

# Currents

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## Hot topics

- **ABC Online now offers downloadable student manuals and online exams. (See article on this page.)**
- **What is the USPS Digital Media Library? (See article on this page.)**
- **Teachers, feeling burned out? Four ways to renew your excitement for teaching. (See article on page 3.)**
- **You can now access HQ800 PR data. (See insert page.)**

## ABC Online—Rebounding Sales

USPS's online America's Boating Course®, now available for \$29.95, offers a downloadable manual and an online exam that students may take if their state regulations permit. Online sales of America's Boating Course are rebounding, and the anticipated impact of the new online exam system is exceeding expectations. Online monthly sales for June 2016 are ahead of any month since 2010. Sales for July 2016 are on track to exceed all July sales since 2010.

In case you have not checked out the online America's Boating Course website, here is the link:

<http://www.americasboatingcourse.com/>

Just click on the Enroll Now button to begin the enrollment process. Once



enrollment is completed, including online payment of \$29.95, the student may immediately log into the course. Depending upon each state's boating and education requirements, access to the online final exam is granted or withheld after the student completes all necessary work.



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## Hot Links

**Reserve the Virtual Trainer**

[www.usps.org/php/bsvt](http://www.usps.org/php/bsvt)

**Take an online seminar**

[www.usps.org/edonline/](http://www.usps.org/edonline/)

**Ed Dept. Home Page**

[www.usps.org/eddept/](http://www.usps.org/eddept/)

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Learning theory insights suggest new teaching methods. Pg. 3

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## DML – A New Resource for USPS

The United States Power Squadrons' Digital Media Library (USPS DML) will debut on 1 October. This article shares how you can leverage this new resource and whom to contact to learn more about it.

**What is the USPS DML?** The USPS DML features a new website and mobile app at [uspsdml.org](http://uspsdml.org) hosting the centerpiece of this project – a series of twenty new safe boating videos – plus additional boater education digital media.

As a squadron member, you're invited to preview the pre-launch version of DML: <http://uspsdml.org/staging314/> and try-out its live links to the library's



presence on major social networks, search-box for safe-boating content, and scrolling carousel with clickable thumbnails of DML streaming videos. There are also a

welcome video tour of the library and animated sections previewing boater education slideshows and displaying boating safety images.

**What do the DML videos cover?** The new videos provide full coverage of ANSI powerboat standards and Practical On-the-Water Training (POTW). Two new DML videos will premiere each week from



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early October through late December totaling 20 videos in all, 3-to-5 minutes each, showing multiple types of boats, diverse boater demographics and a variety of on-the-water venues, produced with professional voice-over narration and music and released in American-English and Spanish versions. Topics include:

- Announcing the DML
- Welcome to the DML
- Life Jackets
- Vessel Safety Checks
- Planning Ahead
- Vessel Inspection
- Preparing for Departure
- Departing
- Steering Basics
- Stopping and Holding Position
- Pivot Turn,
- Getting on Plane & Operating on Plane
- Maneuvering on Plane
- Stopping a Boat on Plane
- Anchoring a Boat
- Man Overboard
- Preparing for Arrival
- Docking
- Mooring and Shoreline Landing
- Securing the Boat.

#### How does the DML help USPS?

There are two major ways this project will provide value to our USPS educational mission. First, the DML itself will serve as one large promotion for squadron classrooms. Each short video will function as a commercial for a USPS course or seminar, and every piece of digital media in the library will have a hyperlink to learn more about the subject matter and take visitors to a place to sign-up for squadron classes.

Second, the DML will serve as a new



audio-visual classroom resource. Its videos, slideshows and images are being designed to be incorporated into your curriculum to enhance the learning experience of your students, and each will have its own guide recommending methods and strategies for using that piece of media for best effect.

#### When will the DML and its content be available?

The methods-and-strategies guides will be introduced in Pittsburgh at USPS's Governing Board Meeting. Filming and editing are ongoing through the end of September. The online properties will launch 1 October and all the initial video content will be uploaded and redistributed on social networks by the end of December.

