

# FMA Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

Informative Issue No. 201  
2015

## CADENILLA ESKRIMA GROUP

*Daniel Murray*



CEG-Guam

**The Cadenilla Eskrima Group**  
**Conceptual Learning**  
**The Cadenilla Principle**  
**The Flow Between the Beats**  
**Range and Spatial Relationships**  
**Spatial Relationships**

Ranges

Largo

Medio

Corto

**Conclusion**



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Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts, other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts, the culture of the Philippines and other related subjects.

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The FMA Informative was very fortunate to have Mr. Daniel Murray from the Cadenilla Eskrima Group out of Guam. Mr. Murray has trained extensively under Senior Grandmaster Vicente Sanchez in the Philippines, and is currently the head instructor of CEG-Guam. Mr. Murray was assisted by, Mr. Steven Hyde in demonstrating techniques in this issue.

In this issue which is excellent, you (the reader) will find the very basic, concepts and principles of Lightning Scientific Arnis - originally called "Tersia Serrada Cadenilla y Espada y Daga" - from Senior Grandmaster Vicente Sanchez

It is hoped that the FMA Informative will be able to have Mr. Murray expand on this issue in the future.

### **Daniel Murray**

Began his formal training in the Filipino martial arts under Timothy Kashino and has also been blessed with the opportunity to train extensively under Senior Grandmaster Vicente Sanchez in the Philippines. He currently is the head instructor of CEG-Guam, though he will be relocating back to the mainland United States in 2016.

A proponent of actively testing one's abilities under a variety of formats, Dan has competed in both the weapons division of the San Diego Grand Internationals and the stick fighting portion of the Cold Steel Challenge.

Complimentary to his love of the Filipino martial arts, he has a love of grappling styles and holds a Brown Belt in Judo and a Blue Belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.



Tim Kashino

Senior Grandmaster Vicente Sanchez

Daniel Murray

## The Cadenilla Eskrima Group

We chose the name “Cadenilla Eskrima Group” to pay homage to the influence of the training we have received in Lightning Scientific Arnis - originally called “Tersia Serrada Cadenilla y Espada y Daga” - from Senior Grandmaster Vicente Sanchez. While training with Senior Grandmaster Sanchez in June of 2008, Tim Kashino and I presented Mang Vic with a copy of the Cadenilla Eskrima Group’s curriculum for his approval. After reviewing and approving our curriculum, he told us that Cadenilla – meaning “small chain” – was a very appropriate name for the group. He remarked, “You have so many styles all in one school, so many styles linked together. It is very good.” What had started as a name for our group that honored our teacher, his lineage and what he taught us had also become a moniker the sums up our training philosophy.

The Cadenilla principle – connecting concepts, styles and systems - is not new. It’s an eclectic approach that draws from numerous methods and makes connections between them to teach students how to be both physically and mentally adaptive. Our curriculum draws from various systems; Modern Arnis (and its Balintawak influence), Kenpo Karate, Lightning Scientific Arnis, Pancipanci Eskrima and Cinco Teros-Kasilagan, and isolates several methods or “sub-systems” that make up those systems and relate them back to others



*CEG-Guam with Senior Grandmaster Sanchez*

## Cadenilla Eskrima

The strength of the Cadenilla system flows not from its technical make up, but rather from two overarching principles that guide how everything in the system is taught and processed: Conceptual Learning and the Cadenilla Principle.



*Cold Steel Challenge 2012  
(Author on the Left)*

## Conceptual Learning

We should begin by explaining in greater detail what it is to view your art and training in a conceptual manner. Merriam Webster defines “concept” as “to conceive something in the mind”, with “conceive” further defined as “to apprehend by reason or imagination”

These definitions begin to make clear that our goal is not the mere accumulation of drills, strikes, blocks, and patterns. An individual can spend years working on just these aspects of Eskrima but at the end of the day, all they are doing is memorizing and

repeating motions. They may be “learning” something but they do not necessarily “understand” anything.

Say we were to take someone who speaks English and have him memorize a conversation in Spanish simply by learning set responses in particular order without knowing what he is actually being asked or what he is responding with. The individual could honestly say that he “speaks” Spanish, but clearly he has no real understanding of what he is saying or why he is saying it. Sadly, this is the type of training that

passes for instruction in many schools.

