Standards:

**PANPESK**: Physical activity provides opportunities for self-expression and social development and interaction

**PANPE1**: Competency in movement forms facilitates a desire to participate in and benefit from a lifetime of physical activity

**PANPE2**: Balancing daily physical activity and proper nutrition contributes to lifelong fitness and wellness

Objectives:

You will:

- Exhibit correct form in stretching, strengthening and conditioning exercises
- Describe the importance of physical fitness
- Reflect on the ethical teachings and parables of the martial arts

Guiding Questions:

How do the martial arts teach us about honor?

Introduction:

Aikido is a form of martial arts that was developed in Japan by Ueshiba Morihei, as a product of his philosophy, martial studies, and his religious beliefs. In English Aikido means “the way of harmonious spirit” or “the way of unifying with life’s energy.” Aikido is a special martial arts technique that not only safe guards the welfare of the practitioner but also aims to minimize injury to the assailant. This means use of minimal physical strength as the practitioner directs the assailants force by using turning and diversion moves. Aikido originated from another form of martial art called Daitō-ryū Aiki- jūjutsu. However in the late 1920's it adopted some aspect of religion. Presently, aikido is practiced in most parts of the world with a wide range of styles, interpretations and emphasis. Nevertheless, they all share skills learned from Morihei most of which put a lot of emphasis on the safety of the attacker.
Content:

Basic Philosophy

The term aikido comes from three Chinese characters, ‘ai’, ‘ki’ and ‘do’. ‘Ai’ means combining, unifying or joining; ‘ki’ means mood, energy, morale or spirit while ‘do’ means path or way. ‘Aiki’ is commonly used in forming compound words that mean ‘to join’ or ‘to combine’; it can also be used to express the idea of knowing each other and to express emotions or feelings.

The character ‘do’ is used to merge the exercise of aikido with the theoretical idea of doctrine and other forms of martial arts like Kendo and Judo, and in other more traditional forms of martial arts like tea ceremony or chadō, flower arranging or kadō and Japanese calligraphy or shodō. Hence, from a linguistic point of view, aikido is a form of connector merging forces.

The word aiki means the principles of martial arts or techniques of merging with the movements of an attacker, with the intentions of regulating their actions with less physical effort. One employs aiki by comprehending the rhythm and the intentions of the attacker to get the best time and position to counter attack.

History

Morihei Ueshiba who was born on 14 December 1883 and died on 26th April 1969 founded aikido. His students fondly referred to him as the great teacher. Ueshiba had a great vision for aikido not only as a product of his training in martial arts, but also as a manifestation of his personal belief of universal reconciliation and peace. During his entire life and to date, aikido has developed from the aki that Ueshiba learned into a large assortment of techniques that are used all over the world by different martial artists.

Initial Development

Ueshiba started aikido in the late 1920’s and continued throughout to the 1930’s by combining other forms of older martial arts. Aikido derives its principles and techniques from Daito-ryu aiki-jujutsu. Alongside empty throwing of hands and joint locking methods, Ueshiba integrated his training techniques with weapons like bayonet, the spear and short staff. Nevertheless, aikido borrows most of its technical compositions from the artistry of swordsmanship. In 1912, Ueshiba moved to Hokkaido and in 1915 started studying under Takeda Sokaku. His formal affiliation with Daito-ryu went on until 1937. However, over the end of
that period, he changed tact from Daito-ryu and Takeda and started his own technique called Aiki Budo. According to Bruce (2004), it is not quite clear when he started using the name aikido, but in 1942, the government officially recognized the name during the centralization and reorganization of martial arts in Japan.

**Religious Influences**

In 1919 after Ueshiba moved from Hokkaiddu, he met Onisaburo Deguchi a spiritual leader of the Omoto-kyo religion in Ayabe, who became his spiritual mentor. One of the central features of the religion was the emphasis on the importance of achieving utopia in a person’s life. This had a big influence on Ueshiba philosophy of broadening love and mercifulness especially to those who desired to hurt others. Aikido exhibits this philosophy through its emphasis on knowing this art such that one can get an attack and redirect it without harming the attacker. To add on to the influence on his spiritual growth, his interaction with Deguchi also gave him a chance to enter into the elite circle of military and political people as a martial art artist. Due to the exposure he got from interacting with the elites, Ueshiba attracted financial support and a number of talented students. Later, most of these students would form their own forms of aikido.

