

Hicks Law vs. Code 4 Concepts

By Chad Lyman

Progressive F.O.R.C.E. Concepts

www.PFCtraining.com

+++++PART ONE+++++

This two-part article will delve into one of the most discussed philosophies and institutionalized influences in the physical defense training industry, Hicks Law, and its juxtaposition to the Code 4 Concepts platform. In this first installment, I will dispel common misconceptions about its implementation within the training industry and the C4C solution. In part two of this article, I will discuss the single biggest counter to Hicks Law and the concepts of angles.

Hicks Law is a phenomenon that is often quoted within the physical defense training industry as the gold standard for a training program's development and implementation. Hicks Law is essentially the relationship between choice reaction time and the number of available options; the more choices you have, the longer it will take to make a decision. Within the training industry, it is often explained that if you train multiple techniques for responding to a threat, once under pressure and attacked, you will be "frozen" with indecision and unable to select any of the techniques learned. While frozen, the officer will get overwhelmed by the suspect's actions, which often lead to the officer doing nothing but cowering in the face of the attack. During training, I have personally witnessed the phenomena of officers remaining frozen, even while being hit or shot at with non-lethal training ammunition until they are verbally prompted to fight back.

As a result of Hicks Law, many trainers decide the answer is to only give students limited options in response to countering a given threat. These "options" are commonly taught as one or two key techniques. This approach not only limits the potential for a successful outcome, but the effectiveness of the techniques as well as the student's mindset.

C4C instruction departs from the overwhelming majority of programs by focusing on a principle and concept based approach, which impacts both the mindset of the practitioner and their overall effectiveness in a physical conflict. Techniques are implemented to support the principles and concepts, not the sole basis for the program. The principle-based approach further creates an independent freethinker who is able to flow with and dominate a physical encounter.

C4C Instructors and students understand that Hicks Law is an illustration of why technique-based combative training systems fail, whether the system/curriculum has two hundred techniques, twenty, or even just one. No matter WHAT you "pick" as the technique(s) of choice, you will encounter several problems. Chief among

them is that the technique selected may not be something that all of your personnel are comfortable performing or even capable of executing.

The ultimate question, which must be answered among many is: Do you believe adhering to a training program based solely on Hicks Law will save your officers when they hit the street tonight?

C4C Instructors and students understand that ANY technique can fail or be countered, regardless of Hicks Law. We teach this principle to our students through the Counter Principle. The Counter Principle says that NOTHING works all the time, in every situation, with every opponent. ANY technique chosen may fail or be countered. Since we know this to be true, how then do you decide on the one or two techniques you will pick to teach as an answer to Hicks Law?

The reality of the Counter Principle can be further explained by the following. If you only have one option, it is not an option, it is a necessity; it had better work. If you have two options it is a dilemma; which one should I use? This can cause a delay, and your inaction can lead to defeat. If you have three or more options, you have legitimate choice and consideration. If one option or technique doesn't work or is countered, no problem, I will simply transition to the next. If something doesn't work for whatever reason, C4C trained officers will flow to another option and continue to pursue their ultimate outcome, control and custody. We don't get frozen or stuck on any single technique or attempt to pick the "perfect" solution.

Since C4C recognizes the legitimacy of Hicks Law as it relates to not being a "collector of techniques," how then do we justify the aforementioned apparent contradiction? C4C is different for two reasons:

- 1- We teach that law enforcement should remain outcome-based. In other words, options and techniques trained should lead to a clearly defined outcome. For regular police work, the desired outcome is control and custody.
- 2- Our curriculum is principle and concept-based. The techniques an officer may use are interchangeable and really don't matter, so long as the technique one chooses does not violate any established principles and leads to the desired outcome.

C4C further counters the "truth" found in Hicks Law and the limitations it places on being technique-based by getting officers to a platform of domination where they can choose multiple options to defeat their adversary. (Platform=Position.) By establishing a dominant platform the C4C trained officers put themselves in a position where they can engage effectively, or choose to transition and disengage from the suspect. In doing so, the officer conversely places the adversary in a position of inferiority and makes it extremely difficult for the subject to be effective until they escape or reverse their circumstance.

The C4C trained officer carries out the dominant platform strategy by consistently trying to carry out three key concepts: Mobility, Transition, and Disengagement.

First, the C4C trained officer is committed to staying mobile and in constant motion. This includes the officers moving themselves and moving the suspect. Movement is implemented to create and release pressure, physically and psychologically, by pushing, pulling, and circling. Movement is further used to establish dominant platforms and to escape inferior ones. If the officer gets caught in an inferior position where their mobility is limited, they will actively fight to become mobile and escape the bad position. Through this principle of mobility, the officer can control the distance in the fight by creating space, or taking it away and crowding the suspect. The officer will also control movement and distance by creating and maintaining angles. Controlling a suspect's head can be a key to the development and management of these angles. We will talk more about angles in part two of this article.

A second critical concept is the consideration of potential transitions throughout the whole encounter. The officer may transition from empty hands to weapons, defense to offense, or vice versa. The officer can decide whether to stay attached or disengage, or go from one technique to another. If an officer stays committed to the concept of consistent transitioning from one platform to the next, from one technique to another, always working to gain more control of their subject and ultimately take them into custody, then the officer will not be defeated or paralyzed by either the Counter Principle or Hicks Law.

Third, the officer should maintain the ability and awareness to disengage from the suspect. If the officer feels he or she needs more resources, they are losing a position of dominance, or if the officer wants space to transition to a weapon system, then this principle of disengagement is a practical course of action. The officer may also make the decision that they no longer want to be attached or engaged up close and personal to the suspect. Ultimately disengagement may be exactly what is needed to regain or establish a new dominant platform.

Please stay tuned for Part 2 of this article and stay safe out there!

AUTHOR BIO:

Chad Lyman is the Director of Combatives for Progressive F.O.R.C.E. Concepts (www.PFCtraining.com) and the founder of the Code 4 Concepts training system. Chad has combined his years of operational law enforcement and Mixed Martial Arts experience to emerge as one of the nation's leading defensive tactics trainers. He is the consummate professional, trainer, and street cop whose dedication to students and the advancement of officer safety through modern tactics is unparalleled. Chad's career began with a Bachelor's Degree from Portland State University in

Administration of Justice and double minor in History and Terrorism Studies. Chad then entered into law enforcement as a full-time Police Officer with the Portland Bureau of Police. There he distinguished himself as a key trainer of police personnel in the areas of defensive tactics and subject control. Chad later moved to Southern Nevada to serve with a major metropolitan police department. His responsibilities have included patrol, Field Training Officer, gang detective, Mobile Crimes Saturation Team (anti-terrorism), and full-time SWAT operator. Chad is currently assigned to the training division as part of the Advanced Officer Skills Training (AOST) team. He also holds multiple law enforcement user and instructor certifications including FTO, firearms, active shooter, riot/civil unrest, and advanced defensive tactics instructor. Chad has trained in Mixed Martial Arts and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for over ten years. He currently serves as a coach for the Gracie Humita Las Vegas Competition Team-Team Mica and has taught Mixed Martial Arts in Las Vegas since 2006. Chad is a frequent grappling competitor and currently holds a Black Belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Because of his exceptional skills, Chad is a personal ground fighting coach for several professional MMA competitors. In 2012, Chad was inducted in the Masters Martial Arts Hall of Fame for his work in the area of police and military defensive tactics.