

## TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION TRAINING for STUDENT TEACHERS

Annette Strain, Acting Assistant Principal, Wodonga South Primary School

Robert Allen, VicRoads Regional Road Safety Co-ordinator, Benalla

Conrad Remenyi, Project Manager, Curriculum Initiatives, Department of Education, Employment and Training

### ABSTRACT

This paper describes a recently piloted program to provide professional development for trainee teachers to include Traffic Safety Education (TSE) in school programs. It includes cooperation between three agencies: the University, the Department of Employment, Education and Training and VicRoads. The program targets two groups:

- graduate diploma of education students
- the schools in which they do their teaching practice.

The program shows how student teachers become mentors for the target schools by:

- undergoing certification of 2 days training in *Bike Ed*
- completing 2 days Curriculum training including:
  - rationale for TSE
  - integrating traffic safety into the school curriculum
  - developing a unit of work using VicRoads resources.
- delivery of the TSE Units the students have developed in selected schools
- evaluation of the program
- follow up of the student teachers in the school of their first appointment.

### Key Words:

Traffic Safety Education, Student Teacher, Teacher Professional Development, Curriculum Development

### Introduction

This initiative arose from the implementation of the Traffic Safety Education Teacher Professional Development Project (TSETPDP) which is managed by the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET). The TSETPDP currently supports 16 teachers statewide to be freed from their school timetable commitments for one day per week to help schools include Traffic Safety Education (TSE) in their curriculum. These practising teachers work within their own regions as local experts and use a variety of strategies to target schools that don't have (comprehensive) TSE to it take up. This paper describes a locally developed strategy to target not the schools directly, as has been the usual approach, but the prospective teachers at the regional university campus – a strategy that is proving to be most successful.

In 1997, the TSE Network Leader for Goulburn North-East Annette Strain initiated the concept of an intensive TSE training program for student teachers. The major focus of the five day intensive program would be to train the student teachers in their final year so that they would:

- have a positive initial experience with TSE
- gain certification in TSE
- feel confident enough to develop and teach TSE programs in their prospective classrooms
- be an advocate for TSE in their prospective schools.

To ensure the success of this program Annette initially engaged support for the idea from the TSETPDP Project Manager (Conrad Remenyi), the local VicRoads Regional Road Safety Co-ordinator (Robert Allen) and local district schools who would provide the student teachers with teaching practicum. The major target groups for this exercise would be the final year graduate diploma student teachers and the schools in which they would do their teaching practice.

As a professional learning team Annette, Conrad and Robert then drafted a program to cater for five of the local LaTrobe University compulsory field days for an intensive professional development program in TSE. The five day agenda that they developed would ensure students become mentors for their target schools by:

1. Undergoing a two day "Bike-Ed" accreditation course
2. A day of information and in-servicing on the rationale for TSE, TSE resources, integrating TSE in the curriculum and developing a unit of work
3. Delivery of the TSE unit they developed in selected schools
4. Evaluation of the program and follow up of the student teachers in the school of their first appointment.

Annette then approached the LaTrobe University Wodonga , Victoria (Graduate Diploma of Teaching Unit) with the proposal. The university teaching unit enthusiastically accepted the proposal because it:

- was seen to have the full support of DEET and the lead TSE agency
- neatly slotted into their practicum program
- was a complete stand alone package that every student teacher could use
- included critical information on implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSFII), a priority area of DEET
- provided additional certification approved by DEET.

## Method

With Annette as the lead developer of the program, the professional learning team prepared and delivered the course:

1. The “Bike-Ed” two day accreditation course took place at the university campus grounds under the direction of the DEET preferred provider of bicycle education. The course covered:
  - providing children with the opportunity to complete bicycle education as part of the curriculum - integrated into an on-going TSE program
  - discussing road safety concepts, their applicability to age groups and constantly reinforcing the specific TSE work/skills required at each year level
  - ensuring awareness of critical factors in bicycling such as children always wearing a properly adjusted helmet, having a properly adjusted bike for their size and height, wearing brightly colored clothing, bike checks, etc. every time they ride a bike
  - practising the bicycle skill they will need to address in their school programs
2. University Graduate Diploma students met for the day to gain instruction and discuss the following:
  - the rationale for TSE – Conrad delivered a session using teacher professional development TV programs, facts, figures and examples of the reasons (integration issues, legal issues, community pressures, DEET priority areas) some schools were prompted to introduce TSE in their curriculum
  - TSE resources for schools - Conrad covered the range of curriculum materials and support programs for teachers and schools provided by DEET, the Transport Accident Commission, Victoria Police, the Department of Infrastructure and the RACV. Robert covered the extensive range of resources and programs provided by VicRoads.. This included demonstrations of products across all year levels, with a major emphasis on “RoadSmart”, which was the nominated resource students would use to develop their unit of work to teach in local district schools.
  - Integrating TSE into the curriculum – Annette showed how TSE was integrated into the curriculum at Wodonga South Primary School, providing students with successful planning documents and strategies and covering scope and sequence charts. With support from Conrad, she also ranged over curriculum implementation issues, classroom delivery issues and ways to successfully use CSF II and its Teacher Support Materials.
  - Planning a unit of work to be taught in local district schools – students worked in pairs and teams to developing their own unit of work using:
    - \* Wodonga South's planning curriculum documents
    - \* Victorian Association of Traffic Safety Education Teachers (VATSET) newsletter (which contains road safety regulation, resources and curriculum information as well as examples of classroom activities)
    - \* the key VicRoads resource, “RoadSmart”.
3. Delivery of a TSE unit of work in a district school - prior arrangements with the Principal in each school ensured students smooth entry to prearranged classes. Lessons were of one hour duration, supported with VicRoads resources and their own prepared lesson. Annette followed the day up by a further letter thanking Principals for their support and letting Principals know how much the students appreciated the opportunity.