**International Spread of Aikido**

Minoru Mochizuki introduced Akido to the rest of the world, in 1951 when he visited France and presented aikido techniques to students of Judo. Tadashi Abe who came to France in 1952 as the official representative of Aikikai Hombu followed Mochizuki. Abe stayed in France for over 7 years and helped to cement aikido in Europe. In 1953, Kenji Tomiki together with a group of different martial artists toured 15 states in the United States. Later in the same year, Koichi was sent to Hawaii by Aikikai Hombu where he established several dojos (formal teaching places for Japanese martial arts). This marked the beginning of extensive establishment of aikido all over America. ‘Aikido’ martial art was introduced in the United Kingdom in 1955, in Italy 1960 and Germany in 1965. According to John (2005), Morihei Ueshiba called the spread of aikido as “Official Delegate for Europe and Africa” In the 1990’s martial arts actor, Steven Seagal popularized aikido in Hollywood films. Today aikido remains as one of the most popular martial arts all over the world.

**Proliferation of Independent Organizations**
The largest organization of aikido in the world is the Aikikai Foundation, which is controlled by the Ueshiba family. The earliest forms of independent aikido styles to come out were ‘Yoseikan’ aikido that was started in 1931 by Minoru Mochizuki, ‘Yoshinkan’ Aikido founded in 1955 by Gozo Shioda and ‘Shodokan’ Aikido founded in 1967 by Kenji Tomiki. These various forms of aikido started before the death of Ueshiba, and involved a form of non-competitive martial arts. However, ‘Shodokan’ aikido became controversial after it started a unique rule-based contest, which many people felt was against the aikido spirit. According to Stefa (2008), two more aikido styles ‘Shin Shin Toitsu’ Aikido and ‘Shin shin Aikishuren Kai’ started in 1969 after the death of Ueshiba.

A major controversy arose in 1974 after Koichi Tohei who was one of the chief instructors in Aikikai Hombu Dojo left. Koichi left after disagreeing with the founder’s son, Kisshomaru Ueshiba, over the proper function of ki development in day-to-day aikido training. After leaving, Tohei started his own style that he called Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido, which follows ’Ki’ teachings. Unofficially ‘Shin Shin Toitsu’ Aikido was known as the Iwama style and at some point; a few of its practitioners started a network of schools that were named Iwama Ryu. Although the followers of this style stayed in the Aikikai group until the death of Saito in 2002, they consequently divided into two groups. One stayed with the Aikikai while the other formed an independent group called Shin shin Aikishuren Kai. Today, each of the different styles is managed by different governing organizations.

**Training**

In aikido training, there are both aspects of mental and physical training. The physical training covers general physical conditioning and fitness, as well as specific performance skills. Since a big part of aikido training consists mostly of throws, the initial technique that students are taught is how to roll or fall safely. The precise skills for attack include both grabs and strikes, while defense techniques include pins and throws. After Students have learned the basic techniques, they learn freestyle defense against several opponents and use of weaponry.

**Fitness**

Physical training objectives pursued together with aikido skills include relaxation, controlled flexibility, and endurance with minimal stress on physical strength. In this training program, extending and pushing movements are more frequent than contracting and pulling movements. This characteristic is a universal fitness goal for any aikido practitioner. Some anaerobic fitness procedures like weight
training enhance contracting movements. Unlike other martial arts training, aikido training does not focus on specific body muscles to improve power, mass or tone. Rather, aikido training concentrates on the harmonization of the entire body movement and balance just like in yoga. For instance, most dojos start their lessons with warm-up exercises such as stretching.

**Roles of Uke and Nage**

Training in aikido mainly involves two partners engaging in pre-arranged fight challenges. The primary pattern is for the recipient of the attack also known as Uke to start an assault against an opponent known as ‘Nage’, who counteracts the attack by using an aikido technique. The two parties of Uke and Nage learn adaptation and blending techniques of aikido training. Nage learns how to control and blend with attacking energy, while Uke learns how to become flexible and calm in disadvantageous and out of balance positions in which ‘Nage’ places him. Uke constantly tries to recover balance and cover up vulnerabilities like an exposed side, while Nage uses timing and position to always make Uke vulnerable and keep him out of balance.

