

APPENDIX 5 – TECHNIQUES FOR INSTRUCTING AND COACHING

RYA Dinghy Coaching G14/05 - Pages 22 to 38 inclusive are detailed on the following pages.

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A further example of information relating to instructing techniques is available in DVD format from the Fédération Française de Voile entitled “*DVD Enseigner la voile*” See **Appendix 7 – Source Reference Data** for details

DRAFT

TECHNIQUES FOR INSTRUCTING AND COACHING

INSTRUCTING AND COACHING SKILLS

Sailing instruction is essentially a practical process of brief – task – debrief. The students are there to handle the equipment and actually do the tasks.

The learning really starts afloat and in particular when the student takes the helm. The instructor's job is to make this experience enjoyable, informative and safe.

On a course you should start sailing as soon as possible. A safety brief, correct clothes and a demonstration are essential but don't spend time talking about the theory of sailing at this stage. Students are usually slightly anxious about their first sail and stories about dangers and disasters will do little to allay their fears. Once people see the boat and equipment being used, or better still, are using it themselves they will pick up the concept fairly quickly. Also, the sooner you can give a student a straightforward achievable task followed by a genuine 'well done', the sooner they will relax and realise the course is achievable.

Briefing

You must be able to explain clearly what is required. This is virtually impossible across the water from a moving powerboat or to a frightened student in a heeling dinghy. Brief ashore or, if afloat, calm down the situation by lying to or heaving to.

A demonstration is an excellent way of showing the task required. The National Sailing Scheme incorporates a progression of demonstrations, some of them ashore (the land drills), which allow students to observe and then handle the controls without any distractions. When giving a demonstration make sure everyone can see and then draw their attention to the part of the boat that is important at the time. This might be the tiller, the luff of the jib, or possibly the sideways effect of the tide.

Make your briefings exactly that - brief. The anecdotes can come later, and remember the purpose of the demonstration is to teach a new skill not to display your prowess. Your brief has failed if the students are unclear about what they are supposed to be doing. Good instructors can deliver and summarise the brief as a succession of related 'bullet points' which are clear and easy to remember. A few questions at the end will help to reinforce the points made.

At more advanced levels it can be a good idea to involve the sailors in the brief using brainstorming and questions. Check their knowledge before going afloat. It can also be useful to encourage students to set their own goals for each session.

TOP TIP

Always summarise for clarity.

Clear summaries help both instructor and student



The Task

The task must be chosen to suit the ability of the student. Part of the skill of instructing is to assess the student's ability and provide tuition at a challenging but not impossible level. It is very frustrating for someone with a natural flair or with some experience to be taught at the pace of the slowest beginner.

Once the task has been set, allow the student to feel responsible for it. Do not continually interrupt - if you have briefed well it should be unnecessary. If events start to go wrong a quiet word will allow the student to correct the mistake while still being in control. Never elbow students out of the way to demonstrate your skill; the idea is that they demonstrate theirs.

Occasionally, if you can, allow a mistake to be made to illustrate a point, but only do this if you feel it is a good learning opportunity. It is a technique more appropriate to the higher level courses and you should take great care not to use the situation to put down or demoralise the student.

Debriefing

Debriefing is one of the most important skills of the sailing instructor. Done well it is informative, positive, good-natured and helpful. Done badly it can be destructive and demoralising. At the end of a debrief the students should be clear about what happened, their strengths and weaknesses, and be fired with enthusiasm to try again. They should never lose their self esteem or motivation.

Debrief as soon as possible after the task. If you are in the boat with the students, heave to. If you are teaching single handlers, stop regularly.

You must observe each task very carefully both to give feedback to individuals as well as the group. A notebook is helpful if you are in a safety boat or ashore but can be a bit 'official' and threatening in a dinghy. Don't overload the students with information but keep your feedback focused on what the session was about.

