Phase I
Germinal Phase: Reactive Curriculum Development

The need for training in WMD has arisen in response to terrorist threats, successful and unsuccessful, along with funding to help insulate or prepare the citizens of the nation. Rudimentary training and response preparation has existed for some time, to widely varying degrees, at the federal, state, and municipal levels. The joining of initiatives under ODP requires some immediate curricular development. This first response to the need for training is not likely to have the luxury of time needed to fully develop all of the elements of a polished curriculum. What is likely to evolve is a process similar to that described in the earliest phase of development of the criminal justice curriculum.

The first twenty years of the development of criminology and criminal justice exemplified the "rational process" using subject matter experts to construct, collate, and deliver instruction on those topics and issues "believed" to be appropriate to the discipline. Similarly, we would anticipate that the first phase of WMD training would be responsive to *perceived* needs and the curriculum development would be based on the rational process. As stated earlier, the rational process is a viable model of course and curriculum development. It is described as:

Rational Process.   If there is insufficient time or insufficient information on which to proceed but it is essential to proceed quickly, a rational approach, informed by experts, often referred to as "Subject-Matter Experts," on the subject, may be the most viable method to use. If the experts on the subject are sufficiently knowledgeable, representative, unbiased, and articulate, the initial curricula should be appropriate and valid. This method is an established one in the development of curricula in training and education. It relies upon the strength of those experts who recommend and design the elements, based on their intuitive and experiential views of needs and gaps.

A somewhat more sophisticated "rational approach" but still elementary model is that of DACUM. The DACUM approach is a quasi-informal method of developing the basic elements of instruction and curriculum and is the acronym for **D**eveloping **A** Curricul**UM.** This approach was developed by the Canada Department of Manpower and Immigration along with the General Learning Corporation[1] and is a quick, straight-forward approach to developing the key elements of a curriculum. The first step in DACUM is the development of a single sheet skill profile which serves as the curricular plan. The profile is typically developed by a group of experts or persons skilled in that particular profession or activity. The DACUM group or committee develops the profile which serves as the basis for instructional content.

As with the "Rational Process," the appropriateness of the curriculum is dependant upon the expertise of the DACUM group or committee. If they are knowledgeable and comprehensive, the curriculum should be appropriate. In fact, it may be so appropriate that there are few changes once more sophisticated methods are employed. If the committee or group developing the initial or germinal curriculum are also versed in educational theory and literature, the methods used to deliver the training are also likely to be appropriate.

A reasonable process or method for (1) responding quickly to a need or demand, (2) with the most appropriate initial set of courses or curriculum, and (3) establishing the framework for a more sophisticated and defensible curriculum development, refinement, or validation approach, is described below:

- Define, as comprehensively as possible, the discipline, topics, and personnel subject to the training;
- Identify, using subject matter experts, the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed;
- Identify the existing training, resources, and courses which accommodate the needs;
- Develop new courses to accommodate the gaps;
- Deliver the training using instructors trained in the subject matter and in instruction;
- Engage in Strategic Planning to refine the parameters of the enquiry, discipline, and training;
- Engage in strategic curriculum development to revise, refine, or validate the initial or germinal approaches.

The steps in this process are consistent with those described by Tyler.[2] A revised version of what he suggested curricular developers consider is presented below:

Learner   First, though not exclusively, curricular planners should look to the learners' needs to help determine the range of topics and material to be addressed in a curriculum. In essence, the learners' needs and abilities are screened to determine the type of courses and curriculum needed.

Agencies   Agencies, organizations, communities, states, and other entities outside the learner or participant but exerting a strong influence on him or her would be the critical variable in this stage of planning.[3]

Subject Matter   The subject matter obviously exerts a strong influence on the curriculum. Tyler comments on the value of "subject matter experts" in the development of new courses and new curriculum but he infers that they are also keeping the other two elements - students and organizations - in mind as they recommend and refine new courses of study.

Tyler recommended that curriculum planners "screen" the objectives which rise from the consideration of students, society and subject. The "screen" he suggested was both a philosophical screen and a psychological screen.[4]

While we find this initial or germinal approach to curriculum and course development to be a viable one, it is not the central purpose of this document. This document, as is clear in the earlier sections, is designed to articulate the preferred or recommended *proactive* steps to be considered in the curriculum process. This is more the subject of the next section.

Notes to Phase I.

1. Adams, R. E. (1975). <u>DACUM Approach to Curriculum, Learning and Evaluation in Occupational Training</u>. Yarmouth, Nova Scotia: Regional Economic Expansion.

2. Tyler, Ralph W. (1949). <u>Basic Principle of Curriculum and Instruction</u>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

3. Tyler, Op cit., p. 19-20, 34-39

4. Tyler, op. Cit., p. 29.