#### How will the DML be promoted?

DML's launch will have a promotional campaign targeting the more than 85 million US boaters who can benefit from safe-boating messages. From

October through December, there will be two press releases and media alerts every week introducing the DML and each new video as it comes online. There will be a corresponding push of each title across major social networks. In addition, there will be an affinity-groups program with our allies, so that all-in-all the USPS DML and its content will be covered by more than 10,000 media outlets.

#### Who can I contact to find out more?

If you'd like to learn more or get involved in the Digital Media Library project, please contact:

P/D/C Marty Lafferty, AP  
DML project manager  
410-725-7820

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410-412-4027

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## New Seminars

Look for two new seminars coming this fall from the Electro-Mechanical Systems Committee. The first is on AIS (Automatic Identification System), a very useful tool supplementing radar

to identify large ships we share the waterways with day and night. The second will be on *Propane Systems and Safety*.

In the future, we will release a *Radar* seminar; and a total revision of the classroom *GPS* seminar is underway.

As always, don't hesitate to bring anomalies, mysterious test questions, errors and typos to our attention. For more information, contact:

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Each state boating agency specifically reviews the online material and determines if the online exam is acceptable for its jurisdiction. Prior to purchase, the student is informed whether (a) their state accepts the online exam, (b) an in-person, proctored exam is required or (c) instead of an online course, an in-person, classroom course is required.

Online sales have been made in 39 states and territories, of which 27

states have approved the online exam within their jurisdictions and four more are considering approval. From the enrollment data, it is clear that the new online exam feature is driving the rebound in sales. The top states in online sales of America's Boating Course are: New York, Washington, Maine and Florida, all of which accept the online exam.

Two states have approved the online course but require an in-person, proctored exam: NH and RI.

Six states specifically require an in-person, classroom course: CT, LA, NJ, OR, PA and TX.

The Basic Public Education Committee of the Educational Department is continuing to work with all states to bring the online U.S. Power Squadrons flagship public course to their students and to keep the material up to date.

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## Keeping Your Teaching Energy Up

Teaching is such a rewarding activity that many instructors never tire of the experience. We naturally expect the excitement of learning to be the solution for any learning distraction. However, sometimes after having taught a course several times and mastering the material, one may lose some enthusiasm. The excitement of teaching something new or thinking about how to explain the content is compromised.

Another pitfall is expecting students to bring all the energy needed for learning. Students may not have the background information or experience to add excitement or energy to the learning. Knowing you may need skills or knowledge does not automatically lead to excitement for learning.

There are four areas of instruction to consider when thinking about re-energizing your teaching. These include course content, knowledge of learners and learning, using a variety of instructional strategies, and using questions to ensure that people are learning. Each of these interconnected areas may be used to strengthen your teaching.

**Course Content**—As we teach the content we become more familiar with the key concepts and vocabulary. We streamline delivery and use better examples to convey the content. Once we have solved these challenges, the

content becomes routine. It is easy to forget that the learner does not have the same level of understanding. This can be called the "curse of knowledge." For example, a Piloting Instructor uses a chart plotter so well it is hard to understand why there is any challenge to the process. A learner with no charting experience would need to build both manipulation skills and knowledge for successful plotting.

A solution is to build a deeper understanding of the content. Knowing the content well enough to **adapt or adjust it with different examples or explanations** for the students allows the instructor a new focus to help re-energize teaching.

We may reorganize the content to start with a different concept or idea and **adapt content to different instructional strategies**. Perhaps we have more social learners in class. Instead of explaining charting problems to teach navigation techniques, a set of situations could be developed that allow students to build the same skills by working together to complete the problems. This might be called **showing and not telling**. We would use our knowledge of charting to have the students work through problems and learn.

**Knowledge of Learners and Learning**—A second approach to re-energizing our teaching is to build knowledge of learners and learning.

