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presents a feature article from Blitz martial arts magazine Vol 25 No 01 (January 2011):

## Steve Miranda – Professor

**AUSTRALIA'S #1 MARTIAL ARTS MAGAZINE**

**BLITZ**

**AUSTRALASIAN MARTIAL ARTS MAGAZINE**

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YOUR LIFE**

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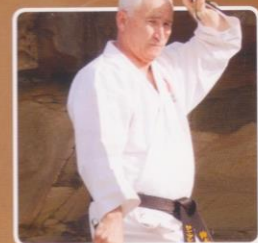
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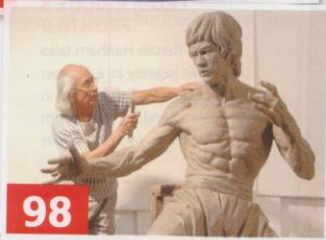
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## The Test of Time

Each month in this segment, martial arts instructors throw down their opinions on issues concerning martial arts training, teaching, fighting and philosophy. This issue, we ask the question: Should Dan-grades be awarded purely on skill tests or time spent in service of the art, or both?



**Steve Miranda**  
Chief instructor,  
National Karate Academies

*The founder and Chief Instructor of the National Karate Academies – Miranda Kai system, Professor Steven Miranda is an experienced instructor in many different styles of martial arts. He has trained and holds Black-belts in judo, silat, taekwondo, kung fu and several styles of jujitsu and karate, including a 4th Dan in Bob Jones' Zen Do Kai system. He considers himself a true freestylist with a traditional background. Having trained in the martial arts for over 40 years – since starting judo at the age of six – Professor Miranda was graded to 8th Degree Black-belt in 2008 by the Australian Martial Arts Association.*

what other people have witnessed and acknowledged that you have done, in contribution to your style, as well as knowledge, ability/skill, dedication, years spent training, years teaching in the martial arts at a high level... The key word is 'performance'.

Why performance? Were you graded through coloured belts on ability, time etc. or are you graded on time only? Your Black-belt – was it graded on performance and time? Well, with higher Dans that doesn't change, just the criteria does. How can you have a hand-out rank over a cup of coffee at, say, 8th Dan, and be graded at coloured-belt level and lower Black-belt levels? It doesn't make sense. All higher Dan-levels need to be graded on performance, including a physical grading, or a demonstration for the head instructors to their own students and instructors, as well as developing and building their own system/styles.

The grade should have more credibility than a coloured belt, shouldn't it? Thus, time on its own does not give you a high Dan-level.

For head instructors, your Black-belt instructors should be pushing you up, rather than you joining an association to gain a Dan and say 'I have an association rank' – your style should be grading you. How can anyone grade you if they don't teach your system and

have never been graded in it? The martial arts associations are there to witness your efforts, not to be abused for hand-out ranks. Remember, rank only shows where you are in your system and is irrelevant outside of this.

If you have been teaching and training for 40 years, why do you need to be at a high

Dan level teaching coloured belts? Even the 1st and 2nd Dans do not require an 8th Degree Black-belt to teach them, so why get some title that is not a result of proper testing and thus means nothing? You would be better off staying a 4th Dan with credibility than becoming an 8th Dan with no credibility.



Miranda believes the skill set must match the rank.

**SOMA** can provide training, tournaments, gradings (after a qualifying period and assessment) and a whole host of other benefits. For more information about how you or your martial arts organisation can join the **Society of Martial Arts** please contact [admin@societyofmartialarts.com](mailto:admin@societyofmartialarts.com)