The most useful information a sailor receives is from himself, so a good way of debriefing is to ask the students what happened or if they would act differently next time. Your comments should reinforce what was done well but you must also be clear about what needs improvement. The instructor's personality comes in here. It is important to be able to deliver advice on how to correct mistakes without any 'edge' or bad feeling. Students want to know what they did wrong but do not want to be 'ticked off' or feel their instructor is using the occasion to deliver a personal slight.



STUDENTS DON'T LIKE BEING 'TICKED OFF'...

The standard form of debrief starts with a recognition of what went well followed by the errors made and finishes with encouragement on how to improve. A few questions will give the student an opportunity to give their point of view and ensure that the instructor knows that the point has been received. The best coaches and instructors enable the sailor to become their own coach. Many instructors used to taking charge and issuing commands neglect the students' own comments. They are therefore unaware as to whether they are learning anything.

There are many models for debriefing but the traffic light is an effective one.

RED	ASK	Open questions eg. • What did you notice? • When, where and how much? • Get them to be specific
AMBER	DISCUSS	Constructive comments and positive feedback on their performance and judgements.
GREEN	SOLVE	Information on how to improve

Providing Feedback

Open questions initiate dialogue. Try to use them to encourage discussion. The following words are the prefixes for open questions, which should be used whenever possible in eliciting feedback from your students:

- Why?
- Who?
- Where?
- What?
- How?

The following words generally prefix closed questions:

- Did?
- Should?
- Will?
- Is?

These are likely to return answers of limited value, such as Yes or No.

Try to provide each student with regular, encouraging feedback, which helps them to improve. Look for something positive to say first (however awful the attempt at a skill has been) and then tell them how to improve. Avoid sarcasm or negativity at all times.

Non-verbal messages

- Try to motivate your students. Check that you are giving each student equal attention and encourage their concentration.
- Much of our best communication is not spoken, including head-nods, smiles, frowns, physical contact, eye movements, laughter, body posture, language and many other actions.
- The eyes are crucial – take your sunglasses off if possible. Glazed or down-turned eyes indicate boredom or disinterest, as does fidgeting, which may also signal disagreement. Fully raised eyebrows signal disbelief and half raised indicate puzzlement.
- You may be able to gauge the mood and attitude of your group by observation, so try to be aware of the signals being transmitted by your students.

Occasionally allow a mistake to be made....



Methods, motivators and barriers to learning

Adults and young people often learn in different ways and for different reasons:

As an Instructor, try to be aware of your students' motivation for taking part and organise your delivery accordingly. In addition, be aware that people often bring their own barriers to learning: other responsibilities, feeling cold, lack of self confidence or a personality clash with the instructor may feature. "I'm here because I have to be, not because I want to be" is a common issue for young people. The imaginative instructor will find ways to address these issues.

Adults	Young People
Self directed	More random and instructor led
Goals and structure are important	Fun and experiential approach
Need to know why they are learning something	More need for the what, where and when rather than why
Often apply previous experience	May be experiencing the skill for the first time. Uninhibited - like to be with their friends

How do we teach a new skill?

Sailing involves a number of different skills. These include thinking skills (cognitive), the ability to interpret information, and movement skills (kinaesthetic). You will usually require more than one way to be fully successful in communicating a skill. These may include:

- Demonstrations, verbal instructions and experience (try it)
- Video, diagrams photo sequences
- Images or visualisation



....so long as it's not too serious.



Demonstrations are particularly important and useful in sailing, so demonstrate whenever possible. People will need time to identify what is being taught, link the parts into a smooth skill and become automatic.

This leads us to the 'whole – part – whole' demonstration method, where the skill is executed at normal speed, then broken into detailed parts, then redone at normal speed. In this way both a mental picture and a detailed understanding can be conveyed.