This is **looking at the effect we are having on the learner**. In the last two decades knowledge from research on learning has increased rapidly. Brain imaging has allowed researchers to view activity in the brain while people are learning. The research has led to new thinking about teaching and learning. We now know that the brain changes as people learn new information.

Understanding how the brain takes in and stores information allows for better planning for retention of learning. We now know that **information moves through the emotional part of the brain before it enters the reasoning area of the brain**. A positive learning environment helps the student process information and focus understanding. Teachers are also energized when receiving feedback from the learner that demonstrates they understand the content or skill.

The teacher must process teaching decisions in working memory before they are stored in long-term memory. The model developed of working memory is like a worktable where 5-9 items can be processed before being removed from the table and stored for future use. Perhaps thirty seconds is used to decide what to do with the information. If it is not stored, the person will not be able to recall the information. Increasing your awareness of learning engages you in

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the experience more fully and allows for deeper thinking about teaching. Think about the brain information when making teaching decisions. *How the Brain Learns* by David A. Sousa is a resource to consider for exploring the impact of brain research.

### Variety of Instructional Strategies—

Variety is the spice of life that adds zest to our day and our teaching! We can use different instructional strategies to increase our enthusiasm and interest. Instructional strategies are plans for delivering the content based on the learning objective. For example, if the students appear to know the content, adjust the objective so the students use the content to complete an activity to strengthen their understanding. Solving the challenge will make your work easier as well. The same content can be taught in several ways. As long as we facilitate learning the key concepts and content of a USPS course or seminar, our work will meet USPS objectives.

Examples of ways to adapt an objective include: divide the class into small groups to work with a skill or content, use visual aids to show the content differently, employ a teaching aid to practice a skill, or assign student

presentations of content such as a cloud type in weather class could each bring more energy to the learning environment. Remember that the **learner has to make meaning of the content** to understand and remember. Manipulating content in some way creates a stronger memory channel than sitting and listening. Let that knowledge help guide your thinking to plan teaching.

**Questions—**The fourth area to think about to re-energize your teaching is developing questions that strengthen teaching and understanding. Creating good questions provides you with a different window to look at your teaching of the content.

After asking a question, wait 3-5 seconds before calling on a student. After the student answers, pause for an additional 3-5 seconds before commenting or asking another student for a response. Having time to think will lead to better answers. Asking questions is one way to gather data to help you understand how well your lesson plan is progressing with your students. Feedback on student understanding is the key to successful teaching. Giving feedback to students engages them in the content and reinforces correct understanding. It also is used to correct misunder-

standings. Questions do that by **focusing on the content, behavior or skill and not on the person**. Questions allow the creation of a learning environment where the learner is using the content to communicate. Processing the content to answer questions allows the creation of stronger memories and deeper learner understanding.

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[www.usps.org/eddept/misc/currents.htm](http://www.usps.org/eddept/misc/currents.htm)



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## E-Books Update

E-Books (manuals and other books that can be downloaded to your smart phone, tablet or desktop computer) are soon to be a reality for students and instructors of USPS Educational Department courses. The first E-Book for an advanced course will be the student manual for Seamanship 2016. We're expecting to have a launch date in the fall of 2016. Seventeen squadrons have shown early interest and will be contacted shortly after the Fall Governing Board with specific instructions and ordering details.

The E-Books team will initially use a PDF format for the participant's use. There are plans for offering an E-Pub format by the end of the year. No-cost downloadable E-Book readers that are

platform independent are readily available. Early users will have recommended readers and download instructions supplied with orders. Current procedures will require the Squadron Educational Officer or other authorized squadron designee to order the appropriate material using the existing educational material ordering procedure. There will be a new item number for all E-Book manuals or course kits that have an E-Book manual. When the order is received, a download link and key will be forwarded to the ordering officer for each student/participant.

