



The BRC: Translating the Vision to the Field

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The latest iteration of the Basic *RiderCourse* (release January 2018) from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation is based on sound research and the most current understanding of the principles of safety, adult learning, and motor skills. While the research and instructional philosophy that undergird the BRC provide guidance and a framework for effective and efficient delivery, experience in the field has shown that delivery of training frequently does not reflect what was intended in the curriculum design.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine this “gap” between the vision and intent of the BRC and how it is often delivered in the field. We will propose some opportunities for providing clarity, consistency, and a common frame of reference for RiderCoaches, RiderCoach Trainers, Site Managers, and Administrators.

- **The goal of this paper to is elucidate the opportunities for us to bridge this gap.** We have a product (the BRC) that has the potential to serve hundreds of thousands of riders each year and set them up to become more thoughtful and responsible riders...riders of skill, judgment, and character. If we do not succeed in bridging this gap, we are effectively hamstrung in our opportunity to arm riders to prevent and survive crashes, injuries, and fatalities on their motorcycles.
- **The key areas we will address in this paper are:**
 - providing a common frame of reference
 - clarifying the “how” and the “why” of the BRC, and
 - operationalizing the concept of the level 1 through level 5 RiderCoach

Our goal is that after reading this paper, you will be not just informed, but inspired to take action to bridge this gap as it may apply in your own work as a RiderCoach, a RiderCoach Trainer, a Site Manager or Owner, or an Administrator.

A Common Frame of Reference

Most of us who have been in the motorcycle rider training business for any length of time have heard phrases such as:

“This is the way we do it here.”

“It seems to work better if I do it this way”

“I like to do it this way”

“Yes, I know that cards/RCG says that, but...”

Sometimes, whatever is meant by “this” is perfectly aligned with curriculum principles and maintains student safety and continuity of instruction. However, we also know that



sometimes it is not. The challenge for all of us is - *How is a RiderCoach in the field to know and how can we empower them to make that distinction with accuracy?*

A common frame of reference exists for the BRC by way of the range cards and the RiderCoach Guide. While there is much there, there is also much left to RiderCoach interpretation and discretion. These interpretations vary among RiderCoaches as well as among RiderCoach Trainers and can lead to conflict. There is latitude built in to the BRC to allow for individual personality and for a RiderCoach to play to his or her strengths. That latitude, of course, has limits (as it should).

The following are some opportunities to expand on the existing common frame of reference.

- Produce a short video-based online experience for all RiderCoach Candidates to complete prior to arriving on-site for their RiderCoach Preparation Course. Much like the Basic *eCourse* does for new riders, this online experience can provide candidates with the basic foundations of the curriculum and the underlying philosophy of the curriculum. This common understanding (which they can be tested on prior to arrival) lays the foundation for their time on the range and in the classroom at the RCP, accelerates their learning, and provides all RCCs with exactly the same information.
- Document what we have seen over the years as “common misunderstandings” and/or “common misinterpretations” of the BRC.
- Clarify and publish the intent of the curriculum design for those areas of the BRC where we see the most challenges.
- Utilize 21st century technologies to provide this information to the RiderCoaches and RiderCoach Trainers (short videos, audio files, live online meetings for open Q & A, utilize a “push” philosophy of dissemination where the information is delivered to the RiderCoach and not simply stored online somewhere, etc.).
- Ensure that all active RiderCoach Trainers have a very high level of understanding of the how the BRC is intended to be delivered, the common areas of misunderstanding and misinterpretation, and positive methods for working with RiderCoaches. When the RiderCoach Trainers speak with a common and consistent voice, rider training delivery nationwide benefits. This can be accomplished with regular email newsletters, regular live webinars where all participate (webinars to be recorded and made available to those who could not attend live), and regular testing to minimize drift and ensure that all who carry the qualification of RiderCoach Trainer have the knowledge and skills to do so accurately and effectively.

Clarifying the “How” and “Why” of the BRC

There are some people who are happy to do as they are told on the job once they know what that is. There are also some people (perhaps most people) who have a strong need to know the “why” behind what they are being asked to do. This desire for meaning is an admirable trait but it can get in the way of (or at least slow down)



RiderCoach training and development. It absolutely true that when a person understands the why behind a given what or how, they are likely to do it better and more consistently. Having said that, it simply isn't practical to cover all the "whys" during initial RiderCoach training, it isn't reasonable to expect anyone to remember all of that information, and that much background would almost certainly take away from the mental energy spent on the nuts and bolts of how to teach the BRC (which RCCs need to learn during the RiderCoach Preparation Course).

"How" and "Why" for the BRC do exist in the RiderCoach Guide. Tab 5 ("Teaching the Basic *RiderCourse*") and Tab 7 ("Range Exercises") provide a tremendous amount of information to guide RiderCoaches. However, as time in the field has shown us, many RiderCoaches are not familiar with the content in these valuable sections (and some have not read them at all!)