How to remember skills and instructions

A mnemonic is a vivid image, story or rhyme which helps you to remember a complicated skill or process (such as

tacking). Many people find these helpful, particularly if they are easy to remember for some reason:

- Use positive, pleasant images and exaggerate the size of important parts of the image
“Crouch down like a mouse”
- Use humour and rhyming. Funny things are easier to remember.
- Vivid images and symbols can be helpful. (West Cardinal Buoy has a Waist)

Land Drills

- Sailing can be seen as a series of drills.
- Land drills introduce clarity and simplicity. They enable students to achieve more in less time afloat. They are not an end in themselves, nor are they always appropriate
- Land drills work particularly well after a demonstration afloat to convey the “big picture”
- Introduce the session by explaining why the land drill may be useful
- Make it as real as possible. Boats are much better than ropes and chairs
- If using a boat, make sure it is safe on its trolley with people aboard, or put it on grass.
- Position the students where they can see clearly but are safe. Be aware of any distractions
- What you do is more important than what you say. Use few words and demonstrate smoothly at normal speed, before breaking the manoeuvre down
- Most people talk too much as they demonstrate
- Involve your students where possible e.g. in moving the boom or balancing the boat
- When teaching children, consider increasing entertainment by turning the drill into play by the use of songs or other ideas
- Land drills are useful for a number of skills e.g. spinnaker work, anchoring, reefing etc., where a complicated series of actions have to be co-ordinated



How our students learn

People learn in many different ways. They may have very different preferences to you for how, when, and where they learn. It is your responsibility to enable your students to learn, rather than just to teach the material.

Just as most people have a preference for using their left or right hands, they tend to have a preferred learning style.

Adults and children usually learn in different ways. If sailors are aware of their preferred style, they can vary or adapt their approach to learning. As an Instructor or Coach it is a good idea to modify and vary your style and approach to suit your students.

The three major ways in which people learn new things are:

- Visual (seeing)
- Auditory (hearing)
- Kinaesthetic (active doing)

Visual Learners

Visual learners relate well to written information: notes, diagrams and pictures.

Typically they will be unhappy with a presentation where they are unable to take detailed notes - to an extent information does not exist for a visual learner unless it has been seen written down. This is why some visual learners will take notes even when they have printed course notes such as this book. Visual learners will tend to be most effective in written communication, symbol manipulation etc.

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners relate most effectively to the spoken word. They will tend to listen to a lecture, and then take notes afterwards, or rely on printed notes. Often information written down will have little meaning until it has been heard - it may help auditory learners to read written information out loud. (Auditory learners may be sophisticated speakers, and may specialise effectively in subjects like law or politics.)

Kinaesthetic Learners (Movement)

Kinaesthetic learners learn effectively through touch, movement and space: they learn skills by imitation and practice. Kinaesthetic learners can appear slow, in that usually information is not presented in a style that suits their learning methods.

Each person may well use more than one style and preferences may change as skill develops. Use all styles and judge the reaction to see which is most effective.

Keeping students informed

RYA certificates provide a great incentive to book on courses. However they can become a discouragement to the weak student as the prospect of a certificate fades. Your Chief Instructor will advise on the importance of keeping everyone informed as to their progress through the course, and what they can realistically achieve. So this could involve breaking the news that a Performance Sailing certificate is not possible by the end of the course. Explain what can be achieved and agree between you to get the best possible value out of the course. From then on set goals, point out strengths and weaknesses and offer encouragement. Point out how much has been achieved as the course progresses so that by the final debrief you can both be satisfied that the course was worthwhile.

TOP TIP

*Think about how your students learn.
Adapt your style to suit*

If you fail to keep students informed, tension will build up with students discussing amongst themselves whether they are passing or failing. During the final debrief your teaching may be blamed for lack of results. This lack of communication between instructor and student is one of the most common reasons for complaints about RYA courses. Remember that many of the people you teach are highly successful and respected in their own field. The only skill you may have that they haven't is the ability to sail and teach sailing. Try to ensure they retain their dignity and a positive attitude towards you and the sport. This is one of the most skillful aspects of instructing.

Your first course

Your best plan is to arrive early and get to know the area and boats. Your Chief Instructor will ensure you know the 'house rules' and where the equipment is stowed. Make a list of the points you wish to make during the teaching session.

