

## **IPENZ TRANSPORTATION GROUP CONFERENCE 2015**

### **Technical Note**

#### **Cycle Skills Training – improving safety of cycle journeys**

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**Qualifications:**

Diploma Marketing

National Certificate in Recreation and Sport (Coaching and Instruction): Cycle Skills Instructor

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## **ABSTRACT**

Training is known to help individuals acquire new skills. Cycle skills training is a tool to help improve cyclist behaviour and safety – to help individuals safely acquire new cycle skills. Cycling New Zealand is a leading provider in cycle skills training to school children and adults. For the past four years data and feedback has been collected from cycle skills programmes delivered by Cycling New Zealand (formerly BikeNZ) educator Vicki Butterworth in Hawkes Bay. It shows that cyclists who have completed cycle specific training have shown increased knowledge, a greater understanding of the road code, improved skills development and increased confidence for cycling. Studies from Johansson & Taylor (2013) have also confirmed school students have improved knowledge of cycle skills, cycle safety, road rules and cycle related laws for riding safely on the road after undertaking Cycling New Zealand training. Within the Hawke's Bay region a large collaboration has taken place with Cycling New Zealand, Sport Hawke's Bay, iWay and Hawke's Bay Sports Park. This has ensured suitable training facilities and age specific Cycling New Zealand cycle skills programmes have been provided. Over 3000 children and adults have undertaken Cycle New Zealand cycle skills training from 2011-2014 and the learnings from this are shared.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Vicki Butterworth (Cycling New Zealand Educator) instructs cycle skills programmes to youth and adults in Hawke's Bay. Over the past four years she has taught thousands of participants, worked with numerous Hawke's Bay schools, teachers, organisations and instructors.

She works within the Cycling New Zealand Community cycling team who plan, develop, coordinate and deliver cycle skills training to instructors, children, youth and adults around New Zealand.

The aim is to share her best practice learnings, using sixteen images/key topics to highlight the increased participation, development of skills, safety and knowledge of cycling. Included are details of contributing topics from the following: facilities, programmes, collaborations, barriers, research data and feedback to date from individuals/schools/organisations.

Cycle skills programmes improve cycle safety, develop the individual skills/confidence of cyclists regardless of age and create safer cycle journeys in our communities.

## Cycle Skills Training – improving safety of cycle journeys

1. **Why cycle skills training?** By following New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) cycle skills training guidelines in programme design, using nationally qualified instructors, with sound practical risk management practices, it ensures more competent cyclists are trained, thus improving the safety of cycle journeys for youth and adults.



Figure 1. Practical cycle skills training – Waipukurau School

2. **How?** Cycle skills programmes taught by nationally qualified instructors help minimise risk and maximise the learning for cyclists. These can be delivered within schools or at suitable venues, for all ages using skills appropriate programmes.
3. **What programme?** New Zealand Transport Agency Cyclist skills training guide (2011) states the Grade 1-3 training requirements. The different grades depend on the ability/development of cyclists, and the traffic environment, so appropriate skills can be taught. Grade 1 is beginner skills, taught in off road situations, learning fundamental cycle skills. Grade 2 is intermediate on-road skills, layering onto the skills from Grade 1 and incorporating content from 'The official New Zealand code for cyclists' (2013). Grade 3 is for all traffic situations, including advanced e.g. multi-lane roundabouts. Programmes are based on the guidelines and an example is the BikeNZ Introduction to road & everyday cycling instructor training manual (2012). This programme is Grade 2 and shows instructors how to teach cyclists to ride safely and competently in light traffic situations.
4. **Improving safety and creating safer journeys.** Cycle skills training increases participants: knowledge, safety, confidence, enjoyment, health, ability for young and old. This in turn creates safer cycle journeys for individuals.
5. **Skills Tested.** Cycling New Zealand has a simple skills test, the straight line test data is collected before and after training. This shows the skill level prior to training and how teaching a participant a simple technique can lead to increased practical skills.
6. **Knowledge Tested.** Over the past four years the majority of participant's knowledge has been tested before and after training. The results as stated in Johansson (2013:5) concluded that participants show a significant improvement in knowledge of approximately 20% after cycle skills training.

