



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education about cycling can take two forms:

1. Educational schemes and campaigns which inform people about, and promote, the benefits of and issues concerning cycling; and
2. Educational programmes which provide information on road safety skills (Osborne, 1998).

1. CYCLING EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Both of these approaches are widespread and well-established in some European countries, for example, the UK and the Netherlands. In the UK, the average adult receives 25 hours training and is examined before being permitted to drive on the roads. In comparison, most cyclists, who use the same roads, are given no formal training (Hudson, 1982). Cyclist training and education have a vital role to play in improving cycling knowledge, skills and behaviour and hence they have been encouraged on this basis (RoSPA, 1993). If people learn the appropriate cycling skills then this can greatly enhance their ability to safely use the roads (Franklin, 1997). Not only that but it is likely that increasing general awareness of cycling is likely to increase levels of cycling (Osborne, 1998). The way forward to encouraging cycling might be to teach cyclists the necessary skills to help them to cope better with the road system in its current state (Franklin, 2002).

- Wittink (1994) comments that “safe cycling can only be learnt through years of training and experience...(and hence) some form of education or information about cycling is essential for almost everyone”.
- There are 3 key elements/requirements of an education program (Hudson, 1982):
 1. Needs to tackle the behaviour of both cyclists and motorists;
 2. Needs to support enforcement;
 3. Needs a long-term role – people’s habits must be reinforced or they are likely to revert. Following on from this, education must teach new cyclists/drivers, as well as improving the behaviour of existing cyclists/drivers.
- Cycling education may target all sectors of the population, including the young, the elderly, and all other adults who may be unaware of the advantages of cycling.
- Each group has specific needs and problems - educational programmes must be tailored to these individual needs to ensure the most efficient informing strategy (Wittink, 1994):



Educating Adults:

- Adult cycle training has an important role both in encouraging non-cyclists to consider cycling and also, in improving road safety skills of both those who already cycle and those who do not (National Cycling Forum, 1999 in Franklin, 2002).
- City Councils and cycling groups can establish cycling schemes for inexperienced adult cyclists.
- Cycle training could be offered when working with companies and developing 'cycle to work' schemes.

Educating Children:

- Cycle training for children and other vulnerable road users is important in teaching the inexperienced how to cycle safely in an environment which is typically hostile to their needs (RoSPA, 1993). Training should seek to help children interact with traffic rather than trying to reduce contact with it (Geelong Bike Plan Committee, 1984).
- The National Cycling Strategy (National Cycling Forum, 1999) states that "children should be offered practical on-road training at several stages in their school career to enable them to deal confidently and safely with real traffic situations".
- Past research has shown that training can improve children's cycling behaviour (for a certain length of time at least). The research also suggests that improvement in cycling behaviour gets worse over time and this indicates that training must be reinforced and continual if it is to remain effective (RoSPA, 1993).
- Education highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of different modes of transport could improve children's awareness of the implications of their travel choices and habits. In particular, education should seek to improve childrens' awareness of the environmental and health benefits of cycling.
- Education should increase children's awareness of risk, providing them with positive life-long attitudes to road safety (ETSC, 1999). However, it should not over-state the risks associated with cycling.

2. ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Educating other Road Users about Cycling:

- Education on cycling should not merely be targeted at cyclists (Wittink 1993). Safety is also affected by the behaviour of other road users. Hence, information campaigns must be targeted at these groups so as to increase non-cyclists awareness of cyclists' rights on the road, needs and behaviour, therefore encouraging maximum safety (Wittink 1993).
- Many cyclists are victims of inappropriate motorist behaviour. It is important to educate motorists as soon as they learn to drive. For other motorists, action is needed to improve the behaviour of existing cyclists (Hudson, 1982).
- Employers and road safety officers can play a role in ensuring that motorists drive in ways that will not endanger cyclists, for example through publicity campaigns aimed at making motorists more aware of cyclists and targeted driving courses or training (e.g. working with HGV drivers). (National Cycling Forum, 1999).



- There is a need to educate motorists about situations when over vulnerable road users might be encountered and put at risk. This will increase awareness and teach motorists how to respond to minimise that risk (ETSC, 1999).

Encouraging Awareness of the Traffic-Perspective of Other Traffic Modes:

- In turn, all road users must be made aware of the traffic-perspective of all other road users. For example, understanding how children perceive traffic and danger. Cyclists must also be made aware of the perspectives of other road-users, in particular the difficulties motorists might face when in situations with cyclists – for example, cyclists need to know how difficult it might be to see a cyclist in a dark, rainy situation.
- All road-users must be made aware of both their own safety and the safety of others. Through road safety plans and travel and publicity campaigns, road-users should be made aware of the importance of behaving and travelling in ways that will not endanger themselves or others. Individuals must be informed of the role they can play in contributing to their own safety and the safety of others. Such ideas can be incorporated into road safety plans and publicity campaigns. (National Cycling Forum, 1999).
- Alongside this, law enforcement to minimise bad behaviour of all road-users is paramount. User compliance with road safety rules must be encouraged (ETSC, 1999). To encourage cycling, both a safer environment must be provided and road users encouraged to behave in the appropriate manner.

Other Relevant Briefings:

- Cycling and Promotion
- Cycling and Young People
- Cycling and Safety

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