KEYS TO A STRONG COMBATIVES CURRICULUM

There are several key concepts to consider when evaluating current defensive tactics curriculum, or on which to build a combatives program. The material needs to be based on your group's desired outcome. This can vary depending on whether you are a military unit, law enforcement agency or close protection team. Even within these categories there can be different sub-category outcomes. For example in law enforcement, the curriculum could be for a Parole and Probation agency, a corrections setting, or a patrol officer. Furthermore, each agency could have outcomes that are specific to them. Essentially, *one size does not fit all*.

Law enforcement agencies have traditionally taught defensive tactics to officers in a technique-based approach that rarely leads to the desired officer outcome of subject custody and control. In traditional combat athletics such as wrestling, boxing, Muay Thai, or Brazilian Jiu Jitsu there are clear outcomes that the athlete is trying to achieve. Clear goals steeped in supporting principles and concepts provide the foundation for a winning outcome-based strategy. Techniques are merely the vehicles to deliver principles during combative encounters. In the world of law enforcement, the primary focus of this article, the combatants who better understands and employs the application of principles and concepts during combative encounters will dominate, which leads to being able to capture the desired outcome- control and custody of a suspect.

Having the honor to teach the Code 4 Concepts (C4C) combatives curriculum to different agencies from around the world here at PFC, I always tell the students that the goal in a combative event is to dominate the opponent. I have little desire to "survive" or have a "fight of the night" type of encounter. I want to dominate the encounter and end it as soon as possible; staying true to principles that will lead to the desired outcome does this.

One of the challenges in creating or evaluating an agencies curriculum for defensive tactics or combatives is the "experts" sought have extensive training, experience, and knowledge in coaching and competing in the combative arts, but they have little to no experience in the outcomes that law enforcement need to achieve in their world. This is not to say that these individuals have nothing to offer the armed professional, in fact they do, it is just that they are severely handicapped in a true understanding what we do, or need to do to be effective. All too often agencies get an expensive martial arts lesson that does not enable the user to achieve their desired outcome when they are in the street with the bad guys.

A prime example of this is the proliferation of BJJ masters who market and teach military and law enforcement units around the world. As I mentioned, I am a BJJ coach and competitor for a high level BJJ team in Las Vegas, NV and I love BJJ. However, it is an immediate red flag when I attend a "law enforcement" training led by a BJJ black belt and the

curriculum is a technique based BJJ lesson that does not lead to the desired outcome of custody and control. In law enforcement circles this means that the suspect is handcuffed. Having a guard heavy curriculum (officer on his back, suspect on top, officers legs between he and suspect) that does not focus on the officer escaping to top the suspect on his belly face down for handcuffing, is a curriculum that is NOT focused on LE outcomes. These experts often mean well, but they have almost certainly not diligently sought out a law enforcement perspective to comprehensively develop and deliver the curriculum in a way that truly meets the needs.

The best combatives instructors will have vast experience and training in traditional combat systems, coaching experience in those systems, and extensive training and operational experience in law enforcement and military theaters. At PFC our Code 4 Concepts curriculum is created and taught by high-level competitors, coaches, and police and military operators. Our civilian instructors have spent years training alongside armed professionals and are constantly pursuing better ways to help operators achieve their outcome through a principled approach that enhances ability, retention, and performance.

Another red flag for consideration is when instructors say that you should always or never do this or that. An example would be that you should "always make space and go to a tool" as a police officer, or you "should never go to the ground." At PFC we provide solid principle based instruction that leads to the operator being in dominant positions over the suspect, and we expect the operator to be a living, breathing, thinking, problem solver who works towards their outcome throughout the encounter. Whether the operator stays attached, strikes the suspect, disengages and transitions to a weapon system, takes the suspect down, or works for a team resolution to the situation is up to the operator, and is often dictated by the situation. Training is preparation for the battle and training should prepare the operator for battlefield tests by identifying clear outcomes, and then having principles and concepts that will lead to successful completion of these outcomes. Operators need to be thinking problem solvers when these tests occur.

Some instructors postulate they want to enhance "what you will do naturally" in a fight and therefore their curriculum is easy to teach and retain. This is not always the best approach, as what you do naturally in a combative encounter will often get you killed. This can be true in many stressful circumstances. In EVOC driving courses students are taught not to be heavy on the brake when faced with an eminent collision, even though the natural response is to stomp on the brake in an attempt to stop. Steering during dangerous tactical situations should be small inputs, although the natural inclination is to jerk the wheel violently, leading to the operator losing control of his vehicle. Another example is the importance of sight picture,

sight alignment, and trigger control in a deadly force/shooting incident. When involved in a situation where someone is trying to kill you in a gunfight, the above response is not a natural reaction to being shot at. However, the above concepts can be critical for the operator to deliver effective hits in a gunfight.

In much the same way, many of the same "natural" reactions to being attacked can lead to an operator losing a combative encounter. Some common natural reactions are to try to lean back or back up when being punched, reaching or trying to block punches, or turning away. All of these natural reactions will get you knocked out. C4C has a specific 4-principle approach to punch defense that leads to operators being hard to knock out immediately after training with us. Another example would be someone throwing their hips back if an offender tries to take them down, when in actuality the operator should put their hips in to stop the takedown. The good news is through the C4C outcome principle based approach we can overcome the "natural" reactions that will get you killed, just as we do in driving or gun fights.

In addition to applying a solid outcome principle based curriculum and training program, C4C uses math to validate and test all curriculum. Use math to eternally search for an easier, quicker, more consistent way to do things. If something takes four steps, and you figure out how to do it in two, change your curriculum as soon as you can verify your results through pressure testing in the training room and the field. Constantly look for techniques that can be effective for big operators or small, males or females, old and young. Also asking: Do our tactics work against trained and untrained offenders? Can you find a way to teach something so that retention is improved for our students? (Big hint, teach principles as your base, not techniques…then students learn knowledge, not moves.) Can students teach others? This would show that they understand the "whys" and "hows" of what we do. If students can't retain material, it only works against certain people or only works a small percentage of the time, etc, then your math is terrible and your curriculum is weak as well.

To make your combatives material effective and retainable it must be an outcome based system that is based on solid principles and concepts. Test it often through a constant application of math and scenario-based training. Avoid technique-based curriculum created and taught by instructors who don't know our needs and outcomes. Be cautious of training that reinforces "natural" reactions that actually should be trained out of us. Seek out curriculum and instructors that have heavy training and experience in our world and understand our outcomes.

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The outcome-based system of Code 4 Concepts, was developed through my 16 years of law enforcement and experience as a student and coach of mixed martial arts and by those who have "been there, done that". We are not beholden to any martial art or system, and we are constantly challenging and refining through math, our curriculum…a way of fighting and training, for the armed professional. We can deliver the training to your agency in Las Vegas, or we are fully capable via Mobile Training Team (MTT) to travel to your location. In addition, we can also provide technical assistance by evaluating your current Defensive Tactics/Combatives curriculum and developing a comprehensive plan to train your agency. For more information you can contact us at info@pfctraining.com or you can reach me directly at lyman@pfctraining.com.

Thanks and stay safe.

Chad Lyman

PFC Director of Combatives & Founder of C4C

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