Chapter 1
Introduction: **Planning and Implementing a Curriculum in a Specialized Discipline**

The development of a training program in a specialized discipline is a process which is similar to and informed by "strategic planning." Virtually every serious and comprehensive contribution to the literature on curricular development and design includes a section on strategic planning. Similarly, every comprehensive discussion on the justice-related discipline addresses the issue of strategic planning. It would be inappropriate to ignore this planning concept here.

Elements of Strategic Planning

Experts on strategic planning have identified a variety of steps in the process. Some of the literature catalogues a complex array of steps in the planning process while some have only a few, critical steps.

Strategic planning in education has been addressed often and by some very qualified experts. It would be duplicative to catalogue many of the approaches, which tend to differ slightly but in non-substantive ways so only a few approaches will be described. These approaches have utility later as we describe the processes which can be and should be used in developing a "training architecture" or structure.

We will first view what Bryson and Einsweiler[1] call the basic steps in public sector strategic planning. These are the logical steps an organization, particularly a public organization should take in developing strategic plans. These steps are:

- Scan the environment
- Select key issues
- Set mission statements or broad goals
- Undertake external or internal analyses
- Develop goals, objectives and strategies for each issue
- Develop an implementation plan to carry out strategic actions
- Monitor, update and scan

These or similar steps in a strategic planning process can assist an organization in clarifying directions, establishing priorities, and make defensible decisions, across levels and functions.[2]

McCune[3] describes a curricular planning process which includes but is not limited to strategic planning. She uses strategic planning to address the question "Where are we going?" and includes in this element (1) the strategic plan, (2) the mission statement, (3) the goals, and (4) the decision points. The next element in the planning process described by McCune is program planning. She uses this term to describe the answer to the question "How do we get there?" and includes (1) a curriculum plan, (2) a personnel development plan, (3) a facilities plan, and (4) a budget. The final element she describes is the program delivery plan which answers the question "What do we do to get there?" and includes (1) lesson plans, and (2) work plans. McCune's planning process addresses broadly the issues of relevance (strategic planning), effectiveness (program planning), and efficiency (program delivery).

Finch and Crunkilton describe a strategic planning process which is more specific than McCune's. They define strategic planning as a process or series of steps that guide the organization through:

- Examining the external environment and its impact on the organization now and in the future.
- Conducting a self examination.
- Formulating vision and mission statements to guide the organization in the future.
- Developing specific plans that will assist the organization to fulfill its vision and mission.
- Applying the strategies included in the plan.
- Evaluating the organization through formative and summative assessment approaches.[4]

Clearly they emphasize the introspective examination of the organization or unit to determine the appropriateness of the actions. They give little insight, however, on the process of developing the specific plans (step 4) which are to be used. This is the information the organization or agency is most interested in seeing articulated because it represents the blueprint or "road map" which, if followed, is likely to accomplish the objectives. Their steps provide information on the general objectives and outcomes of the steps but we can turn to justice-related literature to find more specificity in the steps or elements.

One of the most comprehensive and specific treatments of planning was contributed by Victor Strecher.[5] Following years of planning and delivering police training and decades of planning and directing some of the most prestigious criminal justice educational programs in the nation, Strecher published a treatise on Planning Community Policing. Designed most likely as a text, the book has been used by many police administrators in directing systematic and strategic change within organizations.

Under the heading "Goal-Oriented Change," Strecher describes sixteen steps or elements in the system planning model. These steps are consistent with the strategic planning process but provide specificity within some of the categories. The steps or elements are:

    Define the problem
    Define the service goal
    Analyze the service goal
    Accept, refine or reject the service goal
    Commit the agency to the goal - policy, dimension of response
    Compile an array of strategy alternatives

Analyze the costs of strategy alternatives
Select the strategy
Convert the strategy to an action plan
Divide the work of the action plan
Assign the task to units
Implement the action plan
Monitor the operation
Feed back the monitoring information
Refine any stage in the retro-plan
Manage the system toward its goal and productivity

Each of these sixteen steps or elements requires a great deal of work and each could easily be divided into many more elements or steps. Most organizations begin by compiling "an array of strategic alternatives" but, as Strecher advises, there are issues related to problem identification and service goal development prior to determining which strategies apply.

