

Instructing afloat

As **Clive Grant** sees it, there are definite stages to instructing intermediate sailors afloat.

At first, after the initial briefing ashore, you may need to instruct from a moving powerboat. This is a short instruction from the coach to the candidates, and involves using the powerboat to best effect. There may be little input from the student (see Feedback page 11) at this early stage - just the coach amplifying one or two points only. Clear concise communication with few words is best, preferably some of the same words used during the briefing.

If the student does not respond to this and he/she requires more input, or you feel that you want to discuss the situation, stop the dinghy, come alongside and raise centre board, ease the kicker etc. Then have a small discussion about the problem, teasing out the essentials which are going wrong and offering positive coaching to put it right.



The third phase, if they are still not getting it, is to stop the boat, or ask them to come alongside a stationary powerboat, so that you can demonstrate to the candidates what is required. This is followed by a brief exchange before they practise.

After they return to shore, all the various comments are discussed during the review, which is concise and specific to the task.

Not all stages are used all the time, and some of them may be used in a different order, but the skills to deliver each are the same.

I have also focussed on positive coaching a great deal: tell them what to do to make it right, not what they are doing wrong; this comes across as much more positive.