

Why is the begin2ride program so effective at reducing mishaps?

In the mid and late nineties I was highly involved with the California Motorcyclists Safety Program (CMSP) as an instructor and site operator. I was teaching the Doug Fitts version of the MRC:RSS curriculum every weekend. Some of the trends that I had observed in the class concerned me but I was not sure what greater implications they may have had.

In 1996, I had the opportunity to meet John Billheimer. At that time he was performing his research on motorcycle accidents and training. He was using a matched pair analysis, matching individuals who were similar in experience, except that one of the pair was trained in the CMSP and the other was not trained in any formal program. This later became the "Evaluation of the California Motorcyclist Safety Program" report published in 1999. John's research was a revelation; he found that there was no difference in the chance of mishap between trained riders and untrained riders, except for the most novice pairs.

At the time, John's results were surprising, but years of confirming statistics has removed all doubt: fatality and morbidity has continued to increase despite increased participation in rider training. It turns out that what he had discovered on the street was exactly what I was seeing in my classes. The causal factors of the separation of data in the matched pair analysis of the new riders were exactly the same as the causes of mishaps in the program I was teaching. For example, a novice using improper throttle application, or who gets mentally "overloaded", and then suffers a mishap in class, reflects the same type of mishaps causing the separation of mishap rates in the novice rider matched pair study.

The conclusion was stunning: the current training programs could only benefit a limited number of riders in regards to decreasing their chance of mishap. However, it also indicated that if we could focus on reducing mishaps during the class it should have a profound affect on the rider's performance on the street. With this knowledge, a system could be devised to eliminate these unnecessary mishaps!

These events helped lead to the creation of the begin2ride program. My team focused on the new riders and found ways to reduce the chance of mishap of new riders. We developed and refined a program exclusively for new riders that reduced the chance of mishap during the training that would also decrease the chance of mishap should they make an informed choice to ride on the street.

The begin2ride program has a near zero mishap rate when compared to other curriculums claiming to be for new riders. This program was first taught in 2001, and has had continual classes since then. Since 2004 it has been in a stable format and has had excellent results. Because we know this program works for reducing the mortality and morbidity rates of new riders, we are interested in seeing this program widely disseminated. This curriculum is available to all in an "open source" format. (See link below.)

To summarize, general training for all riders is not having the expected results. However, trying to measure effects of training through matched pair data has lead to a useful result. We can now understand that our expectation that general programs would be good for all was wrong! We now apply appropriate training to the appropriate group. The result is that training tailored to specific groups can have a desirable effect on those groups.

Since the success of the begin2ride program, we have applied the technique to other groups with similar results, which we call the continue2ride and test2ride programs. Here I want to focus your attention on the highly refined begin2ride program. This program has an immediate effect on reducing chance of mishaps for new riders. The following links can provide more information.

B2R Curriculum Docs :

<http://www.nmcti.org/forinstructors.html>

Mission Statement:

<http://www.nmcti.org/missionstatement.html>

Joe's Curriculum Vitae:

http://www.nmcti.com/docs/people/joeelliott_cv.pdf

Please contact me anytime regarding any of these matters, 858-208-9799, for we enjoy sharing this information and hope that it reaches the people who can benefit from it the most.

Joseph Elliott, Administrator, Begin2ride program