Advantages of Adopting a Planning Approach

To implement a plan without first developing a plan is illogical. Similarly, to implement a curriculum without planning and developing that curriculum or training process is ill-advised and illogical. What most organizations seek is a process which adopts the goals, however they are produced, and achieves the goals of the organization. Boiled down to one element, the organizational goals should be achieved. In the training environment, the objective is to implement and instruct the appropriate curriculum to prepare people to resolve or address certain issues and problems.

Overview of this Document

This document includes a theoretical platform or predicate, Part I, and a more focused, condensed process for curriculum development, consistent with the predicate. The articulation of the theoretical foundation is broadly based in order to accommodate changes in the future as well as provide guidance and suggestions for further development of curricula. The more focused "process" portion of this document, Part II, is intended to provide guidance in the development of a training curriculum in a specialized discipline. It does not include all of the foundational information and materials used to develop academic "degree-granting" disciplines, although that may be useful for future initiatives.

In the composite, this document is a strategy for curriculum development. The strategy is not intended to meet a specific quantifiable goal, although it is constructed so that it may be adjusted to do so. It is, in that sense, a generic strategy that should work on any scale and in any environment. A companion to Parts I and II is the Executive Summary which introduces the document and provides answers to key questions associated with training in the WMD environment. The processes used to glean those answers were consistent with Parts I and II which reinforces the utility of the portions as "predicates" for the continued understanding of the best, most appropriate curricular approaches for WMD.

Part I of the strategy is comprised of the Introduction and five other sections: (1) Contemporary Approaches to Curricular Development, (2) Assessment of Training Needs to Determine Curricular Content; (3) Curriculum Development and Revision; (4) Training Delivery Methods; and (5) Quality Control Measures.

The section on contemporary approaches to the design and development of a curriculum, describes broad, overarching issues associated with envisioning and perfecting a curriculum, with examples to show that it is not a fast process but one which includes formation and revision over time. These examples include both education and training curricula, based on literature in the disciplines exemplified. The Needs Assessment section addresses the process for determination of need for training and education and focused indications of the content of that curriculum. The curriculum development and revision section addresses the process for developing and revising courses for which there is a determined need, with particular attention to the educational objectives. If the educational objectives are properly constructed, and based on good educational theory, the curriculum should be sound. For that reason, a great deal of attention is given to the prominent taxonomies of educational objectives. These objectives become common themes in this and other sections of the document. The training delivery section addresses the process for determining the delivery method(s) to be employed for each course developed, based on the educational objectives and other criteria. The quality control section addresses competencies, course monitoring and evaluations and the maintenance of a comprehensive feedback loop.

We are of the opinion that this document has utility and its utility will increase over time. A curriculum developed on a sound foundation, a predicate based on good theories and valid educational philosophies, will have sufficient value so as to endure as long as the need for the specific education exist. The curriculum will change, as will the approaches used to develop it and the inherent courses, as has been the case with every other curriculum. No effort has been made here to justify an approach or even to specify any one approach to curricular development. The emphasis, instead, is to develop an appropriate, defensible process with options which can be adopted and tailored by subject-matter experts to develop and refine courses and curricula to meet ever-changing needs.

Notes to Chapter One

1. Bryson, J.M. and R.C. Einsweiler. (1991) <u>Shared Power.</u> Lanham, MD: University Press of America; and Bryson, J.M. (1988). <u>Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations.</u> San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

2. Steiner, George A. (1979). <u>Strategic Planning</u>. New York: Free Press.

3. McCune, Shirley D. (1986). <u>Guide to Strategic Planning for Educators</u>. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curricular Development.

4. Finch, Curtis R. and John R. Crunkilton. (1999). <u>Curriculum Development in vocational and Technical Education: Planning, Content, and Implementation</u>. Boston: Allyn Bacon. P. 46.

5. Strecher, Victor G. (1997)<u>. Planning Community Policing: Goal Specific Cases and Exercises</u>. Prospect Heights: Waveland, p. 26-30.