

Replicating Adverse Dynamics: An Update of The Seven Levels of Simulation Training

by Lawrence N. Nadeau

The original Seven Levels of Simulation Training first appeared in 1995 as part of a video tape entitled **The Building Blocks of Simulation Training** released by RedMan Training Gear. It is a concept developed by law enforcement training pioneer **Gary T. Klugiewicz** and written (narrated) for the video by **Richard Rosenkrantz**, RedMan's Special Projects Manager at the time and one of the most interesting men I have ever met. It should be noted that I was privileged to work very closely with both of these men at RedMan in the early days and I have long considered them mentors, professional allies and personal friends. Richard has since passed, but his many contributions continue to serve law enforcement training to this day. The Seven Levels of Simulation Training were way ahead of their time in an era of "No Win" and "Sandlot" simulations. Still misunderstood by many D.T. Instructors, The Seven Levels gave trainers specific methods of review and the continued development of an officer's previously learned, step by step techniques. It is essentially the mortar that binds each technique they learn together, forming a solid system. A system of trained methods that can be used to reinforce, retain and recall strategies for actual duty use.



First of all The Seven Levels is more of a 'review and development' teaching method than it is an 'initial instruction' teaching method. In other words, participants should already know the techniques they are performing in simulation training. They should already have had the benefit of an Instructor demonstrating and explaining each technique. They already have been provided the opportunity to perform those techniques slow for form, by the numbers with repetition. They have already worked up to a realistic speed of technique employment and are fluid with the learned strategies. The Seven Levels can only be incorporated after the basics have been thoroughly ingrained over time and through student effort in skill development. Officers must have this base knowledge in order to participate in simulation training. If instructors do not spend an adequate amount of time with basic technique indoctrination, pre-mature simulation training efforts will confuse your officers and prove counterproductive.

THE SEVEN LEVELS OF SIMULATION TRAINING:

- 1) Shadow Training*
- 2) Prop Training*
- 3) Partner Training*
- 4) Dynamic Movement*
- 5) Relative Positioning*
- 6) Environmental Factor Training*
- 7) High Level Simulations*

There is a difference between conducting Drills (*Levels 1 through 6*), and executing Scenarios (*Level 7*), though all seven are considered simulation training exercises on the surface. The real difference is in the decision making. Drills are set up and scripted step by step, while scenarios are choreographed allowing participants to interact and make their own decisions based upon what they see and experience within the scenario design. However, both are closely supervised. Drills are, in my opinion, the most underappreciated and under used element of The Seven Levels of Simulation Training, and the real genius of this original training methodology. As you can probably tell, I am a huge fan of the first six levels of simulation training. But, for the sake of this article, I would like to focus on the seventh and final level of simulation within this methodology.

From *The Building Blocks of Simulation Training* video:

7. The final level, is High Level Simulation Training. With the other six levels, the officer focused on one technique at a time, or on a few prearranged techniques. High level simulations force the officers to choose among several options and to help develop their decision-making skills. At any given time, an officer has to make a choice that determines what happens next during the training exercise. These choices add to the complexity of the exercise, and because of this, the instructor has to closely supervise the training to prevent injury to everyone involved. During these exercises, the



demonstrator would be in a full suit while the students would be wearing partial suits. These high level simulation exercises have to be carefully designed, choreographed, and implemented in order to reduce the possibility of injury. This is the top level of the simulation training and should be conducted only after the officers involved in the training have successfully completed all the lower levels. Remember if you don't have enough time to adequately prepare the officers in your class for high level simulations, utilize the modular approach to training, breaking it down into sections and doing it on different days. We all know that high level simulations are the "fun part" of defensive tactics training, but if you don't prepare your students properly for these exercises, you could have confusion and

possible injuries that will place your entire "hands on" training program in jeopardy. Take the time to do it right - even though it will take longer to do it. It's worth it. - Richard Rosenkrantz

During High Level Simulation Training, participant officers will determine the key elements or confrontational parameters of the simulation training experience: Approach, verbal interaction, proximity, force response levels if required, and the techniques, tactics and strategies necessary for successful resolution of the scripted encounter. They don't make all of the training decisions, but the decisions they make are critical to their development in this training environment and in real life. While Drills are "static" because of the lack of student officer decision making, Scenarios are "dynamic" because of the fluidity their decisions create. Replicating the adversity of dynamic real life circumstances can only be achieved productively in training, if the participant officer makes the critical decisions associated with the staged encounter.

Now for the Update; I believe the term **High Level Simulation Training** (the seventh level) is too broad and should be clearly divided into four distinct simulation scenario based levels.

7.) Interactive Simulations- Most of our interactions with the public we serve, do not end up in life and death struggles for control. In fact, the vast majority of interactions with the public are, should I say it, uneventful. We speak to people, issue traffic citations, serve misdemeanor warrants, issue summons, take reports, facilitate custody transfers and respond to complaints daily without confrontation. Why don't we simulate these interactions in training? We should, because any one of these situations can "go bad" if handled improperly. We have all seen situations that were mishandled and "snowballed" out of control, requiring more force than was initially necessary to achieve control of the situation. Am I wrong? This level is about simulating situations that law enforcement and correctional officers are required to handle every day. From verbal interaction to standing handcuff placement. There is an art to professional interaction with the public and those interactions are, more often than not, critical to our missions success. We should definitely be teaching new recruits and veteran officers alike this art form. The beauty of this level, for administrators, is it requires the least amount of gear, has the lowest risk of training



injury, and covers 90% of what officers do on the job daily; Interact. Which makes it the single most important and easiest level of scenario based training you can provide your officers.



