

BTEC from edexcel 

Level 2: Driving and Driver Education



Students at Ashfield School get to grips with vehicle maintenance

A Case Study for Driver Education in the UK

 **Nottinghamshire**
Road Safety Partnership

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The Need for Change

It is well known that driver error is the main cause of car crashes with human factors and driver behaviour said to be a causal factor in 90% of crashes. Young drivers (17-24 year olds) are over-represented in road traffic collisions globally. In the UK 26% of all car user deaths are young people between the age of 17 and 24 (AA ,2012).

Age and inexperience are known to be the predominant risk factors within this group (TRL, 2013). It is known that risk-acceptance is higher particularly amongst young males and low impulse control and high thrill seeking tendencies are also more common within this age group (Turner & McClure, 2003).

Based on this background it has been suggested that educational interventions should be based on theories of behavioural change as well as targeting driver knowledge, skill and attitude. Historically driver training in the UK has been based on theories of skill acquisition such as Gagnes 9 Events of Instruction, (Gagne, 1988), with behavioural issues being overlooked.

In 2010 a literature review carried out on behalf of DfT (Durkin & Tolmie, 2010) made multiple suggestions for young driver education going forwards these included;

- Education should focus on the perceived benefits of safe driving more than perceived risks
- Education should publicise positive behaviours of adolescents and portray peer norms as pro-safety
- Adolescents should be provided with the opportunity to evaluate each other's safety levels and in how to raise concerns about others driving

Despite a large amount of scientific research showing little very little evidence of their effectiveness (TRL, 2013) most road safety education interventions aimed at this group have continued to focus on negative behaviours and their consequences going against the advice of Durkin & Tolmie (2010).



A student at Nailsea School being coached by Driving Force MD Mike Williams

History and Background

The BTEC level 2 Driving and Driver Education was written by Ian Littlefield of Driving Force Ltd and was first trialled in Nailsea School, Somerset in 2011 where it is still running strong. The course is based on the Goals for Driver Education Matrix (Hattaka, et al. 2002) and is constructed of four in-class units representing each of the four levels of the GDE; vehicle control and construction, navigating through traffic, goals and context of driving and goals for life and skills for living. Collectively this represents 40 hours of in-class driver education.

The Driving Force BTEC also consists of a 5th unit; practical driver coaching and peer-review. Unit 5 is comprised of 20 hours of practical coaching on a 2 students to 1 coach ratio. The completion of the peer review process is a compulsory part of the qualification.

Nottingham City Council became interested in the BTEC in late 2013 as they were planning research into young driver behaviours in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Nottingham City had not been involved in interventions targeted at this group for a couple of years due to budget restrictions. In 2013 Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership released a research report showing that young drivers in their jurisdiction were asking for more positive young driver interventions and an increased level of driver education in schools over a longer period of time (GRSP, 2013). Very interested by these results Nottingham City Council produced a replication of the Gloucestershire research and found very similar results suggesting that this was not a local issue and that nationally young people were calling out for improved driver education (NRSP, 2014 Unpublished).

Impressed with the content, style and ambition of the Driving Force BTEC, Nottingham City Council formed an agreement with Driving Force Ltd to deliver the BTEC as a road safety intervention in spring 2014 and began to target local schools in order to trial the course.



*Chief Inspector Andrew
Charlton – Nottinghamshire*

*“A vital part of learning to
drive safely is, understanding
why collisions occur. This
BTEC offers a comprehensive
insight into collision avoidance
making safety a priority. An
educated driver will be a safer
driver.”*

Where We Are At

The first school to take on the Driving Force BTEC in Nottinghamshire is Ashfield School in Kirkby-in-Ashfield where the course is starting in September 2014. Ashfield School are funding the course in full for a section of their uniformed services students.

Arnold Hill School in Arnold, Nottingham are also looking to run the BTEC in 2014/15 on a parental contribution model. Letters seeking interest are currently out as of writing with initial feedback being very positive. Two other Nottinghamshire schools are in talks for a January 2015 start.

In Nottingham driving instructors with experience and qualifications in adapting a client-centred approach have been enlisted to work on the project and are currently subject to mandatory training, continual developmental training and quality assurance as part of their agreement to work on the BTEC. This is a level of CPD well above the DVSA minimum recommendations.

Parental support and feedback has been very encouraging with 100% of parents questioned at a recent event prepared to make some financial contribution to the course. All were in favour of improved driver education through schools with some expressing concerns as to how to tell the quality of an independent driving instructor.

Other regions have also shown an interest in the Driving Force BTEC either through schools or local authority road safety teams with the course potentially spreading into Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Northamptonshire in the near future.

The Driving Force BTEC has already been recognised by one major insurer as risk reducing with a 15% discount offered to all graduates. Discussions with other insurers and corporate supporters are ongoing.

Media interest has also been strong with local coverage in Nottinghamshire on both television and in print achieved.



"BTEC qualified motorists develop their driving skills and style, and so add a whole new dimension to their road driving experience. They also become significantly safer drivers. Adrian Flux has organised a scheme that recognises this by giving a discount of up to 15% against the cost of the successful participants car insurance."

Going Forward

It is reasonably expected that the spread of the Driving Force BTEC will grow quickly as schools, parents and students become more aware of the option and the benefits of a structured educational course. The cost of the BTEC per pupil is currently £7.17 per hour of education. This is about a third of the cost of a standard driving lesson. As such it represents exceptional value for money.

Media interest in the course is also expected to grow as the project expands. Based on interest and uptake levels so far Nottingham City have projected that the Driving Force BTEC may be running in up to 42 schools across 10 English Counties the by the end of 2017.

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Contact Details

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