

# PE Best Practices

## Field-Proven Techniques For Better Boater Education

### “Radio Lottery” Provides Hands-On Classroom Experience

*By Ruth White, ADSO-PE 7*

Proper usage of the VHF/FM radio is vital to boating safety. However, we often find that students are reluctant to operate the radios on their boats. I use an exercise called Radio Lottery to help them become more comfortable with this vital piece of equipment. This exercise enables students to practice microphone position, clarity, speed of speech, and hanging-up when finished. Here’s how Radio Lottery works:

Radios with dummy antenna loads and converters are setup on opposite ends of the room. The radios are set for 5 (one watt). We use Channel 68 as our working channel in place of Channels 16 and 72. This is done for security reasons, and to ensure non-interference with existing marine use.

To facilitate this communications exercise, we have developed scripts that guide the students in performing radio checks, communicating with another vessel, and summoning help. These scripts are prepared in advance and printed on heavy paper. We make sure we have two copies of each script on hand – one for each participant in a given scenario.

Before class, I write each student’s name on a piece of paper and place it in a small container. To get the exercise started, I draw two names and provide the selected students with the appropriate scripts.

By drawing names rather than just asking for volunteers, we find that even reluctant students become participants. Whenever possible, small gifts are awarded to those who participate.

For copies of the radio scripts, email me at [raw618@comcast.net](mailto:raw618@comcast.net).



*This is a great way to help new boaters conquer the stage fright they feel when they first pick up a microphone – Ed.*

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### Reaching More Boaters Through Teamwork, Coordination

*By Judy Tumbleson, DSO-PE 8WR*

In our metropolitan area, we have three flotillas engaged in public education. We all work together when scheduling our courses to offer prospective students the widest possible range of options.

We not only offer courses at different locations, but also starting on different days of the week. For example, we’ll have one that starts on Monday, one on Tuesday, and the third on Wednesday. This arrangement often enables a student who misses a class to pick up that session on another night in one of our other locations. (continued on page 2)

**(Reaching More Boaters, continued)**

This year we're also staggering the months in which classes start. One course will begin in January, one in February, and the third in March. In April, we'll offer a fourth class that will meet twice a week for five weeks (for those people who wait until the weather starts to warm before they think about boating). By coordinating our PE schedules, we feel that we've created more opportunities for learning, and ultimately reached more boaters.

*One of the key tenets of marketing is that to add customers, you must create more opportunities to buy. Great tip! – Ed.*



**Putting Zing Into Your Courses**

**By Anne Lockwood, DVC-EW**

Spice up your Public Education programs by adding a live, on-the-water practical component. The Auxiliary's *On Water Training* takes PE courses a step further by supplementing textbook theory with a safe, fun, and profitable experience. This training is not only valuable for the student, but also serves as a great motivator for Coxswains and crew members to show what they do best.

*On Water Training* complements the BS&S, BSC, ABC, GPS for Mariners, and BCN/ACN courses. Think of the possibilities! Imagine how new boaters will revel in the experience of actually seeing what an ATON looks like in the real water

world. There are amazing tasks in *On Water Training* that enhance all the things that you have spent hours describing in class. The sky is the limit in terms of what *On Water Training* can do to make recreational boaters safer and more aware when heading out for a day of fishing or fun.

The new, user friendly *On Water Training Manual* is available for download from the PE Media Library. The manual has been modified to put the Flotilla in control of what is offered to students. The red tape has been cut and the reporting system streamlined to make this a viable course for every Flotilla. Contact the DVC-EW for any questions.

*Live training in a controlled setting provides an unbeatable learning experience. Do you have an OWT plan yet? – Ed.*

**Optimizing The PE Customer Experience**

**By Vincent Pica II, FSO-PE 18-06**

Here are a couple of practices that have generated strong, positive reactions from our PE students:

**Start on time without leaving boaters in your wake.** Late starts can mean late endings, and also may cause important subject matter to be glossed over. We start each class promptly – and spend the first 10 to 15 minutes reviewing the Q&As at the back of the chapter from the prior week's class. Students know that if they miss these reviews, it'll be harder to do well. So, students arrive on time, which is good for everyone.

**If they pass, isn't knowledge more important than the grade?** When administering the final exam, we score tests right away. Students who pass scores are offered the chance to see which questions they missed and try again. In two years, we've never had a student pass up this opportunity. Better knowledge makes better boaters.

*In education, just like boating, little things mean a lot. Students appreciate effective classroom management – Ed.*

## America's Boating Course – Wholesale Sales By Flotillas

*By Dick Clinchy,  
Department Chief-Education*

This year we're pushing hard to increase the distribution of America's Boating Course (ABC) in the marketplace. Several initiatives are already underway with large retail outlets like West Marine/BoatUS, BassPro, Cabelas, and others. We're also working to have insurance companies distribute the course to insured boaters. Finally, John Whelan, a member of the National Marketing Group, is close to getting an agreement from a major boat manufacturer that would include ABC with the delivery materials on every new boat.

The purpose of these efforts is quite simple...we want to get recreational boating safety education into the hands of hundreds of thousands of boaters who often do not seek out such knowledge. We also hope that these ABC recipients, who we otherwise might never "touch," ultimately will look to the Auxiliary for further education and perhaps even membership.

In conjunction with these "big sale" efforts, we have worked with our partner USPS to develop a wholesale price list. It is important to understand that the lowest wholesale price is still not as low as the price that our Districts pay for ABC! What this means is that should you decide, at the Flotilla level, to engage area marine dealers or booksellers in the re-sale of ABC, you can get the course for about the same price as those organizations that purchase 20,000 or more copies annually. That is quite a distinct advantage for your flotilla.

