**Approach to delivering Bikeability Training: Active Learning Guidance**

This guidance builds on and supersedes the ‘Achieving 80% Active Learning Time Guidance’.

**Definition:**

“Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. In short, active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing”

Bonwell, Charles C., and James A. Eison. 1991. *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom. 1991 ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education.

This approach to learning actively engages learners through thinking, discussion, problem solving, experience and taking part, as well as other methods. All of which directly involve the learner in their own learning journey.

Active learning places a greater degree of responsibility on the learner rather than a passive listening approach. However instructor guidance through prompting, questioning and sometimes telling, is still crucial to active learning. Active learning aims to develop the learners skill in applying knowledge and analysing a situation for themselves through thinking.

**Active Learning and Bikeability**

Bikeability training should give maximum opportunity for cycling practice in increasingly challenging cycling environments. Riders who are actively engaged in learning and cycling throughout the course will learn more, have more fun, be distracted less and present fewer behavioural challenges.

Cycling practice, (with appropriate feedback and decreasing amounts of promoting) is the most important active learning activity during a Bikeability course, but other forms of active learning can help riders stay engaged when they are not riding. These may include:

* Providing demonstrations of National Standard cycling
* Actively observing other riders’ demonstrations
* Giving and receiving feedback to/from each other
* Paired or group riding

Taken together, these forms of active learning should comprise the vast majority of Bikeability delivery time. Any remaining time may be taken up with:

* Instructors moving group to training sites, (If the group is mostly passive BDG p.9)
* Instructor ‘talk time’ (e.g. direct instruction, introducing a new activity, answering riders’ questions)
* Riders waiting to ride

As riders’ skills and confidence grow, their independent cycling to the National Standard should increase and instructor ‘talk time’ diminish.

Previous guidance from the Trust presented the idea that active learning should comprise 80% of course time, and everything else should take the remaining 20%. Updated guidance does not include this because:

* The distribution of 80:20 over the duration of a course is unbalanced and will differ depending on the session or activity being delivered, and the level of progression. This makes it an inappropriate measure of success for an individual session.
* 80:20 is hard to measure over a course.
* Most importantly, the Bikeability Trust have adopted a new approach that active learning should be maximised at every opportunity, for the reasons given above.

This advice is intended to stimulate discussion and the adoption of effective delivery methods. The list below is not exhaustive and the Bikeability Trust invites additional contributions: please send your suggestions to [contactus@bikeability.org.uk](mailto:contactus@bikeability.org.uk).

Bikeability provider managers should introduce any new instruction methods within a robust system of internal quality assurance (including instructor observation, mentoring and professional development) and communicate clearly the purpose of any new methods and 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 the 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 and making sure that all pre-course work (i.e. site risk assessments, checking registers and consents, etc.) is completed well in advance of the course start time.  All those involved (e.g. school business manager, teachers and instructors) should have copies of the course register and timetable, have organised the riders into groups, and spoken to each other before training commences. 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 cycling time and reduce rider waiting time**. This can be done by pairing riders up to ride training exercises (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 used when delivering training, allowing individual riders more time to practise.
3. **Communicate in ways that encourage active engagement.** Instructors should be constantly considering how they are communicating with riders, asking open questions allowing riders to ‘explain’ the core functions and systematic routines rather than explaining this for them. Open questions start ‘How’, ‘What’, ‘When’, ‘Why’, ‘Who’, ‘Where’ or ‘Which’. There are some examples in the Bikeability delivery guide. Instructors should give every rider in the group opportunities to speak and encourage the quieter riders to participate.
4. **Give riders things to do when they are waiting to ride**. For example, when riders observe instructor demonstrations, and potentially provide a commentary. Give riders specific things to look for and ask them questions whilst the demonstration is happening. Ask waiting riders to remind each other what to do before the start of an activity and provide feedback for each other at the end.  Riders could discuss their independent cycling strategies with each other while observing others cycling to the National Standard.
5. **Ensure ‘talk time’ is brief**. Key information that riders need to know can be drawn out through a short set of open questions, with maximum opportunities provided to put this knowledge into practice in an environment appropriate to rider progression. Instructor can give instructions whilst a demonstration is happening, and check understanding with open questions. Concise and accurate feedback will help individual riders identify areas for improvement. Lengthy roadside explanations should be avoided.
6. **Encourage rider demonstrations**. When riders perform an activity, they should be demonstrating National Standard cycling.  Depending on the situation, peer observation and feedback for these demonstrations could be provided by waiting riders. When an instructor is present, waiting riders should stand with them at the best vantage points to observe and provide feedback to other riders.
7. **Increase the level of challenge**. As their skills and confidence grow, riders should tackle new activities without excessive instruction.  Moving groups to more complex and busier training sites as their skills and confidence grow is essential for consolidating learning, securing progression and sustaining engagement. Riders may also create traffic for one another in environments where other road users are not present, for example in more rural environments.
8. **Turn a snake into a group ride**. As riders’ skills and confidence grow, instructors may move groups in more active ways to reinforce what they have learned during training. For example, when using a snake withtwo instructors to move groups, and if the instructors are confident in the collective ability of the group, 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. Asking open questions before and after a group ride can also ensure that riders are fully engaged throughout, and 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 in training, and preparing for future cycling opportunities.

**What does success look like?**

Good Bikeability delivery should develop riders who:

* make independent decisions
* decide how to apply the ‘four core functions’ appropriately through their journey
* become more competent, consistent and confident
* cycle in progressively more challenging cycling environments
* reflect on the decisions they’ve made
* understand how they’re improving and how they can continue to improve
* are always cycling towards the National Standard.
* have fun and are inspired to cycle more!

Instructors should maximise cycling opportunities where possible, introducing a variety of active learning methods. However instructors should note that riders must be observed cycling independently for assessment. Activities such as paired or group riding support formative assessment but should not be a replacement for independent riding.

**Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn!**