Conversely, we could take someone and start him from the very beginning by learning the true make-up of the Spanish language. He would learn sentence structure, definitions, conjugation, inflection, etc. It may take a longer period of time to learn how to carry on the same conversation that the other individual simply memorized, but he would know exactly what was being said and why. He would also be able to add to the conversation by taking it in different directions because he is not just mimicking sounds.

Additionally, our true Spanish speaker could conceivably now hear other languages that he’d never been exposed to such as Tagalog, Portuguese, or Italian, and at least be able to make some sense of what he is hearing because of the common traits of these languages.

This type of learning is what we are seeking by viewing our art conceptually. We are not looking to mimic,

## The Cadenilla Principle

As an individual continues to progress in their training, they will begin to see that within the Filipino martial arts there is a great deal of congruency of motion stretching across many of the things we do. This is by no means a “secret” as the phrase “knife teaches stick” or “stick teaches empty hand” are standard points of instruction in any school. This congruency of motion however is usually only briefly touched on in most schools that focus more on flashy or unsound techniques.

There are a limited number of ways in which the human body can move. For that reason, there are bound to be numerous correlations of similar movements across the art, often with the only differences being a change in either the geometry of the motion or spatial relationship. At times, the only difference is in how the motion is taught or labeled. The horizontal motions of plus pattern Cinco Terros are no different than those of Banda y Banda.

Once you begin to understand the keys of motions, and the science behind them, you can easily recognize the same motions in any art, Filipino or not. This is why Remy Presas could say that Modern Arnis was the art within your art. He understood the simple fact that it is virtually impossible to avoid congruency of motion. Some arts may have more congruency to each other than others but there is almost always some degree of similarity. These similarities represent

we are looking to understand.

Conceptual Expertise truly begins with the basics, the initial material of the Abecedario. Only by spending the time to truly and completely understand these building blocks, can someone progress to an understanding of the essential concepts. Just as a child does not learn to say complex words all at one time but rather learns to make sounds, and then form them into words, then come to understand those words, the eskrimador follows a similar progression.

One of the greatest benefits of learning an art conceptually is that it teaches a student to view any new material with a discerning eye and with the questions of “how and why” ever present in their mind. This can help to eliminate any stylistic biases because the student learns to be less concerned with what they have been told about an art, but rather what they are observing with their own two eyes.

the physical connecting threads between the arts (as opposed to the equally important historical connecting threads that come from the influence of occupational forces or invaders).

There are also connections to be made strictly within the Filipino martial arts as well. Many people speak of their expertise at a particular range but speak very little of how they are able to enter than range against a determined opponent. How does one transition from a medio/largo based drill like Bigay Tama and move in to confuse the opponent with techniques lifted from Balintawak? What is the missing link to effective entries and exits?

When the individual has a solid grasp of the material mentioned in the physical concepts section, it opens the mind to finding these existing links. The secret lies in linking the concepts, the geometry, the rhythm, the empty space in ways that have not been previously explored within the context of that style of Eskrima. The concepts ARE the small chain that links everything together.

Each one of the training concepts is interconnected with one another like the pieces of a puzzle. As pieces begin to link together more and more, the picture will become more and more clear, which in turn makes it even easier to put the rest of the pieces into the puzzle.

Every stage of development after the under-

standing of the basic concepts will involve some degree of self-discovery, either through individual training, study, and thought or through properly guided partner training.

Once the individual has the concepts fully ingrained in their mind, they should be able to begin

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## The Flow Between the Beats

Students who have trained with me for a while often notice I make many correlations between martial arts and music. On the surface this might seem obvious. Due to the fact that so much of Filipino martial arts is a combination of rhythm and timing, it would only make sense that there would be a musical connection, be in something simple such as utilizing drums during training or understanding the six count beat of a simple *siniwali* drill.