When the students arrive, welcome them and ask them about themselves and their background and experience. Learn their names immediately. Explain what you are going to do and invite them to ask about anything they do not understand. If you come across as sincere, the students will be willing you to succeed, even if your teaching technique is unpolished. Be honest about your own experience.

Avoid giving them an over-inflated view of yourself or you will lose their confidence.

If you make an error admit it, think clearly and put it right. No-one gives perfect demonstrations every time but you should be able to stay in control and correct mis-judgements.

Being slightly nervous before your first course is a good quality - it shows you care and want to make it a success. At the end, thinking of the things you should have done during the course is also a good quality - it means you are evaluating and improving what you do.

The Principal of the centre is there to give you help and advice. Use it.



Ten Instructor Qualities

COMPETENT SAILOR

Not necessarily brilliant, but capable, competent and reassuring

GOOD COMMUNICATOR

Articulate and clear, good listener, doesn't continually talk about themselves and comes across as interested and approachable

GOOD TEACHER

Can explain clearly using visual aids where necessary, can structure a lesson

COACH

Can assess progress and provide individual goals and tuition

HONEST AND STRAIGHTFORWARD PERSONALITY

Can deliver criticism and praise without personal prejudice. No 'edge'

CONSCIENTIOUS

Takes care over delivery of course and the boats and equipment

SENSITIVE

Adjusts delivery to suit individuals and takes interest in students

ENTHUSIASTIC

Own enjoyment of the sport is infectious even in adverse conditions such as no wind

RESPONSIBILITY

Understands responsibility for safety of students, stays in charge even when things go wrong

KNOWLEDGEABLE

Understands the subject and RYA scheme





PREPARING AND PRESENTING LESSONS ASHORE

TEACHING ASHORE

With small groups, much of the teaching is done informally around the boat or a portable board. With larger groups it is necessary to use some classroom teaching techniques. A lecture is not always the most effective way of teaching a practical subject like sailing. For example a bowline can only be taught by giving the students a rope and helping them to tie the knot. Merely stating a fact is no guarantee that your students will have received the information.

Bear the following points in mind when teaching:

- Before the first session welcome the students onto the course.
An informal start helps you to find out who they are and their experience.
- Learn the students' names as soon as possible.
- Find out their experience: this will help you pitch the course at the right level.
- Consider the room layout.
Anything you say or do will be pointless unless your students can see and hear you. Encourage your students to fill classrooms from the front. Make sure your room is comfortable, cool and well ventilated.
- Keep talks short.
Twenty minutes is about the right length of time to maintain students' attention without testing or a break. Don't over-run.
- Outline your aims at the beginning of a lesson and summarise the essential points to remember at the close.
- A **handout** stating the important facts is useful, but should not be given out until the end of the lecture. Handouts distributed at the beginning will only be read by students when they should be listening to you.
- Give your talk a structure:
Introduction, Development, Summary, Test.
- Draw on practical examples to illustrate your points.
Anecdotes should not be used to reinforce your personal brilliance - the class will quickly sense they are being taught by a knowledgeable and credible sailor, without you having to remind them regularly.
- Consider the age and experience of your audience (see notes on teaching adults).
- **Technical language.**
Avoid complicated terms but define those which are essential. Before you answer questions on, say, sailing by the lee, ensure that the rest of the class know what you are talking about.
- **Choose your position.**
Where and how you stand will have an effect on your talk. Standing behind a desk or lectern may appear more formal and puts a barrier between you and your audience.



Sitting on a table at the front of the class may be too relaxed for some talks. Watch polished speakers and assess their use of body language. Don't hide behind your visual aids.

- **Involve your students.**

Speak to all of them. Don't talk to the ceiling, the floor or the wall at the back of the classroom. Try to make eye contact with every member of the audience at some stage. As alternatives to a monologue, use question and answer techniques, discussions etc and use students' names.