Now you might ask, "So what?" Well, think about what you can accomplish with a modest additional effort on the part of your members. Your RBS Program Visitors are the best ones to work with if you choose to implement this concept. Try going to some of the marine dealers with whom you have

regular contact, or perhaps book dealers who get substantial boater traffic, and offer them the opportunity to purchase ABC from your Flotilla on a wholesale basis. On the wholesale price list, ABC in quantities of less than 500 costs \$16.00 per copy. So, maybe you'd sell ABC to that dealer at \$16.00 a copy. Of course, you are free to set a higher price, and knowing that the dealer would normally have to add shipping charges to the wholesale price, you might sell the course for \$20.00. Those dealers who are real friends of the Auxiliary might even be willing to pay full price for ABC (suggested retail of \$34.95), with your Flotilla capturing 100% of the resulting positive cash flow.

Consider the following example. Let's say that you find three marine dealers willing to purchase ABC from your flotilla for \$20 a copy. Each of these dealers then re-sells ABC for \$34.95. The dealers stand to make a nice profit on each sale, and are encouraged to display the course prominently in their stores.

If we assume, just for this example, that your District price for ABC is \$10.00 a copy, then your Flotilla makes \$10.00 on each sale. If each of your three dealers sells just five copies each month, your Flotilla will earn an additional \$1,800 per year. Think about what your Flotilla can do with that much additional revenue.

More importantly, remember that in this case you are also providing recreational boating safety education to at least 180 more people each year. In fact you'll probably reach even more, since the whole family can share the ABC CD.

This program is a great way for your Flotilla to reach more boaters. Taken to the extreme, if we could get every Flotilla in the United States to follow through, we'd reach out and touch another 200,000 boaters each year! Now, that's an impressive leveraging of our efforts indeed.

*ABC offers tremendous benefits to boaters and flotillas. Are you on board? – Ed.*

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## The National Education Team – In Action At NTrain!

**By Robin Freeman,  
Deputy Department Chief-Education**

Late last month, 16 DSOs-PE representing the entire country arrived in "balmy" St Louis, Missouri for the annual National Training Conference (NTrain). Friday evening we assembled in the conference room where we would spend the next two days brainstorming.

After a brief "getting to know you" session, the group set about building the weekend's agenda. Everyone in the room contributed ideas, possibilities, programs, and problems, all of which were logged on large Post-It sheets. We agreed at the outset that no idea was too radical to consider!

Saturday we picked up where we left off. Several new courses were reviewed. By DSO consensus, courses were either dropped for consideration at this time or given the go ahead for development. We heard excellent presentations from DSOs on river boating, On Water Training, and a possible short course for women, taught by women. In addition, the long and knotty problem of what to do about a sailing course was thoroughly hashed out amongst the DSOs. As a result we now have a clear direction here with definite time-lines and goals.

Saturday night we all met for dinner, with the high energy that sustained our sessions carrying into the evening. No, we didn't have any food fights. But we did do a lot of talking, laughing, sharing, and finding common ground. We also discussed next year's NTrain, and how to build on the fabulous teamwork evidenced in 2004.

Dick and I view the DSO-PEs as a key component of the National E Department Staff, and consider their input to be absolutely essential. Based on the feedback we received, your DSOs are eager to contribute. One declared this the "Best NTrain

Ever!" Another said, "I felt like I had a chance to help make a difference." All went home with a renewed commitment to identifying and communicating PE Best Practices throughout the Auxiliary's instructor community.

On Sunday we closed the sessions by voting on the Friday night brainstorming topics. The Top Three items in each category were assigned an "owner" staff member and a completion date. The results were emailed to all DSOs-PE for their review.

So what did 16 DSOs, 2 Division Chiefs, Department Chief and Deputy accomplish? Why don't **YOU** ask **YOUR** DSO-PE what the weekend in St Louis meant for them, and for education efforts in your district? You'll be glad you asked!

*Collaboration is the key to our collective success. Take Robin's advice and ask your DSO-PE about the lessons learned at this year's NTrain – Ed.*

## Contribute to PE Best Practices

Do you have a Best Practice to share with your teammates in the public education arena? If so, please email Tom Angott at [tangott@comcast.net](mailto:tangott@comcast.net).



## Question of the Month

**Question:** Should my flotilla really be pushing America’s Boating Course? We’re concerned about the impact that a self-taught course might have on both boater safety and our overall PE program.

### TOP TEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT BE TEACHING OR PROMOTING ABC

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Answer:** Notice a great deal of white space in the list to the left? That’s because there are **NO** good reasons for not teaching or promoting ABC.

However, before going any further, let’s address two inarguable givens:

- Well-taught classroom-based boating education is superior to self-taught boating education
- No doubt about it, recreational boaters will learn far more in a Boating Skills & Seamanship course than they will learn in ABC

Now that we have these two issues behind us, let’s look at some facts:

- According to ADM Collins, our Commandant, there are 70,000,000 Americans that are boaters of some sort
- We know that there are 13,000,000 registered and documented vessels in the United States
- According to the Nat’l Marine Manufacturers Association, there are 350,000 new power boats sold in the US each year

In comparison, our public education programs reach about 80,000 adults each year – in total. And probably five to ten thousand of these are our own members. The USPS educates about 35,000 adults each year.

What that tells us is that there is a massive gap between those who need boating safety education (no matter how basic), and those who are taking advantage of it. Even if we add in “free” state boating courses, we’re still not scratching the surface. Granted, ABC is just one tool among many...but it’s an important tool for reaching the boating public, and one you can’t afford to ignore.

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