This connection is really only the scratching of the surface though. I should state right now that I am not at all what I would consider a “Musician”. I can play the guitar a bit and do some simple drumming. In regards to this article, my point of view is through the eyes of a rhythm guitarist. You won’t catch me pulling off any Hendrix solos, but I know enough chords to pretty much take care of any song to the point that you can sing along with it.

So what does this have to do with the Filipino martial arts? Let’s take a drill like *Sumbrada*, a simple 1-4-12. We have three clear movements, an action followed by a reaction and a counter that can continue in a perpetual motion. It is, in essence, a “song” that never ends. Each of those strikes and counters is like a musical chord.

By itself, that chord may sound pleasing. It serves a specific purpose and carries a specific feeling. And while you can string that chord together multiple times, it is not, by itself, a song any more than repeating *Sumbrada* over and over is “fighting”. So in order to make a song we need at least another chord. So then maybe we take a drill like *Siniwali* and link that to our *Sumbrada*. Now we have two “sounds” working together to form a more complete tune. Is it a complex song? No, it is still very basic. But it is one step closer. We can continue to add “chords” to the song so long as the rhythm is pleasing and things have a real “flow” between them.

When we use this paradigm, the way we teach someone how to play a song on the guitar or piano is not that different from how most students are first

making connections on their own accord, though in some cases some prodding and suggestion might be necessary to get them on the right track. This could be done by demonstrating one aspect of connecting threads in order to stimulate the thought process.



*The Author demonstrating in Rizal Park 2013*

introduced to the Filipino martial arts. Most folk songs use some variation of the same four chords: G, C, D, and Em. Once a student learns those four chords to play one song, the student has learned the “*abecedario*” of folk music and can now jumble those four chords up to play hundreds of other songs. This is akin to learning the classical styles of *Eskrima*. Once you have the concepts of *Doblete*, *Cinco Terros*, *Sungkiti*, and *Banda y Banda*, you have a very strong foundation that can be used to effectively fight. Your ability to use either of these examples though will depend upon how much you practice in order to establish your “flow” from one style or chord to another. This is the difference between a beginning student and someone who really has the basics down pat. In the music world you can clearly hear the difference and in the Filipino martial arts world, you can clearly see it when they try to spar or flow between ranges.

Once a musician has learned a few songs (nothing more than set patterns of notes and chords) and grasped the concepts of flowing, now they can start to “jam”. They can go completely free flow without a preset arrangement and make up their own songs on the fly. They also now have the ability to sit in with another musician (be it guitar player, drummer, etc) and due to their understanding of beats, timing, and flow they can play along with that person even if they have not practiced together before. The instrument the other musician uses is inconsequential because the timing, rhythm and flow are universal concepts. See

where I’m going with this? Just replace “musician” with “*Eskrimador*”.

While this analogy can help a student to understand what it means to have “flow”, we can also use this musical connection to also show them how easy it is to become stagnant in your training.

While there is debate about the term “muscle memory”, it cannot be argued that once an individual learns a physical skill to a high degree, their body can perform that skill largely independent of conscious thought. The skill truly becomes a part of us and feels like second nature. This is often a very positive thing but sometimes we get so comfortable with a particular skill or movement that it becomes too familiar to us and hinders our growth when we try to learn something new.

Speaking of the fact that so many of his songs follow a variation of the G, Em, C, D structure, folk singer John Prine has said something to the effect of “the fingers know where they want to go. They return to the comfortable places and won’t go someplace new unless I force them to”. Once our brain has mastered a skill set and we have received the ego boost of positive reinforcement (i.e. people applaud our playing or we sell a platinum album, etc) we naturally don’t want to deviate from this formula that has brought us these good feelings. For this reason, many artists will remain in a comfort zone of repeating the

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## Range and Spatial Relationships

It is commonly accepted in the Filipino martial arts that there are three main ranges of weapon based combat. These are commonly known as *Largo* (long), *Medio* (medium), and *Corto* (close) ranges, respectively.

While nearly all the Filipino martial arts systems train in each of these ranges to some extent, many systems do choose a particular range in which to specialize. Our purpose here is to examine these three primary ranges, identify some basic advantages and disadvantages to their use in combat, and shed some light on those spatial relationships that occur outside of the “Big 3” ranges.

same flow and formula over and over unless one they lose that positive reinforcement, either internally (they no longer are pleased with themselves performing the same things) or externally (album sales go down, critics say you have grown stagnant).

