

Summary: Lessons Learned

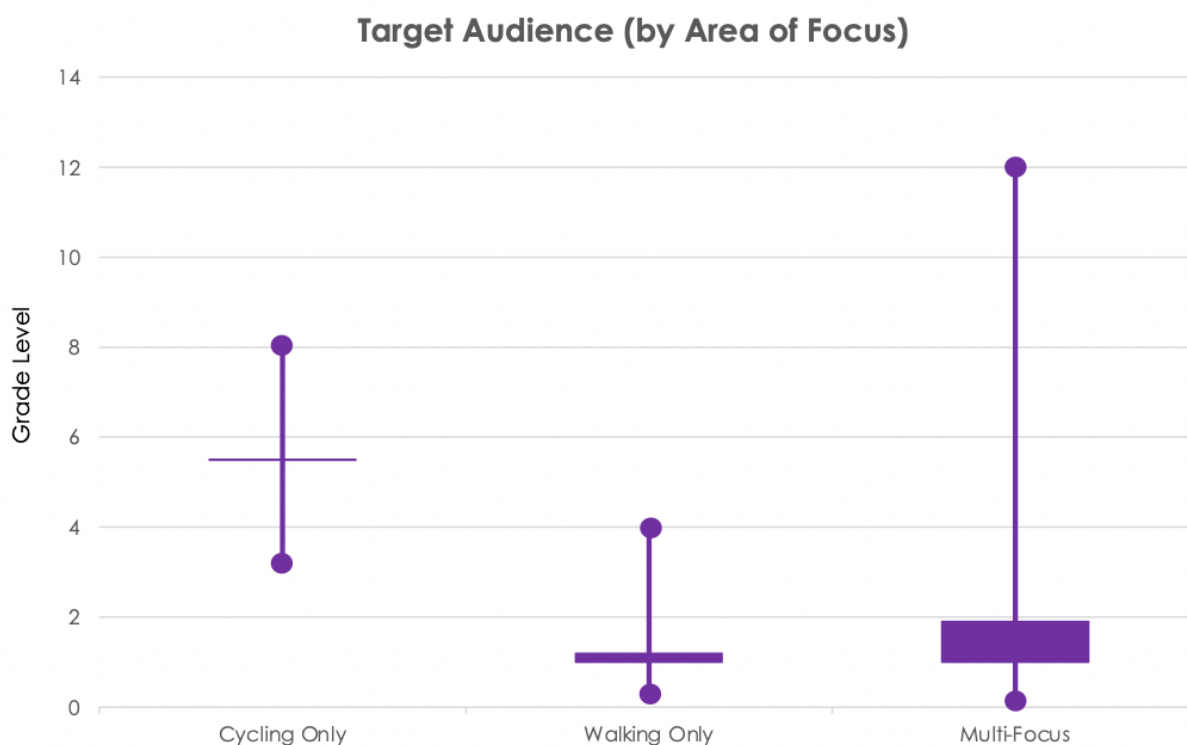
The “Building a Collaborative Approach to Walking & Wheeling Skills Training in Schools” project has highlighted that there are many common approaches to delivering skills training in schools. There are twelve key lessons learned from this project that can be used to enhance existing programs and inform the development of programs in new communities:

1. **No need to reinvent the wheel:** Tested, transferable program models and materials exist, and organizations are willing to share. This includes student curriculum and instructor training materials.
2. **Secure funding:** Delivering walking & wheeling skills training programs requires significant resources, and funding should be secured to cover key costs before launching, including:
 - a. A coordinator to oversee instructor training, outreach, evaluation, etc. Of the twelve existing programs surveyed, eight have one or more full time equivalent (FTE) coordinators.
 - b. Paid instructors to lead course delivery in schools. The most common rate for instructors in Canada is currently \$20/hr., but this varies based on the location and local cost of living.
 - c. Marketing and promotions. School outreach has been identified as a universal challenge for programs in Canada, so it is important to be realistic about what marketing and promotion activities will be required, who will do the work, and how they will be paid.
 - d. Supplies and equipment, including quality bikes and helmets. Due to the required maintenance and short life span, cheap bikes are not worth the hassle and organizations should budget for about \$800 per bike.
 - e. Transportation, maintenance, and storage costs for equipment, especially if off-season bike storage may be required.
 - f. Instructor training fees. This includes human resources costs to deliver the training, venue rentals, potential travel, etc.
 - g. Program insurance (if not already provided by your organization).
3. **Deliver courses for free in schools:** Most existing programs are being delivered at no cost to participants, and at no cost to schools. This has been identified as important to ensure accessibility of the courses. It can also be easier to attract participating schools to a free program.

4. **Include both walking & wheeling:** If it fits within the mandate of your organization, include training information on both walking & wheeling in the same program, instead of separating them into distinct programs.
 - a. If walking & wheeling programs are being delivered separately in your community, identify ways to share instructors, combine outreach, etc.

5. **Target age can be flexible:** Programs across Canada are being delivered with success to students from kindergarten to grade 12. Trends indicate that cycling-specific programs emphasize reaching students in grades 5 and 6 while walking-specific programs and mixed-focus programs emphasize reaching students in grade 1 (see Figure 2).