Only successful downloads will be counted and the student will own the material and be able to print portions or the entire document. Initially, there will be no change in the course price,

and billing will continue to use the existing squadron account structure. There will be no changes to the examination procedure. Authorized squadron officers will continue to order exams from USPS HQ, administer proctored exams locally and then return completed exams to HQ for grading and assigning credit to successful candidates.

We are currently waiting for the support software that is required for registering, ordering and manual distribution to be completed. Once it is completed and tested, we will be ready to go. For more information, contact:

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## Extracting Public Relations Data from the HQ800 Database

For over 20 years, we have been collecting and storing data about how students heard about our courses. We've captured the data from ED-26 Boating Course Registration forms (paper and electronic successors) and the Boating Class Assistant and HQ800 systems. This data, which includes some Public Relations (PR) and student demographics items, is now in a single database containing over 80,000 records that can be analyzed to help us to allocate resources most effectively for promoting our courses. This article explains how to use a new trial tool which can query the HQ800 database to extract the data you need for PR evaluation purposes.

Go to the EdDept home page on the Member's part of the USPS web site, select the EdDept Tools menu and click on the SEO page. On the SEO page, click on the link to SEO tools. You will see the page shown in Figure 1.

**SEO/DEO tools**

- [800 Home - Boating Course/Seminar/Adv Course Tracking](#)
- [ED26 Student Boating Course Completion Query](#)
- [ED46 Seminar Attendee Completion Query](#)
- [Course Completion Query](#)
- [800 System Help](#)
- [Codes and definitions used by HQ and Eddept systems](#)
- [Locate USPS University Students near your squadron](#)
- [Locate Cyber Squadron Members near your squadron](#)
- [View Public/Member Locate Course/Seminar/Courses Display](#)
- [BOC Candidate Review/Training History](#)
- [BOC Certifiers List](#)
- [BOC Regional Contacts](#)
- [View/Update Squadron Eddept Job Assignments - Online ED-1](#)
- [Locate Certified Instructors](#)
- [National Safe Boating Test - A forgotten resource](#)
- **Trial Tool** [Public Relations Survey Data Query](#)

Figure 1 – SEO/DEO Tool Page

Now click on the bottom link: “**Trial Tool** - Public Relations Survey Data Query.” This will take you to this URL: [http://www.usps.org/cgi-bin/nat/eddept/800/start\\_mrk.cgi](http://www.usps.org/cgi-bin/nat/eddept/800/start_mrk.cgi), shown in Figure 2. (Alternatively, you can click on the above link or use the QR code shown with your smart phone.)



**Public Relations Survey Data Query** [How to Use](#)

This is not a report it is a data mining tool!

Submit a Query against the Public Relations Survey Database.  
Note: If you enter only the "From" value the selection begins with that value.  
If you enter the "To" value the selection ends with that value.

Field	Options
Started (Date)	<input type="text"/> From <input type="text"/> To mmddyy
Type	<input type="radio"/> Seminar <input type="radio"/> Boating Course <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ignore
Squadron Number	<input type="text"/> <a href="#">Find the number of a squadron</a>
District	<input type="text"/>
State	<input type="text"/>
Birth Date	<input type="text"/> From <input type="text"/> To mmddyyyy
Age	<input type="text"/> From <input type="text"/> To
Sex	<input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ignore
Learned	<input type="text"/>
Description	<input type="text"/> Contains
Boat Size	<input type="radio"/> Under 16 <input type="radio"/> 16-25 <input type="radio"/> 26-39 <input type="radio"/> 40-54 <input type="radio"/> Over 54 <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ignore
Boat Type	<input type="radio"/> Inboard <input type="radio"/> Outboard <input type="radio"/> I/O <input type="radio"/> Sail <input type="radio"/> Paddle <input type="radio"/> PWC <input type="radio"/> None <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ignore
Boating HP	<input type="text"/> From <input type="text"/> To Not available for Seminars
Trailer	<input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ignore
Boating Years	<input type="text"/> From <input type="text"/> To Show as: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Counts <input type="radio"/> Percentage

[Submit](#) [Clear](#) [Back](#) [Return to Tools Page](#)

Figure 2 – Query Form

The query form that you will see in Figure 2 allows you to choose criteria to apply against the selection of records in the database. Clicking on "Submit" will run the query. The page returned (Figure 3) contains a "Results Breakout" which gives the **percentage** of matches which fall into each of the results "buckets."

