

iCYCLE

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the opportunity to come along today and allow me to share our Road Safety Unit's experience of developing a new resource for use in schools throughout Argyll and Bute. Like most ideas this one was niggling away in my head for quite some time – what did we want to do; how were we going to do it; who could help us and would it work - were questions that kept popping up. Once we actually started developing it we found that there were plenty of helpful people out there willing to help point us in the right direction and I am pleased to say that we are delighted with our new resource and even more delighted that it can be shared with road safety practitioners across the country.

BACKGROUND

The Scottish Cycle Training Scheme (SCTS) has been developed by Road Safety Scotland (RSS), a Scottish Government funded body aiming to develop a co-ordinated approach to Scotland's road safety education training and publicity initiatives. SCTS introduces children, aged 10-12, to basic cycling skills and aims to give them the knowledge necessary to be competent and safe cyclists. This can often be a young person's first step to independent road use so it is important that such training is made available. Whilst the safety of our young cyclists is paramount, participation in this activity also benefits the environment and their physical health – both of which the Scottish Government are keen to encourage. Argyll and Bute Council have embraced this ethos within their Single Outcome Agreement and Local Transport Strategy.

All of our 80 Primary Schools in Argyll and Bute take part in the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme. The Road Safety Unit trains the instructors who then train the children. The children receive lessons on bicycle maintenance, Highway Code and road craft and are tested at the end of their training period. Cycle training used to take place solely in the playground but 92% of our schools now train and test on-road as we believe this is the most effective method of improving actual behaviour in traffic. Cycling Scotland has acknowledged our commitment to on-road cycle training as an example of good practice. Two of our trained cyclists were also used to demonstrate manoeuvres in the DVD produced by Road Safety Scotland to support SCTS materials. We are proud of the high standard of practical

training that is provided in Argyll and Bute and strive to improve upon this each year.

Having achieved such high standards with practical training we then considered how to improve on the theoretical knowledge necessary to become an independent cyclist. Schools were all teaching the theory in different ways – some set homework tasks, some teach it in class while others leave it up to the child to learn at home. The children receive a Cyclist's Handbook and a Highway Code for Young Road User. After consulting a sample of teachers we identified a lack of innovative educational resources to help children learn their theory. There was a clear need for a resource which would stimulate pupils' interest in learning and would be flexible enough to be used by a whole class or an individual.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

For this reason, we approached Janice Black of 'Promethean' at the Scottish Learning Festival. Promethean are global leaders in interactive education technology solutions. Many classrooms across Argyll and Bute were already equipped with interactive whiteboards and we wanted to move with the times. This technology enables teachers to create an environment that engages, stimulates and enriches the learning of all students. Using their software, ActivInspire, teachers would be able to create an inventive interactive resource. Our vision, with 'iCycle', was that teachers would be provided with time saving, pre-prepared 'flipchart' lessons, which facilitated interactive learning and were flexible enough to suit differing abilities.

Road Safety Scotland were delighted to support this pioneering resource which would link to existing SCTS materials and willingly offered the use of their logo, colour scheme, and still and video images to be used within 'iCycle'.

We identified the following themes as being the most important for young cyclists –

- Cycle maintenance
- Equipment
- Manoeuvres
- Road position
- Priority at junctions
- Observation
- Signs and road markings
- Hazards for cyclists

COSTS INVOLVED

The next stage was to employ teachers who had previously demonstrated excellent working knowledge of ActivInspire to create the flipcharts covering

these themes. Janice Black of Promethean put us in touch with Alison Lydon who is the ICT Learning and Teaching Advisor at Stewart's Melville School in Edinburgh. Alison was happy to take on the role of developing the cycling flipcharts for us. We paid Alison £1,000 for her time and were more than delighted with what she produced for us. Other costs involved were our own time, meetings with Road Safety Scotland, visits to the pilot schools and meetings with Alison and Janice. Because the resource is web based there is no cost involved in the production of disks for each school and it is a lot easier to add flipcharts or correct any errors.

PILOT

To assess the anticipated benefits we decided to pilot 'iCycle' with children that had previously undertaken cycle training. Teachers reported that all children were very excited and interested to take part in lessons. We trialled some as whole class activities and others as exercises where the children worked alone on a laptop. One teacher commented on "how appealing the tasks were and how well the children responded to each activity". She was particularly pleased with the less able children's reactions as they were most likely to struggle with reading. The teachers appreciated having readymade lessons and some expressed ways in which they could further develop 'iCycle', eg, by adding local street names to junctions or inserting their own photographs. All commented on how well the children joined in with the whole class exercises – "The helmet activities generated lots of discussion on whether helmets should be compulsory. They designed their own helmets and these now form part of our wall display".

The pupils were pleased to be involved in a pilot study of 'iCycle' and readily offered their opinions. One said that "It sticks in your brain more than reading because you are actually doing it". Another commented that "It was a more interesting way to learn and it is more fun when we all do it together". They particularly enjoyed the game type activities – especially the timed road signs quiz. Teaching staff said that this would be an ideal 'brain break' activity as the children would be doing something different but would still be learning.

AVAILABILITY

The completed flipcharts are available to download FREE from Promethean Planet (www.prometheanplanet.com), an on-line community for educators to discuss interactive methods of learning with their peers, as well as obtain resources, tips and guidance from other teachers and educational technology specialists. This allows educators in Argyll and Bute, Scotland and indeed anywhere on the planet to access our theory based resource. Pupils are also be able to download a personal version of the software for use at home giving an opportunity for parental involvement.

We believe that we have identified and filled a gap in road safety educational resources in an extremely innovative way using the latest technology. We have provided teachers and pupils with a resource that is fun and easy to use whilst at the same time providing the key information necessary to become a competent and knowledgeable cyclist. We hope that this will give the children a skill that they will have for the rest of their life and a skill that they have enjoyed gaining. Also, by working in partnership with Promethean we have been able to ensure that every teacher and pupil in Argyll and Bute has access to this exciting new resource and through exposure on Promethean Planet our road safety colleagues around the country will also benefit.

HOW TO ACCESS THE RESOURCE

- 1 Go to www.prometheanplanet.com. You need to register as a user before you are able to download software and resources – you can do this using the prompts in the ‘Log In’ box on the left hand side. Registration is free.
- 2 After successful registration, use the black menu bar near the top of the home page and click on ‘Download ActivInspire’ and follow the prompts.
- 3 Once you have the software installed go back to the home page and click on ‘Resources’, and then ‘Partner Resources’. You will find us under ‘Scottish Cycling Scheme’.
- 4 Click on ‘Free Teacher Resources’ where you can find more information about the flipcharts and how they can be used in the classroom. Click on ‘Resources’ to download the flipcharts and resource packs.
- 5 Save the files to your desktop or create an ‘iCycle’ folder.

Although these flipcharts were designed for use on Promethean Boards they can also be used with SMART boards.

DEMONSTRATION

Thanks for your attention in the boring bit – now comes the fun bit when we can actually show you the resource on the interactive whiteboard. This gives you a chance to get up off your seat and come and have a go – it may have been some time since you were in a classroom so come and look at the new style ‘blackboard’. I am happy to take questions any time and have a handout on how you can get the resource for yourself or any of your colleagues or perhaps even your child if you have a 10 or 11 year old ready to take part in their cycle training.