Given that there are significant areas of overlap between "a common frame of reference" and "how and why," many of the strategies can be applied to both challenges. Having said that, the following are some opportunities to make the existing resources more accessible and applicable to the average RiderCoach.

- Create a series of short videos (one for each range exercise, one for each section/topic in the classroom) that connect the content of that part of the curriculum to the design principles from Tab 5 and the guidance provided for the range in Tab 7. Create downloadable audio versions of these video files.
- Maintain a 21st century, online, password protected social media-type environment for RiderCoaches to ask questions and get answers. This community should have established rules of engagement, allow for sharing of photos and video, and provide for limiting (or even eliminating) posting rights for individuals who do not follow the rules of engagement. This environment forms a community of sorts and must be monitored and curated to provide solid answers and perspectives that speak with the authority of the MSF. The community also provides a safe space to raise questions and even admit a lack of knowledge.
- Ensure that all active RiderCoach Trainers have a very high level of understanding of how the philosophical underpinnings of the BRC are to be operationalized. This elite crew should have an answer to the "why" questions that come from RiderCoaches (and these answers should be the same across RiderCoach Trainers). This can be accomplished with regular email newsletters, regular live webinars where all participate (webinars to be recorded and made available to those who could not attend live), and regular testing to minimize drift and ensure that all who carry the qualification of RiderCoach Trainer have the knowledge and skills to do so accurately and effectively.

Operationalizing the Concept of the Level 1 – Level 5 RiderCoach



The concept of level 1 through level 5 RiderCoaches has been around for many years. There is an acceptable minimum standard of instruction and there are also higher levels of proficiency to attain. This is similar in nature to a martial arts paradigm where participants are motivated to achieve higher belts, and the goal is not to have large group of white belts, but to have a large group of people across the spectrum of belts – most of whom are striving to be better, become more proficient, and reach the next belt level.

One of the challenges of this paradigm is the specificity of what constitutes a given level of RiderCoach. All systems involving levels of performance face this challenge – martial arts belts, any job classification structure involving levels (Accountant I, Accountant II, etc.), military ranks, and even levels of achievement in children’s organizations like the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts. Experience in the field has shown us that there is not a commonly understood definition of the five levels – it tends to be a subjective assessment and can vary among RiderCoach Trainers. This not only makes assessments somewhat subjective but can make it difficult for a RiderCoach to develop a clear path of what they need to accomplish to make to “the next level.”

The following are some opportunities to operationalize our understanding of the 5 levels of RiderCoaches.

- Create a short list of performance measures – ones that a RiderCoach, a RiderCoach Trainer, a site manager, a QA person, or administrator can measure with reasonable accuracy – for each of the 5 levels. These performance measures might include (but certainly are not limited to) items such as:
 - Percent of classroom time that the RiderCoach is talking
 - Percent of students who are engaged in the conversation
 - Overall course mileage (average mileage of the students)
 - How closely the RiderCoach reads the range cards
 - Average time spent coaching by correction (after a student stops)
 - Average number of incidents/accidents on the range
 - Specificity of coaching (e.g. “good job” or “good job squeezing the front brake smoothly”)
 - Student engagement in the classroom related to choices, character, judgment, commitments, and risk offset
 - Successful communication skills demonstrated with students and fellow RiderCoaches
 - Accuracy, completeness, and integrity demonstrated with course related paperwork
 - Accuracy and honesty of feedback to students (“You did great all weekend and you should have no trouble out there on the road” – is it true or is said with the intent to make the student feel good?)
- Provide these definitions to RiderCoaches, RiderCoach Trainers, QA team members, site owners/managers, and administrators so that all have a common understanding and definition. These definitions and performance standards can be further augmented with a brief video explanation (and some behavior



samples) of what each level entails and the intent behind the performance standards.

- Level 1 can be established as a starting point that is not intended to be a destination point. Clearly set the expectation that RiderCoaches will continue to learn and grow and reach higher levels. It is worth considering building in a degree of social desirability to move to Level 2 within the first year.
- Level 5 can be established as a level of mastery – not one to be attained easily or quickly and not one that many will ever reach. Any RiderCoach who has attained Level 5 should also have the respect of his or her peers, as interpersonal communication skills are key to earning and maintaining the level of a master RiderCoach.
- No levels should be “granted” – all should be earned. Levels earned must be maintained. Motorcycle skills are perishable – teaching skills are no different. To maintain a level, a RiderCoach must continue to meet the performance standards of that level.

The BRC has been designed; the philosophical and educational underpinnings are sound; and the distribution network (the cadre of RiderCoaches across the country) stands ready. We believe there are a number of opportunities to support this network of RiderCoaches and RiderCoach Trainers to inspire and empower them to deliver the BRC in the manner in which it was intended.

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