

Achieving 80% active learning time guidance

Introduction

The core functions and systematic routines that feature in the [National Standard](#) (October 2018) and [Bikeability delivery guide](#) (May 2019) are best learnt when practised frequently in increasingly challenging cycling environments. Most riders learn best by 'doing' and arrive at a Bikeability course expecting to do something they love, cycle. If they are actively engaged in cycling throughout the course they will learn more, be distracted less and present fewer behavioural challenges.

Independent cycling is the most important learning activity in Bikeability, but other forms of active learning can help riders stay engaged when they are not riding. These may include demonstrating National Standard cycling, observing other riders' demonstrations, and giving and receiving feedback to/from each other. Taken together, independent cycling and these other forms of active learning should comprise 80% of Bikeability delivery time. The remaining 20% may be taken up with instructors moving groups to training sites, instructor 'talk time' (e.g. introducing a drill, answering riders' questions) and riders waiting to ride. As riders' skills and confidence grow, their independent cycling to the National Standard should increase and instructor 'talk time' diminish.

The 2019 Bikeability conference included a practical workshop on how to achieve 80% active learning time in Bikeability delivery. This note builds on the workshop and the relevant section in the *Bikeability delivery guide* (May 2019, p. 6) by providing practical advice on how Bikeability provider managers and instructors can achieve this. This advice is intended to stimulate discussion and the adoption of new methods. The list below is not exhaustive and the Bikeability Trust invites additional contributions: please send your suggestions to contactus@bikeability.org.uk.

Practical methods

Bikeability provider managers should introduce any new instruction methods within a robust system of internal quality assurance that includes instructor observation, mentoring and professional development, and communicate clearly the purpose of any new methods and their success measures. All the methods outlined below can be applied to rural, suburban and urban cycling environments, accepting that instructors will approach every training site and route on its merits and do their best work possible with what is available. The methods are numbered for ease of reference only.

1. **Be prepared and minimise time wastage.** This can be done by arriving early, making sure that all pre-course work (i.e. risk assessment, checking consents, etc.) is completed well in advance of the course, and all those involved, (e.g. school business manager, teachers and instructors) have copies of the register/timetable and have read it, organised groups and spoken to each another. Consider the overall structure of the course to minimise time taken leaving/returning to school (for example 4 x 2 hour sessions require less travel time than 8 x 1 hour sessions).
2. **Increase independent cycling time and reduce rider waiting time.** This can be done by pairing riders up to ride training drills (being sure to rotate the lead rider), or by instructors working on a 1:6 rather than a 2:12 ratio. Smaller ratios can also be considered when delivering training, allowing individual riders more time to practise the core functions and systematic routines.

3. **Communicate in ways that encourage active engagement.** Instructors should be constantly considering how they are communicating with trainees and asking open questions allowing riders to 'explain' the core functions and systematic routines (rather than instructors explaining this for them). Open questions start 'How', 'What', 'When', 'Why', 'Who', 'Where' or 'Which'. Instructors should give every rider in the group opportunities to speak and encourage the quieter children to participate.
4. **Give riders things to do when not riding.** For example, when riders observe instructor demonstrations, give them specific core functions to look for and involve them through questioning whilst the demonstration is happening. Ask waiting riders to remind each other what to do before they start of a drill and provide feedback to each other at the end. Riders could discuss their independent cycling strategies with each other while observing others cycling to the National Standard.
5. **Encourage rider demonstrations.** When riders perform a drill, they should be demonstrating National Standard cycling. Depending on the situation, peer observation and feedback of these demonstrations may not require an instructor to be present. When an instructor is present, waiting riders should stand with them at the best vantage points to observe and provide feedback to other riders.
6. **Increase the level of challenge.** As their skills and confidence grow, riders should tackle new activities without instruction, apart from the instructor checking they will think for themselves and use systematic routines that focus on the four core functions. Moving groups to training more complex and busier training sites as their skills and confidence grow is essential for their securing progression and sustaining engagement.
7. **Turn a snake into a group ride.** When using a snake with two instructors to move groups, and if the instructors are confident in the collective ability of the group (perhaps towards the end of the course), they should consider riders leading the snake in front of the first instructor (and rotating the lead riders). Also, consider allowing the group to move itself from point A to point B within the collective ability of the riders and the limitations of the training area. Converting a passive snake into an active group ride will encourage riders to experience riding together independently (possibly for the first time) while practising what they have learned during a real journey.

What does success look like?

Other workshops at the 2019 Bikeability conference addressed this question, and suggested that in good Bikeability delivery riders will be observed who

- make independent decisions
- perform the four core functions
- in systematic routines throughout their journey
- become more competent, consistent and confident
- in progressively more challenging cycling environments
- reflect on the decisions they've made
- understand how they're improving

- always cycling towards the National Standard.

Increasing the independent cycling time and introducing other active learning methods will contribute to the development of these attributes.

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