In advance aikido training, the Uke applies many reverse techniques to throw or pin down the Nage. This form of advance learning is known as “Ukemi’. Excellent Ukemi involves paying good attention to the technique, immediate environment and your partner. It is an active as opposed to passive assimilation of aikido techniques. The actual fall itself is also part of aikido technique, and it requires the learner to absorb in a safe manner a devastating throw or strike and break a fall in one quick movement. Thus, the art of breaking a fall common in the other forms of martial arts is not applicable in aikido since as Bruce (2004) states the recipient chooses to fall as a technique strategy in aikido.

**Initial Attacks**

Aikido training is about protection against an attack. Most Aikido training is therefore, focused on learning different forms of attacks and how to mitigate them. Although attacks are not learned as comprehensively as in other striking based martial arts, honest attacks i.e. an immobilizing grab or a strong strike are still necessary to learn effective and correct application of aikido techniques. Most of aikido technique involves grabbing which reflects its origin in arm wrestling. Alternative practices substitute punches with sword thrusts. Kicks are mostly set aside for upper-body attacks because they can sometimes be fatal. Kicks are however rare in aikido a tradition carried over from the past in feudal Japan.
Offensive Methods

Some of the primary attack methods include:

**Direct Head strike**: this is a perpendicular knife or hand strike to the head. During training, the strike is usually aimed at the forehead or at the crown for safety purposes. However, more advanced versions of this kind of attack target the maxillary sinus and the nose.

**Side head strike**: this is a side strike by hand that aims at the neck or side of the head.

**Chest thrust**: This is a blow to the upper body or the torso. Most of the punches target the solar plexus, chest, and abdomen. This strike is also known as direct thrust or middle-level thrust.

**Face thrust**: This is a blow to the face using an open fist.

First time trainees are usually taught techniques that involve grabbing. This is because it is safer that way and is easier to absorb force and energy from a strike. Some of the primary grabs include single hand grab where the hand grabs an opponent’s wrist, whole grab where both hands grab an opponent’s wrists, shoulder grab where one or both shoulders are grabbed and chest grab where the front chest clothing is grabbed.

Basic Techniques

Most of the techniques that used in aikido are derived from Daitō-ryū Aiki-jujutsu. Though the terminologies and the names of styles vary, the standard ones are those used by the Aikaki foundation. The techniques include:

**First technique**: This is a kind of a control technique, which involves placing a hand on the elbow and the other hand on the wrist giving the Uke some advantage on the ground. This kind of a grip also applies some pressure on the ulna nerve in the wrist.

**Second technique**: this is a kind of a wristlock, which twists the hand causing painful pressure on the wrist’s nerves.

**Third technique**: this is a rotational wristlock, which directs upward- increasing tension all over the elbow, arms and shoulder.
**Fourth technique:** It is similar to first technique but both arms grip the forearm, and applies pressure by bending the wrist, which forces the knuckles to press the opponent’s radial nerve hence putting pressure on the forearms periosteum bone.

**Fifth technique:** It is visually similar to first technique but with a reversed grip of the wrist and minimum rotation of the shoulder and arm and downward force on the elbow.

**Four direction throw:** forces the hand into a back twist that disengages the shoulder joint.

**Forearm wristlock:** This is a rotating throw of the wristlock, which stretches the extensor digitorum muscles of the forearm.

**Breath throw:** this is a loosely used word used to refer to different types of unrelated mechanical techniques, which do not make use of joint locks, or the other techniques.

**Entering throw:** These are types of throws in which Nage moves around the space occupied by Uke.

**Heaven/earth throw:** starts with both hands grabbing and moving forward, the Nage strikes from below (earth) and above (heaven), which causes Uke to loose balance and topple over.

**Hip throw:** In this throw, Nage bends under the Uke, and then spins Uke over the resulting fulcrum.

**Rotary throw:** In this throw, the Nage twist the arm back to the shoulder joint and jerks in a forward force to throw off the Uke.