8.) Subject Control Simulations- This is one of the most common scenario based training levels in law enforcement today, and has been for many years. Scenarios range from foot pursuit, hard pressure point activation and prone cuffing, to intermediate weaponry use in order to facilitate subject control. This level deals with the many levels of subject resistance and an officer's use of force for control. It requires more and sometimes special equipment to execute this level of training safely, and with more dynamic activity the possibility of training injury does escalate slightly, making equipment selection important.

9.) Personal Safety Simulations- The Ninth Level of Simulation Training also requires more specialized equipment and methods to execute safely and properly. This level deals with officers who encounter aggressive subjects that attempt to assault, incapacitate and/or murder them. These scenarios cover physical assaults, ground defense, bludgeon and edged weapon encounters, firearm defense and retention/disarming situations.

An officers personal safety is in question and they must respond to survive the simulated encounter. Though these situations are rare during an officer's career, they must still be addressed in training. The



caution here is not to spend a disproportionate amount of time at this level. I have seen training programs spend all of their valuable training time at this level exclusively, ignoring the rarity of occurrence, the amount of training equipment required to properly, safely execute it and the higher risk of training injury to officers and instructors. Why? Because someone on the training staff thought these scenarios were the most fun and interesting for the instructors! And we wonder why our student officers “Fear the Gear” in training.

10.) Firearms Use Simulations- This tenth level is really where Simulation Training got its start. Back in the late 70's and early 80's training departments were conducting cotton wad firearms simulations in “Shoot, Don't Shoot” courses designed to test an officer's reactions to extreme circumstances. With participant officers wearing goggles and ballistic vests they were armed with a revolver containing primer only bullet cases topped off with a cotton wad and

wax. The officer was then led through a series of rooms, each containing a different “scenario” to encounter, all the while being screamed at by instructors to do anything but the right thing. Very stressful! While the training methods may now be outdated, the instructional emphasis was always on the decisions the officer made, not on shot placement. This was the very beginning of scenario based simulation exercises in law enforcement training, some thirty-five or forty years ago.



This level's focus is on an officer's decision to employ their firearm. Scenarios designed to illicit an officer verbalizing if appropriate, drawing, pointing, verbalizing and even firing his or her weapon. The scenarios can even continue with a transition to subject control, or pursuit, restraint application, search, removal and securing of weapon(s) if applicable, subject aftercare, notifications and securing the scene. The decisions and actions of the officer in the scenario, or lack thereof, is what is of critical importance to evaluate.

THE TEN LEVELS OF REPLICATING ADVERSE DYNAMICS:

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|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Shadow Training | Drills to Convey Concepts |
| 2) Prop Training | Drills to Convey Concepts |
| 3) Partner Training | Drills to Convey Concepts |

4) Dynamic Movement	Drills Adding Variables
5) Relative Positioning	Drills Adding Variables
6) Environmental Factor Training	Drills Adding Variables
7) Interactive Simulations	Scenario Based Training
8) Subject Control Simulations	Scenario Based Training
9) Personal Safety Simulations	Scenario Based Training
10) Firearms Use Simulations	Scenario Based Training

In closing, I would like to express my deep appreciation and sincere gratitude to **Richard Rosenkrantz** and **Gary Klugiewicz**, men I have been honored to serve with and learn from. Without their foundational wisdom and clear direction in the ways of simulation training, we may all still be lost.

I really hope this helps you in the development of a sound simulation training program for your agency. Our officers deserve training that focuses on the tasks they perform, and the demands they may face, and we have an obligation to replicate those adverse dynamics in training so they may do a difficult job safely and professionally. Our training culture must evolve into one that empowers officers to proceed with confidence in the training they possess. Unfortunately, we in Defensive Tactics, have worked for years to undermine the trust our officers should have in us and the training we provide. They have grown to “Fear the Gear” in simulation training and it is our fault. We can change this fear culture, by focusing on **their** needs, knowledge, skills, abilities and confidence, instead of our own. Train for them, not for yourself. Because the reality is, **if they don’t trust you, you can’t train them.**

Lawrence N. Nadeau is the author of *Replicating Adverse Dynamics: Simulation Training Concepts, Scenarios and Equipment for Law Enforcement Trainers and Administrators*. He is also the author of *Basic Defensive Tactics: Foundational Concepts for Law Enforcement Subject Control and Personal Safety Issues Programming*. Larry is a United States Marine (1980-84), retired police officer, a senior advisor to RedMan Training Gear, an ILEETA charter member and veteran law enforcement trainer with over 30 years of experience. He may be reached at (225) 791-4430 or at founder@rad-systems.com.



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