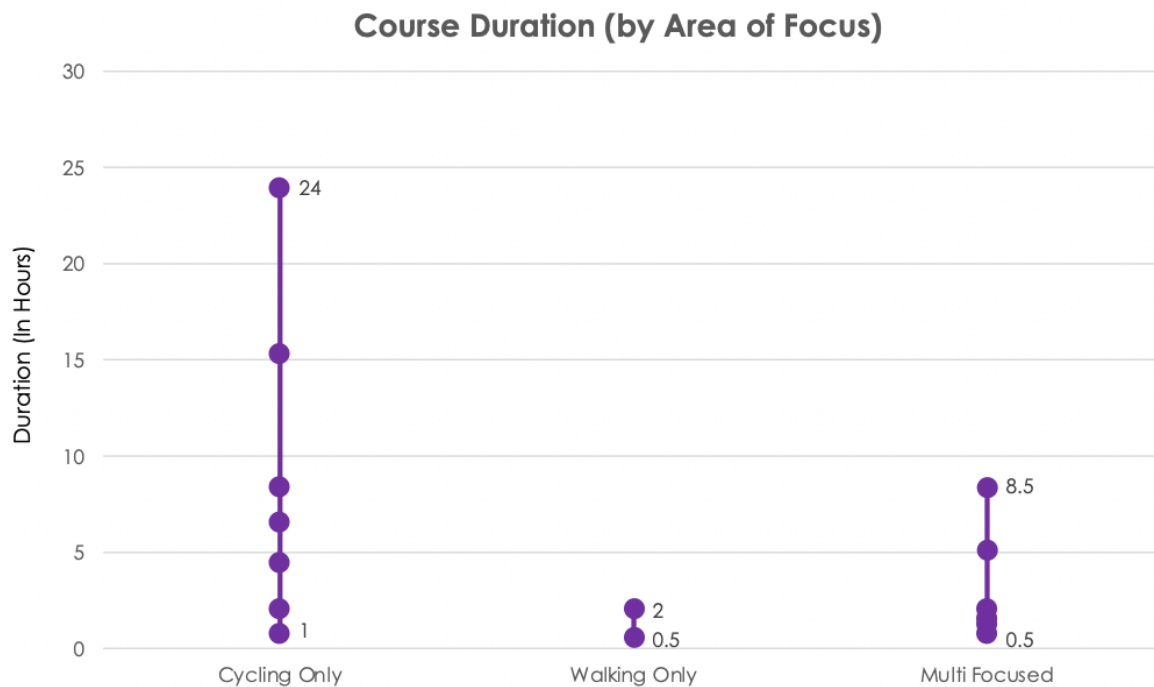
Figure 2. Target audience (i.e., grade level) sorted by area of focus for programs



Note: In this graph, the small purple dots represent the upper and lower limits of the grade levels reached with each type of course. The horizontal purple lines represent the most frequently reached grade level for each type of course, with the boldness of the line indicating the frequency of reach.

6. **Program duration also varies:** Program length is typically influenced by available resources, target age group and the goals of the program. Current programs range from 30 minutes to 24 hours in total length, with the majority of programs being delivered in under 10 hours. Programs longer than 2 hours are typically delivered across a series of days, or weeks, and in one case - three years (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Course duration in hours, sorted by area of focus for programs



Note: In this graph, the small purple dots represent the duration (in hours) of each individual course included in the survey.

7. **Hire and train program instructors:** While one program is experiencing success with classroom teachers delivering in-class content, other organizations have struggled with this approach. Most existing programs hire and train instructors specifically to deliver 100% of their walking and wheeling skills training programs.
 - a. Sixty percent of current programs use an in-house training program to train their instructors.
 - b. Half of the existing programs require some form of regular instructor recertification.
 - c. Most programs require instructors to complete a criminal record check, first aid, and CPR certification.
8. **Student to instructor ratios depend on context:** Student to instructor ratios vary for current programs and vary depending on where learning is taking place (e.g., in class vs on road). Organizations can seek guidance on ratios from specialized bodies in their area, such as [Ophea](#).
9. **Provide real-world experiences:** Taking students on a walk or ride in the community has been identified as an essential component of skills training because it allows students to apply their new knowledge in real-world scenarios around their community.
10. **Provide equipment and maintenance:** Not all students will have access to equipment such as helmets, bikes, and scooters, or be able to transport them to school. At a minimum, equipment should be loaned to students who need it, however, many programs provide equipment to all participants, regardless of need. Providing equipment can help to support equitable access to programming by ensuring that students new to cycling and students without their own equipment are included, and that all participants have access to safe and properly maintained equipment.
11. **Identify an internal champion:** Organizations that are able to work with an internal school or school board champion have had success in integrating their programs into the school curriculum and overcoming some of the identified barriers of getting their programs into schools. This can also be crucial in ensuring that programs are equitably reaching all schools, and not only those that are the keenest.

12. **Work in partnership:** Partnerships have been identified as being key to the successful implementation of in-school walking & wheeling skills training programs. In particular, partnerships with local bike shops have been integral to help with the provision and maintenance of equipment. When seeking partnerships, it is important to be clear on the program needs, goals and target audience and how partners will collaborate.

- a. Historically, walking & wheeling skills training programs have included a partnership with police services. With the move in many communities to decrease the presence of police in schools, most ongoing programs in Canada do not currently include a partnership with police, and do not bring police officers into schools for their programming.

Please refer to the full project report available at ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca for more information.