**Implementations**

 Mostly aikido uses movements of the body to mingle with Uke. For instance, an entering action consists of movements inwards and towards Uke while a turning action uses a rotating motion. Other techniques called ‘Suwari-waza’ are undertaken while seated. Thus, from all the techniques, there are many possible implementations. For example, the first aikido technique is commonly used on an attacker moving forward with a blow or on an attacker moving backwards to create some distance.
Weapons

The commonly used weaponry in aikido training includes knives, wooden swords and the short staff. Nowadays, some training schools include firearm-disarming skills in their training. Both weapon retention and weapon taking skills are occasionally taught together to incorporate both armed and unarmed skills. Other styles like the Iwama style, mostly spends considerable amount of time with the wooden sword and a short staff. According to Shoida (2006), teaching of these techniques emphasizes the ideal foot movement, distance, and connectedness with a training partner.

Multiple Attackers and Randori

One common characteristic of aikido training is the technique of defense against multiple attackers, called Taninzugake or Taninzudori. Training with many attackers is a central part of many curricula and is a requirement for ranking. Freestyle training called Randori, which literally means chaos, determines instinctive execution of defensive techniques in an uncoordinated environment. Calculated choice of technique, founded on how teachers reposition their students in relation to their attackers is very essential in Randori training. For example, an Ura technique can be used to counterbalance the present attacker, while rotating to face attackers coming from behind you. The Randori taught in Shodokan aikido differs from other Randoris, in part as it is carried out with several attackers and a defender or between two people who defend, attack and counter at their own will.

Injuries

During aikido training, it is the duty of the Nage to avoid injuring the Uke by using a force and speed of attack, which corresponds with their partner’s expertise in Ukemi. Injuries especially those related to joints are usually caused by the Nage’s inability to adequately judge the Uke’s skill level in terms of handling a pin or throw. Research on the common kinds of injuries in aikido indicates that the nature of injuries differ significantly from one technique to another. Soft tissue injuries are common in this form of martial arts.

Mental Training

In aikido, both features of physical and mental training are incorporated. This serves to relax both the body and the mind even under the most dangerous and stressful circumstances. This is very important in enabling the participants to
perform all the movements involved in aikido with directness and confidence. As a form of martial art involved not only with proficiency in fighting but also improvement of day-to-day life, the mental training is therefore very important to practitioners of aikido.

**Ki**

The study of “Ki’ is both physical and mental. Though the original character for ‘ki’ represented a lid on a pot full of rice, the symbol for ‘ki’ is commonly used to refer to everyday Japanese words like health. ‘Ki’ means united mental and physical intention. In conventional martial arts however, it represents life’s energy. In the later years, Ueshiba’s use of ki took on a gentle and softer approach and most of his followers teach ki from this angle with students graded differently in both ki progress and aikido skills.

**Uniforms and Ranking**

Practitioners of aikido usually advance by promotion through a sequence of grades called ‘kyu’ then advance to a higher level called ‘Dan’. Belts are also used in other aikido organizations to differentiate student’s grades, mostly white and black belts though there some who use other different colors. Grading requirements differ, so a given rank is different to another organization. The uniform used during participation and training are the same. They include simple trousers and wraparound jackets, which are usually white in color. Both thick and thin cotton tops are also used. According to Adele & Oscar (2001), instructors also wear hakamas that are wide pleated indigo or black trousers.

**Student Practice:**

**Aikido Training**

In this laboratory activity, you will discover, understand and apply the concepts and skills related to Aikido Training.

**Instructions:**

1. Locate a free Aikido teaching video online.
2. Learn and practice Aikido movements for two or three days.
3. Use the attached Activity Log, record your activities including dates and duration of play. Make sure to provide a response to the reflection question. Upon completion, upload the document.

**Alternative:** You can participate in Martial Arts at a local Dojo, Fitness center, gym and/or on the Wii or Xbox Kinect.
Check for Understanding/Formative Assessment

Aikido Presentation
In this laboratory activity, you will discover, understand, and apply the concepts and skills related to Aikido Training.

Directions: Create a Kata routine of at least five movements in the discipline discussed in the lesson. Take a picture of yourself performing each of the five movements. In a Microsoft word document, PowerPoint or pdf, present and describe the five movements in your own words. Upon completion, upload the document.

Resources