- **Avoid irritating mannerisms.**

Your RYA instructor course will help to identify habits of which you may have no knowledge.

- **Avoid distractions.**

Any distractions (e.g. Mannerisms) which take your students' attention away from what you are saying will damage your talk. If you are giving a talk outside because of good weather, arrange the group so that they are facing away from any distractions and such that the sun is in your eyes, not theirs.

- **Practise writing on blackboards and/or wipeboards.**

Prepared overhead projector acetates are preferable to copious board-writing with your back to your students. Never talk to your board, always to your students. If you are not using or have finished with a board, rub it clean to avoid distraction.



- **Don't bluff.**

If you don't know the answer to a question - say so. Your students would far rather have an honest 'don't know, but I'll find out' than a bluffed answer. Having said that, you should always ensure that you have a wider knowledge of your subject than the basic facts contained in your lecture.

- **Don't be afraid to test.**

Providing the questions are not threatening they can be used to maintain interest and will help to reinforce your teaching.

- **Avoid sarcasm, humiliation or rudeness.**

Try not to let any of your prejudices alienate members of the class. In particular, avoid patronising students of a very different age group from your own and avoid sexism.

- **Don't try to be funny unless you are naturally witty.** The instructor course will help to appraise you of your natural level of humour.

Finally, remember that your talk will have succeeded only if all your students leave it having learnt all the important facts which you intended to communicate and are eager to learn more.

Teaching adults...

- Adults tend to have a greater fear of failure than children. They are therefore more reluctant to appear foolish in front of a class. You should concentrate on rewarding ideas and not on making those who give wrong answers feel inadequate. Adults will accept being corrected if it is done positively and is not humiliating.
- Adults for whom 'being lectured' is their only experience of being taught are initially reluctant to become involved in discussion, question and answer, tests and quizzes etc. Encourage them to ask questions and take part in the discussion. You will have to push against this dislike at first; once the students have overcome it they will learn more quickly and enjoy themselves more. Don't give anyone the opportunity to opt out. To encourage others, congratulate those who do join in initially.
- Adults are much more vulnerable to sarcasm than children, who tend to be used to it.
- The greater part of adult learning since leaving school will have been by 'problem solving' and personal experience. Use this to your advantage and let 'problem solving' from information you supply be one of your teaching methods, but remember that this approach usually takes longer than instructions.
- An adult's academic interest in the subject is not always compatible with his practical ability; the gap sometimes widens with age.

... and children

- Generally, young people make better students than adults, learning faster and with better retention.
- However, they are intolerant of poor classroom teaching. If their motivation is not high, it will be lowered further by a dull lecture in the classroom. Children learning within a group of relative strangers may initially be very shy about contributing answers. This in turn makes it difficult for the instructors to assess how much is being absorbed without resorting to testing, which again makes the process seem like school. Once you have overcome the shyness, you could find the opposite problem of having to control class input to the level which allows you to teach.
- Teaching young children (6-10) to sail requires a different approach to that for older children or adults. See the International Optimist Club Guide.
- Remember to explore the alternatives to the lecture: games ashore, work cards, modelling or drawing sessions.
- The Youth Sailing Scheme takes the different learning styles into account and is particularly suitable for young sailors. The initial training takes place in single handed dinghies (such as the Taz, Optimist and Pico) or suitable double handers (Pico Plus, Feva and Mirror).



PREPARATION AND USE OF VISUAL AIDS

We all communicate using a mixture of verbal and non-verbal information. A huge proportion of the message we transmit is tone of voice, eye contact, body language, etc. Good tuition requires the instructor or coach to make sure that they focus on keeping both types of message clear and inspirational.

Basic principles

• *Relevance*

Visual aids should be relevant or they become a distraction. Do not produce them for their own sake.

• *Clarity*

Diagrams must be simple and easily understood. They must be clearly read by the furthest of your audience. Any visual aid which cannot be seen by everyone is neither visual nor an aid.