4. Evaluation of the program  
Students subsequently met to discuss the week's program and filled out an evaluation form which included all aspects of the program.

Annette and Robert followed up student teachers in school of their first appointment the following year. Of the students contacted by June 2000, 75% reported that in their first school appointment they were engaged in traffic safety lessons within the first half of their new school year.

#### Results

- Each year 20-30 Graduate Diploma students completed a five day intensive TSE professional development program
- Graduate diploma students become advocates of TSE and mentors for other classroom teachers
- 14-15 local district schools participated as host schools to the students
- Co-operative, co-ordinated support for prospective teachers by three organisations: DEET, VicRoads and LaTrobe University

#### Conclusion

The success of this program is underlined by the extremely positive feedback from the university staff and the student teachers involved.

Because the program is locally delivered, led by a practising teacher and supported by key TSE agencies, participants universally report that they felt empowered and confident to develop and deliver TSE in schools.

This is reinforced further in that participants receive official certification for their bicycle education instructor training from DEET.

Feedback at every level of the program suggest that creation of a genuine sense in participants of 'do-ability' and availability of support at this formative stage of the teacher are the keys to the success of the program.

Other TSE Network Leaders in other regions are now adopting the program for their own regions/areas. Assessment of the level of uptake of TSE by participants in other regions in the next years will confirm the success as to whether this is a universally applicable strategy to include TSE in school curriculum.

#### Appendix A

##### LETTER TO SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE PRACTICUM

Dear Principal

Thanks for supporting the training of prospective teachers in TSE.

I am sure your students will benefit from the infusion of these activities in your school program.

I have made these arrangements to ensure you are aware of the entire program and for the smooth operation of the day at your school:

1. A week's agenda for the student teachers:

Friday	Program briefing LaTrobe Uni
Monday	"Bike-Ed" training LaTrobe Uni
Tuesday	"Bike-Ed" training LaTrobe Uni
Wednesday	Curriculum day Wodonga South P.S.
Thursday	Practicum at District Schools
Friday	Evaluation LaTrobe Uni

2. When students arrive at your school they will come to the office for formal introduction. Whilst at your school they will take a one off traffic safety lesson in a classroom which you have nominated from either years 3/4/5 or 6. Students will endeavour during this hour to introduce the children to the new cycling rules which now apply to them. They will inform children and at the same time encourage children to alter or

continue their behaviour appropriately. DEET and VicRoads support this program and students will be able to discuss with you the relevant resources which they used for their lesson.

- Hopefully students will leave information for your school's newsletter and forwarding information to contact either the Traffic Safety Education Network Leader for your area and the VicRoads Regional Road Safety Co-ordinator who can give your school continuing support in Traffic Safety Education.

## Appendix B

### WODONGA SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM PLANNING DOCUMENT

UnitPlannerT3	UnitPlannerT4	English	Mathematics	Mathematics2	Integrated	Integrated2	PhysEd	Personal	Music	Music2	LOTE	Art	
Unit Topic: <input type="text"/>		Team: <input type="text"/>		Year Level: <input type="text"/>		CSFLevel: <input type="text" value="0"/>							
Resources: - Teacher reference, Books, Videos/kits, Materials/equipment, Guest speakers						Ideas to introduce and engage children with the topic.							
What do we hope the children will understand about their physical world by the end of this unit?						Strategies and activities to determine children's prior knowledge of the topic.							
						Bright Futures - Specific skills targeted.							
Activities which will enable children to gain new information about the topic. Activities which focus on the 'Understandings' and makes use of what the children already know.													
Learning Technologies - integrated activities.													