By this same token, it is easy for an *Eskrimador* to fall into a comfort zone of repetition. We all develop favorite tactics, ranges, and skill sets. Things that work for us and give us the positive feedback of success, either through sparring/competing or the praise of our peers/superiors. For many people, this is really where their journey in the art ends. You find many martial artists say they have been learning martial arts for XX of years. In most cases, they have been “learning” for five or so years and then “repeating” for the remainder of that time with little thought to progression or challenging themselves to step out of their comfort zone.

Just like the musician who sticks to the same chords and patterns, it doesn’t mean that what they stick to is inadequate. Just as practical combat needs to be simple, there are hundreds of great songs that have a simple melody. The difference is in the artistry, in having a truly well rounded skill set that promotes learning throughout a lifetime and gives you a greater ability to express who you are as a person. That is what the core of any art, be it martial or musical, is all about.



*The Author discussing Spatial Relationships with members of CEG-Pacific Northwest in 2013*

## Spatial Relationships

A spatial relationship is a blanket term for a number of interactions that are constantly shifting within the “battle space”

At the most basic level, it refers to the distance between you and your opponent that is more commonly referred to as “range”. Ranges play an integral part of both your offense and defense, determining everything from what block you might utilize to what your counter attack will be.

The second Spatial Relationship, one that is most often eclipsed by focusing on range, is the relationship between your weapon and the weapon of your opponent. This can be reflected in two ways. The first is the simple fact that you may not be dealing with matched weapons of equal length and as such even if you are in the same “range” with your opponent, your spatial relationship may be different. Secondly, this relationship can change due to the body structure of you and your opponent. If you are in a Serrada position and the opponent is in an “open” position, the spatial relationship between your weapons is obviously different that’s what it would be if you were both in an open position. Another example of differing body structures affecting the relationship would be someone utilizing a false lead. These seemingly minor differences can create major changes in tactics, particularly when they are combined with a proper use of timing, rhythm, and geometry, as we will discuss later.

The third spatial relationship is the relationship you and your opponent share with empty space. This empty space might be a large area, such as when you have yet to engage and are both beyond Largo range, or it might be a very small area that presents itself to attack the opponent as you block, check, and then counter his strike. This empty space might be utilized offensively, as previously mentioned, or it might be a simple defensive tactic such as simply stepping your leg back to avoid a low strike. The goal is to make effective use of existing empty space, recognize applications for empty space as it shifts and changes, and to create new empty space in order to dictate the use of the battle space.

### Ranges

Now that we have explained the basic concept of Spatial Relationships, we can speak specifically on range, beginning with Largo.

Largo is often described as the range at which you are able to strike your opponent’s extremities (usually the hand but also potentially the leg) while the opponent remains unable to strike your head. It can also be viewed as a range at which the practitioner is able to use footwork and body movement in such a way as to avoid the opponent’s strikes without using his own weapons to block or parry.

The advantages of Largo range are both numerous and obvious. First, your distance from your opponent allows you greater observation of his movement, which in turn allows for a faster reaction time. Secondly, this



*These photos represent that the spatial relationship can change between opponents based on their stance and body posture even if the range remains the same.*



- 1: Grey prepares to attack Red with a forehand diagonal strike
- 2: Red responds with a modified Lightning Scientific Method 5, first striking the hand from Largo
- 3: Red shifts his body closer and delivers a backhand redonda to Grey's arm.
- 4: Red transitions to Medio range and finishes Grey with a power back hand to the head.

greater distance allows for maximum use of footwork. Finally, by staying at Largo you are keeping your vital targets protect from the enemy while maintaining an ability to “chip away” at both his ability and desire to continue to engagement.

This is not to say that Largo does not have noticeable drawbacks. An initial concern is that effective use of Largo requires some degree of open space and room to move, two environmental factors that the practitioner may not be able to dictate. Additionally, two of Largo’s advantages can also be viewed in a negative light as your distance to the opponent can make your actions readable if you initiate the attack without proper use of deceptive tactics. Also, his vital target areas remain out of your striking area unless you choose to close distance. Finally, unless you have specifically trained against someone who is aggressively trying to advance, it can be difficult to keep a determined opponent from closing distance and crashing into Corto range.