• *Short slides*

Maximum four to six points per PowerPoint or OHP slide.

• *Timing*

Produce visual aids when needed; they will only distract your audience if displayed too soon. Dispose of them after use.

• *Display*

Try to display a visual aid in a dramatic manner. Students will remember something for longer if it is linked to a highlight.

• *Involvement*

A display of neatly tied knots on a board is much less effective than students attempting to tie the knots themselves, although the knotboard will be useful for reference after the lesson.

• *Use the other senses*

An aid which can be passed around, is more valuable than something which is merely displayed. Beware of moving on to another topic while your visual aid is still circulating. Nobody will listen to you if they have a toy with which to play. Equally, use the mechanism of some visual aids to 'punctuate' your lecture and put in 'paragraphs' i.e., switching off the OHP between acetates, lights on/off between slides.

• *Yourself*

Don't forget that you are a walking visual aid with optional sound yourself. Think about your mannerisms, delivery, position etc and their effect on the class. Never hide behind another visual aid such that your audience cannot see you properly. Finally, dress for the occasion. Although sailing is a practical sport, don't let your appearance serve as a distraction to your audience. A good general rule is to dress as well as the best dressed of your audience. You will then offend nobody.

Types of visual aid

It is often said that the best visual aid available to the sailing instructor is the boat itself, but the more advanced your teaching, the less true that statement becomes. Each of the other visual aids in common use has certain advantages and drawbacks.

Chalkboard or Wipeboard

These are widely available and can be portable. Be careful to talk to your students and not to the board. The disadvantages are that although adequate for simple messages or drawings it is unsatisfactory for detailed work to be done when the audience is present.

Flipchart

This has many of the characteristics of the chalkboard but the twin advantages that it is portable and information can be stored and used repeatedly.

Overhead projector

Properly used, this can be very versatile. Although it requires power, it can be used in daylight and without the instructor losing eye contact with the audience.

Although it is possible to write and draw as you speak, most instructors prefer to prepare OHP slides in advance. You can enhance them by the use of colour and by using overlays to build up or break down complex concepts or techniques.

Once a few operating tricks are learnt, the OHP is simple to use effectively but you must avoid the temptation to put too many words on an acetate. Remember that words are not visuals, even though they may be used to trigger thoughts or retain ideas. If you have a choice, position the screen in the corner of the room so that you are less likely to obstruct anyone's view.

Digital Projectors

These are becoming much more common although expensive. Slides and text can be produced on a PC using one of the many programmes now available. Avoid over-complication; an audience may be dazzled by the clever effects and miss the important messages of the presentation! Desktop or laptop computer simulations, often available from CD or the Internet, can be useful on certain courses.

Video or DVD films can be projected creating an ideal picture size for a larger audience. Computer generated and video films can be integrated.

The projector is also useful for compiling slide shows using stills from a digital camera.



Video

Either use professionally produced videos or a video camera afloat with your group. The RYA videos are intended to be used in sections, with the instructor interspersing the video with practical sessions. If using a video camera afloat consider the following:

Forget about the attractions of the zoom lens. Get as close to the action with as short a focal length as you can. The resulting picture will be far steadier and hence less likely to induce seasickness in the audience later.

Turn off the microphone. Even the professionals separate the roles of cameraman and commentator. Your 'off-the-cuff' comments are more likely to offend and be less helpful than a later commentary over a silent video.

Choose definite techniques or manoeuvres to film and switch off in between. Nothing is more aggravating for your students than having to sit through two hours of playback for the two minutes of their own sailing.

Models

Ranging from simple shapes used for collision avoidance talks to detailed models of sailing dinghies, the scope for models is limited only by the ability of the builder. In general, a model should have only enough detail as is required to ensure a full understanding of its role. Over-complication may be satisfying to the creator but must not detract from its use as a visual aid.

Land drills and shore-based demonstrations

Ideal for demonstrating complex skills at slow speed and without distraction. eg Tacks, gybes and spinnaker hoists/drops (see page 87).