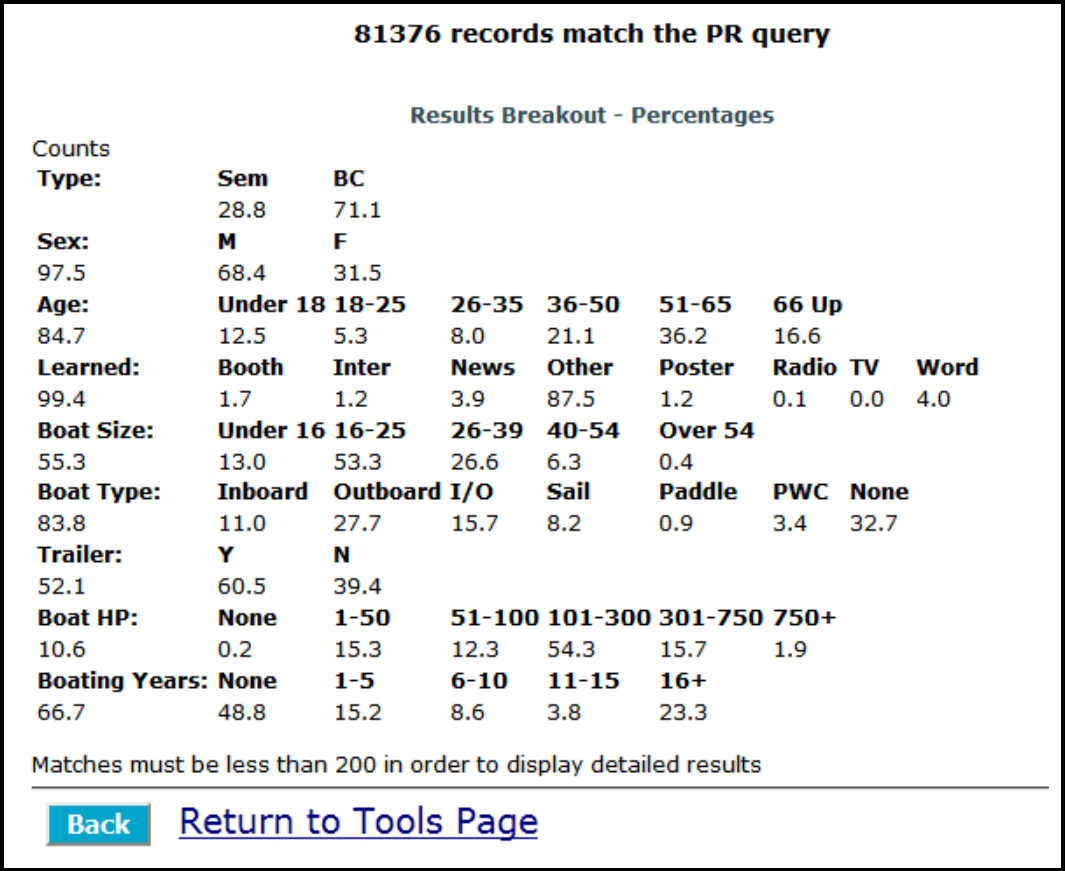


Figure 3 – Data from Query

The range values for the buckets for "Age", "Boat HP" and "Boating Years" can be changed. Any recommendations for changing them are welcomed. **Please read the help information by clicking on "How to Use" button at the top of the query form before running a query.**

This is a work in progress. If you find it useful or if you have any suggestions for improvements, contact: Dan Bartell, National IT Committee [danb@usps.org](mailto:danb@usps.org)