### Medio

As we now move both combatants closer to one another, we reach Medio range, commonly described as the range as which both people are able to strike the opponents head with their weapon, as well as use their live hand to manipulate and strike the opponent to some degree.

Medio is an interesting range as it is one that, in my experience, only exists for a few seconds at a time unless both combatants choose for it to exist longer. What I mean by this is that in actual force on force training, participants are constantly flowing between ranges in order to gain a tactical advantage best suited to their own abilities and preferences. As such, a settling of the feet at Medio range lasts only long enough to strike or defend and is immediately followed either by a moving forward into Corto or retreating back into Largo.

This is neither surprising nor inherently bad. Medio is in many ways the most dangerous range to be in for the basic reason that nearly every conceivable technique “works” at this range and all vital targets are in range. It SHOULD be viewed as a transitory range and one to be avoided.

That thought process runs contradictory to many training methods and drills that only work when both combatant remain in Medio. This is not to say that such drills are devoid of value but rather that they must be viewed as what they are: attribute and coordination development. The combative appli-

cation of such drills must be trained in Corto and Largo if they are to maximize their actual value.



1/2/3: Beginning at Medio, Grey attempts for a disarm  
4: Grey begins a swing at Red's Head but Red crashes in to smother the attack



5: Red uses Grey's momentum to perform a hip throw  
6: Red prepares to finish Grey with a strike to the face.



## Corto

This brings us to Corto Range. Corto is often defined as the range at which one is able to strike with the punyo of the stick, as well as making use of strikes such as headbutts and elbows. Additionally, I consider this range to include various stick grapples and locks (trankada) as well as standing throws and takedowns.



Tactics at Corto can range from the intricate cuentada of Balintawak to a direct and brutal gouging of the eye. It is my opinion that Corto is the most complicated and difficult range to deal with due to both the sheer variety of attacks possible and the intensity and speed with which they occur.

Aspects of Corto can be viewed as either advantageous or detrimental based on the context of if you are the one initiating the action or defending against it. Due to the close distance, things happen very quickly and often outside of our sight perception. This can make it very difficult to react and defend effectively.

Secondly, blunt weapons tactics can often be smothered and as such will not land effectively enough to stop a determined opponent. This is why elements of stick grappling become so important at Corto.

Finally, intensity and aggression can often overwhelm practitioners at this range if they have not specifically prepared themselves to handle it.

1: Grey prepares to attack Red with a strike to the crown of the head  
2/3: Seeking to change the range, Red defends with Payong and crashes into Corto Range  
4: Now at Corto, Red strikes Grey in the back of the head with his stick and applies a neck compression.

## Conclusion

Understand that this is but the briefest of overviews of range as it relates to the Cadenilla System and serves only as an introduction to how we define and conceptualize range and spatial relationships. Future articles can delve into how the ranges relate to one another in action and how technique application can change accordingly.

### ***School Submission***

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

Be Professional; keep your contact information current. - **Click Here**



### ***Event Submission***

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### ***Article Submission***

Finished manuscripts should be accompanied by color or black and white photographs. Though we take care of materials, we can not be responsible for manuscripts/photographs and accept no liability for same. Every photograph or graphic must be accompanied by a caption Carefully key photos to caption information with a letter or number.

We reserve the right to use any photo(s) as cover material or additional compensation. We also reserve the right to edit material and to crop photographs.

We reserve the right to use articles or parts of articles that are given and approved from time to time as needed to promote the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines.

Physical manuscripts should be typed in black, double spaced, and set to 1-1/2 margins (right and left).

Emailed manuscripts should be typed in Ariel or Times Roman, on programs such as Notepad, Wordpad, Microsoft Word, Word Perfect and can be sent as an attachment. Photo(s) can be sent as a .jpg, .gif, .bmp, or .tiff - to submit material for either the FMA Informative Newspaper or an Issue **Click Here**

We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.