavior)
- use the metaphor to describe and analyze behavior change scenarios, and evaluate proposed interventions aimed at changing behavior
- recognize habits and behaviors in oneself that illustrate the relationship between the Elephant and the Rider
- recognize habits and behaviors in others (friends, family, acquaintances, coworkers, ...) that illustrate these relationships
- articulate how the metaphor can be applied to discussions of organizational change, and analyze examples using these concepts
- use the metaphor as a tool for strategizing interventions aimed at changing attitudes and behaviors