

THE DRIVER EDUCATION RESEARCH FOUNDATION

This Extract from the first Doctoral Dissertation leading to a FULL DOCTORATE in Professional Studies (D.Prof.) was awarded to Professor Peter RUSSELL, Principal and Research Director of THE DRIVER EDUCATION RESEARCH FOUNDATION

“A Strategic Approach to CPD in the Driver Training Industry”

Chapter One

Introduction

In common with many other occupations and professions, the driver training industry has needed to address the question of Continuing Professional Development. CPD is recognised by many bodies concerned with the industry (e.g. The Driving Standards Agency, the various National Trade Organisations and the Assessment and Qualifications Agency amongst others) that initial driving instructor training and the basic qualification of “Approved Driving Instructor” (ADI) need regular up-dating and up-skilling to meet the changing demands of potential and fully licensed car drivers.

It is also recognised that driving instructors can contribute new understanding, and knowledge about specialised aspects of driver training and education, through Continuing Professional Development.

However, whilst considerable study and developments in CPD have been undertaken in many occupations and professions, (e.g. those involved in teaching, in nursing, physiotherapy and other divisions within the NHS); little has been done within the driver training industry itself. Consequently this research report is intended to contribute a strategic approach to the subject.

Lifelong Learning is a fresh national approach to all avenues of professional life; it has become part of the ethos of all educational and business development. ‘Lifelong learning is critical to the global economy’ (DfEE 1998). Lifelong learning has been associated with the perceived needs to help change and improve working practices through a planned, systematic process which encompasses a whole range of activities.

Lifelong learning and CPD have been slow in being accepted in the driver training and education industry, mainly because of lack of impetus from controlling and governing agencies, but also because those who are interested in gaining additional qualifications must do so at their own expense and in their own time. This is exacerbated by the fact that few current efforts towards CPD are recognised by those who pay for their driver training. Those in the industry who in the past have tried to improve their knowledge, skills and capabilities have always had to do so through their own initiatives. To this end the underlying theme of this project is to emphasise, evaluate and extend the professionalism of those who teach driving, professionally, at all levels.

The Aim of the project was:

a) To identify and discuss the various qualifications and additional training opportunities leading to successful professional development for those involved in Driver Training and Education;

These can be expressed as objectives that may best be viewed as essential

Terms of Reference.

- The intention is to highlight those areas of CPD which are available and can be seen as beneficial to driving instructors and others working in driver education.
- Secondly to discover the perceived need for CPD from the perspectives of the Driving Standards Agency and of its Register of instructors.
- Finally to highlight the ways in which CPD can be made more easily and readily available to those who wish to take advantage of the opportunities presented.

There is a perceived need for support self-help systems of training for and with a core group of instructors who need assistance and are willing to help others at the same time;

Eventually a resource library of potential project material for those students embarking on degree courses and other research projects will also be crucial. Access will need to be by physical attendance, hard copy and the Internet.

It is hoped that by the creation of a separate agency, with the support of existing organisations, could fulfil a number of roles. Initially this agency would provide the suggested library (with both hard and soft copies of materials) of the various projects by driver education students at all levels up to the Doctorate in Professional Studies.

Eventually this agency may be seen as a springboard for anyone seeking and researching projects allied to safer and better driver training and education. The terms driver training and driver education are similar but not genuine synonyms for each other. Training refers solely to the actions of driving instructors, usually in a practical sense, and often with reference to the learner driver market place. Driver education refers to the whole panoply of training, testing, assessing, publicity, awareness and encouragement for safer driving initiatives, both in theory and practice. It is hoped that some commercial funding would be possible to support these aims.

The timing of this project has proven to be extremely apposite. Apart from demands for CPD in the industry for the first time in the history of driver education in this country there exists the potential opportunity for driver trainers to improve and then demonstrate their professionalism and to have it recognised by examination and qualifications beyond those vocational needs of a government register. The reasons for this will be discussed and analysed as part of the project.

The strategic approach advocated by this report will consider three issues.

The first is based around the need to enhance the professional capabilities of those involved in driver training and education. This needs to be competence based, and is allied to additional further and higher qualifications currently or potentially available. It also relies on government initiatives offering inducements for all Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) to improve their abilities and skills.

The second issue concerns the needs and desires of many ADIs to gain additional knowledge and is directly linked to the general principles of continuing professional development. Their success

will be measured possibly by the acquisition of 'credit points' now widely used in further and higher education.

The third issue concerns the potential for heightened personal satisfaction in an industry that is very much 'cheap-lesson-price' led. The acquisition of a greater and deeper range of knowledge may be desirable both from a personal satisfaction point of view and as an excellent business selling point.

This report is addressed primarily to those authorities, especially the Driving Standards Agency (DSA); to both national ADI trade associations – the Driving Instructors Association (DIA) and the Motor Schools Association (MSA); and to the International Association for Driver Education (IVV) and to the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA); to The General Council for National Vocational Qualifications (GCNVQ); to the European Union (EU) and to the International Association for Driver Testing Authorities (CIECA) "Advanced" Driving Training Project; and to all others who provide courses, set examinations and agree standards which will help to determine the future of driver training and education within the United Kingdom and also in the member states of the European Union. In this sense the report is intended to influence policy.

However it is anticipated that the exploration of these issues and the attendant information in this report will also benefit students in driver education and members within the profession.



Professor Peter RUSSELL M.A., D. Prof, was awarded his Doctor's Degree in Professional Studies, in July, 2002: he was Appointed Research Director of the DRIVER EDUCATION RESEARCH FOUNDATION by Viscount Jan Simons, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords in May 2004 at a ceremony at the House of Lords, Westminster, immediately prior to the INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY ASSOCIATION's 2004, I.V.V. Biennial Convention in ROVINJ, CROATIA