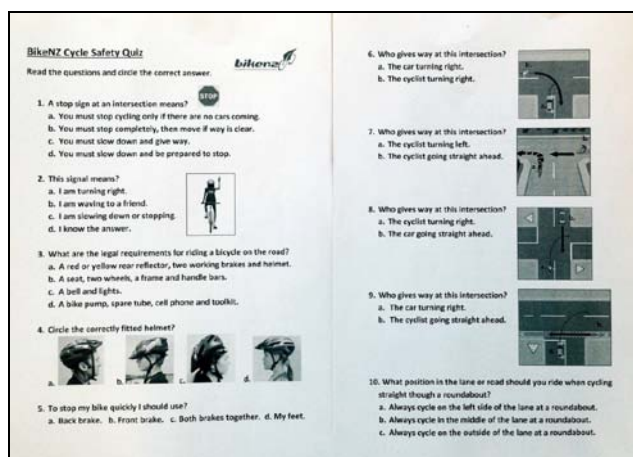


Figure 2. BikeNZ Cycle Safety Quiz

7. **Instructors.** To consistently and safely develop participants into better cyclists, trained and qualified instructors are a key. Training instructors with the Instructor training manual (2011) leads to more knowledgeable and safer instructors.
8. **Facilities.** Sometimes the simple things are the best things; a flat area, an instructor and cones are all that is needed to teach cycle skills. Facilities like a netball court in school grounds or dedicated cycle delivery areas work equally well when teaching Grade 1 skills.
9. **Equipment required.** Bikes, helmets and teaching resources are required to safely deliver training. Participants can either bring bikes/helmets for training sessions, or they can be supplied by cycle skills providers at dedicated facilities, for example at the Hawke's Bay Sports Park.
10. **Collaboration.** Collaboration with Cycling New Zealand, Sport Hawke's Bay, iWay and the Hawke's Bay Sports Park has had a profound and powerful effect on cycle skills training in Hawke's Bay. These groups have worked together and now have a leading edge cycle skills training facility. They have a cycle skills training area, a junior cycle track and a container with equipment including bikes and helmets, coupled with a dedicated pool of trained instructors.
11. **Barriers.** Funding for instructors; the perception of the value of cycle skills training vs capital investment. It's often difficult to get funding to provide cycle training; it's easier to get funding for capital items e.g. 'junior cycle tracks'. Facilities can look great and kids can play on these, but they are not necessarily the most effective tool for teaching safe cycle skills. Another barrier for some participants is a lack of suitable, safe cycles or helmets to use during and after training.
12. **Case Study.** Cycle skills training translates to more and safer journeys for women as seen with the BMShe club (2014). This club formed after many participants completed BikeNZ cycle skills training and wanted to learn more/ride more often with other women and felt safe doing so. This club has now grown to over 100 members within one year, with weekly recreationally led road and pathway riding groups.
13. **Schools.** Helping young people become safer on the road – before getting in a car. Going into schools and delivering cycle skills training to students helps increase their knowledge of the road rules early and develops understanding from a cyclist's perspective. Cycling New Zealand survey monkey feedback results from teachers whose students have completed training, indicate that all 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that "The programme has practically increased student's road safety cycle skills".

14. **Adults.** Subjective feedback from participants shows cycle skills training has helped adults become safer riding on the road. A quote from a participant after completing training; “I enjoyed it no end and will feel a lot better on the roads knowing the correct things to do (to) keep safe”. Another individual responded when asked “How do you think this programme is beneficial to your group?” with “Increases skills and confidence and thus makes individuals safer on the road and gives them more independence”.
15. **Organisations.** Completing cycle skills training in a workplace helps to develop individual skills, changes perceptions and increases knowledge about cycling on the road. In 2014 a team of staff from Napier/Gisborne NZTA/Opus undertook a team building exercise. They undertook basic skills training in the morning and then were divided into smaller groups, depending on experience/skills, for the afternoon group rides. A road ride was then undertaken by each group, with ‘amazing race’ challenges. In practical terms the following elements were experienced: size of side verges, on road cycle lanes, off road cycle pathways, transitions on and off roads, different speed zones, different road surfaces and experiencing different sizes of vehicles and how they affect cyclists when sharing the road. Participants were challenged and a greater awareness realised, with positive feedback.
16. **Bottom line.** Increasing cyclist skills, confidence and knowledge through cycle skills instruction helps create safer journeys for individuals.

## CONCLUSION

Cycle skills training can be for children, youth or adults in schools, organisations or one on one. Training increases confidence, skills and knowledge and leads to more people cycling.

Provision of cycle skills training provides people with the opportunity to practically learn how to ride more safely on the road. Training helps increase individual skills, confidence and knowledge to travel safely when sharing the road with other road users.

Teaching cycle skills improves safety for cyclists, developing the individual skills/confidence of cyclists, regardless of age, and creates safer cycle journeys for cyclists in our communities.

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