AVOIDING COMPLAINTS

Most complaints arise from a lack of communication.

Students who have attended and passed the Level 2 course, often wish to take further modules, with virtually no further experience and without the ability to achieve the standard by the end of the course. Ideally the person taking the booking will spot this and either divert the student to a more suitable course or ensure that their aims are realistic. If not, the instructor has the job of redefining what can be achieved during the course. Someone who has paid for a course is expecting to receive the syllabus as defined in the logbook. The scheme is in modular form so that the appropriate training can be given to students who have a wide range of aptitudes and experiences.

Remember that the purpose of the scheme is to teach the sport and improve peoples' sailing. If the module is inappropriate the instructor should discuss realistic aims and ensure that the student agrees. A degree of tact and diplomacy is required to break this news but most people who have struggled on the first day will welcome a relief from the stress of trying to achieve an unrealistic target. Leave the possibility of the certificate open as people often improve once the pressure is off.



If you do not inform people of their progress you are more likely to receive a complaint along the lines of "I didn't achieve the certificate because I wasn't taught well".

Occasionally a student turns up who, for whatever reason, is likely to complain. If you can spot one of these, try to run the course exactly by the logbook, this handbook and your school's operating procedure. Before the end of the course, while there is still sailing time available, ask if they are satisfied with the course and if they would like to practise any further skills or techniques. Try to elicit regular feedback and give opportunities for comment.

The Principal or Chief Instructor should also give opportunities for feedback as the course progresses. We cannot expect

every course to be perfect (equipment fails and the weather is unpredictable) but try to deliver the course to the best of your ability and to the guidelines of your school and the RYA. The students should then find the course worthwhile.

If a school receives a complaint the Principal or Chief Instructor should deal with it personally. Try to establish what the person complaining is asking for. An immediate and understandable reaction is 'How dare you criticise my centre' but a more helpful attitude is 'How can we resolve this?' Often the simplest option is to offer more tuition. If you can arrange this before they leave your centre, perhaps at a later date, you can save a lot of correspondence and bad feeling.

The instructors who receive the fewest complaints are those who are competent, take an interest in their students, and ensure that even the difficult or weak students feel they are an important part of the group. The instructional skills required are well beyond those of just sailing or even just teaching.

TEACHING DISABLED SAILORS

Teaching a disabled person to sail is exactly like teaching a non-disabled person. You mix common sense with experience and apply safe practice.

The overall objective is to learn how to sail effectively, develop confidence, enjoyment, a sense of achievement and to have fun. It is important to encourage maximum participation and activity by people. Do not prejudge a person's competence by their disability, but rather by their experience, knowledge and ability. The first thing you should do is ask!



We are all individuals each with different interests. Someone with a disability has ideas, makes plans, gets excited, even bloody minded - in short they are just like the rest of us. There is no need to adopt a different manner and vocabulary or to feel sympathy or embarrassment. The important thing is to treat a disabled person as you would anyone else.

Communication is the key to success.

It is essential that communication is a two way process. Key points to remember are:

- Never assume
- Ask
- Listen
- Establish individual communication
- Emphasise the ability not disability
- Make the terminology/jargon clear
- Build trust
- Check understanding
- Offer empathy not sympathy
- Learn very basic sign language

A disability is not a barrier to the successful completion of courses. All participants must be able to demonstrate their ability to complete the whole syllabus, but this can be achieved by proxy. A candidate who cannot perform a task directly must be able to satisfactorily direct a third party to achieve that task on their behalf. It is worth bearing in mind that the candidate has to possess good communication and teaching skills as well as knowing how to undertake the manoeuvre.

The 'special endorsements' line of the certificate should be treated with care. Do not list any disability unless it directly affects the holder's ability to handle a boat, so the prosthesis that gives a user complete function is of no consequence. However, a visually impaired person may have the endorsement 'Requires visual assistance on the water'.

