



## **National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Policy Position on Online Boating Education Testing**

**Date: September 10, 2007**

**Committee: Education**

### **Background**

Outlined below is the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Policy Position on Online Boating Education Testing. The National Boating Education Standards clearly state that the purpose behind the final exam in a boating safety course is to “assess boat operator knowledge.” The current NASBLA-approved online boating safety courses are required to conform to the requirements of the standards in the content that is offered, but the course format and exam delivery methods are very different from a classroom-based course. The students taking an online course and exam do so through a self-directed process over the Internet without supervision. The student’s performance on the exam is the sole assessment of the student’s mastery of the subject matter in an online course situation.

Currently, there is a lack of educational research that supports the type of online boater education that is offered in the NASBLA-approved courses. W. Hug, a lead researcher in the field of distance learning, noted that “one of the characteristics of good tests is that they have a variety of types of questions [referenced Bloom’s cognitive level theories].” The multiple-choice questions in the NASBLA-approved courses are almost exclusively of the rote-learning type rather than the high-order thinking type.

### **National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Policy**

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, meeting on September 10, 2007, will no longer allow online boating education courses to provide links in the final exams through which the students can reference course materials.

## Policy References

NASBLA Boating Education Standards

Hug, W., Graefe, A., Cottrell, S., Carr-Chellman, A., Kim, J., & Yuki, M. (2000)

Creating national boating education standards: Phase three: NASBLA testing and distance learning recommendations. *Report to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.*

Graefe, A. (2001) Defining best practices in boating, fishing, and stewardship education. *Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.* July 2001. Retrieved through ERIC Database on February 22, 2006.

Mohanan, K.P. (1997). Open book examinations: A report and a response to some recurrent concerns. *Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning Triannual Newsletter.* Retrieved January 2, 2007 from <http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sp/link/jul1997/assess1.htm>