



Tunnel of choices

Simulating risky decision making under social pressure

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The safety problem to be tackled

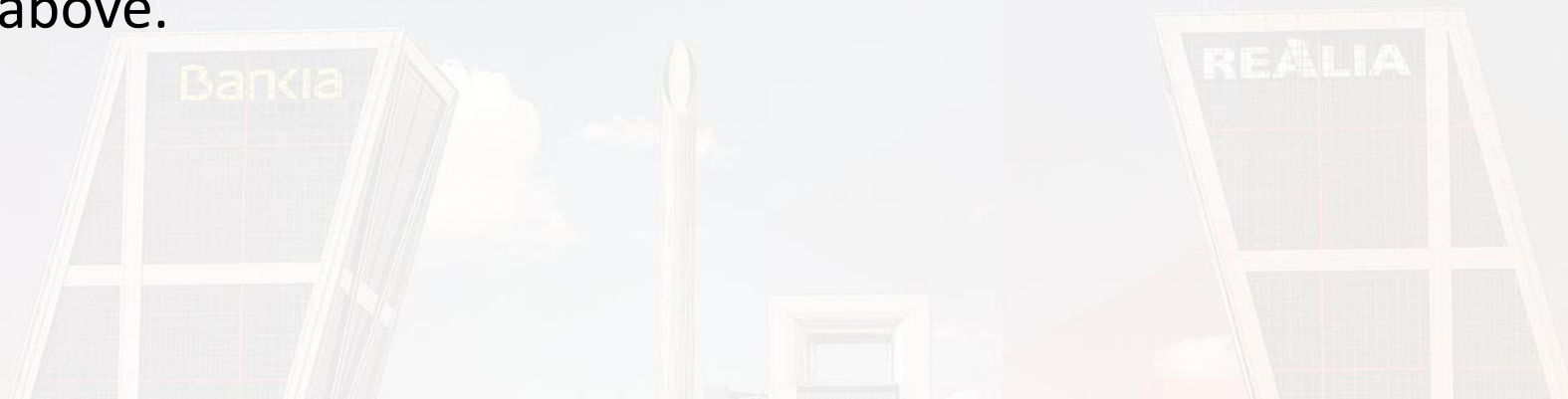
- Serious accidents of young drivers include often three risks
 - No seat belts, excessive speed, use of alcohol.
- These risks are present more often, when there are young passengers in the car.
- Young drivers and passengers are more prone to make risky decisions when in a group.



- Safety related topics are usually approached simply by providing facts to support safe and wise decisions
- However, making a risky decision is not always a matter of not knowing the risks.
- Factors such as social pressure, willingness to comply and personal enhancement may have an effect on decisions in a social situation.



- Preparation for real-life situations with appealing (but stupid) options is typically not done in training process.
- Modern pedagogy emphasises personal reflection and use of emotional processes to make an effect on factors described above.





The idea of the tunnel

- To create a good atmosphere for discussion in in-class teaching is a challenge
 - Tunnel of choices is a technically supported discussion method
 - Used in the post licensing phase of driver education in UAR Finland driver training tracks in Helsinki area, Finland
- Young drivers are given a scenario that needs rapid reacting
- Scenario includes influence of emotions and group effects
- The idea is to simulate a social situation with risky elements



- Four scenarios are available
 - Two scenarios deal with use of seat belts as a driver or a passenger
 - One scenario is about being a passenger in a car with a drunken driver
 - The fourth scenario is about a Friday evening drive of a young driver with a group of passengers and things starting to be risky
- The driving instructor or the group can select the scenario to be used





- The scenario is explained and the group goes one by one through a “tunnel”
 - The tunnel is a honeycomb shaped system with ten audio spots
 - Participants listen individually to ten short comments, safety positive or safety negative, related to the selected scenario
 - Responses of the participants are recorded with a touch panel “thumb up” or “thumb down”
 - After recording personal responses in the tunnel, the group gathers to a discussion facilitated by the instructor

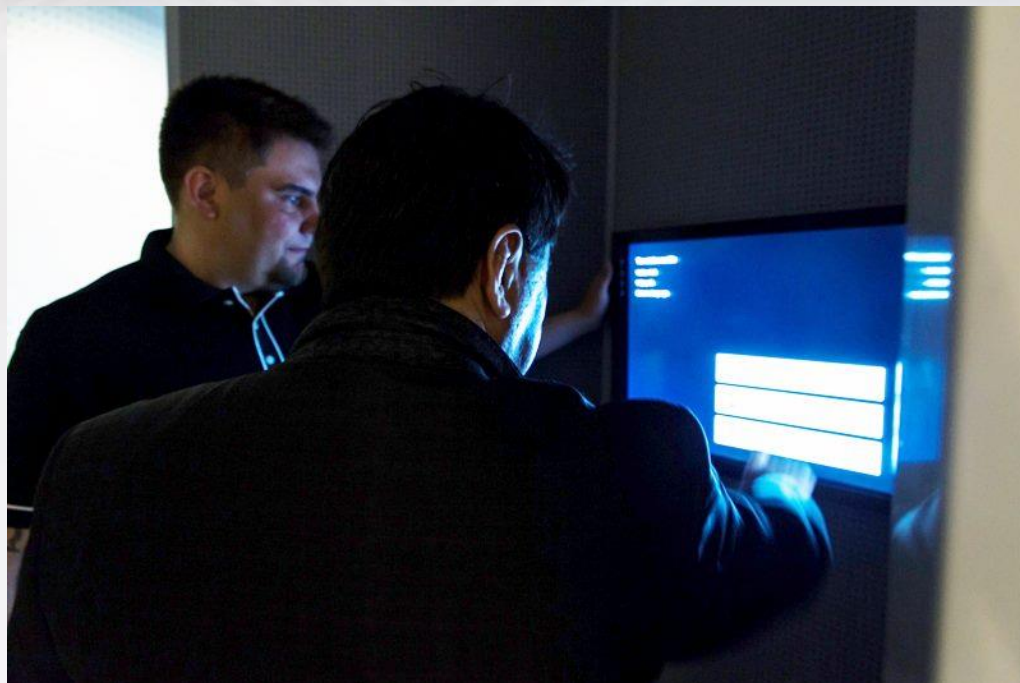


- Example: You have been at a party in countryside and the party is about to be finished. One guy has promised to be the driver, but you notice that he has been drinking. Some of your friends are already sitting in the car but you and some of your friends have some doubts.
 - Now you go through ten audio spots. You will hear some your friends' comments. You have to react to appealing comments by thumb up and not appealing comments by thumb down on a touch panel
 - Comments: Hey, are you stupid, you will be left here alone, hop in! You are my best friend, I do not want that something bad happens to you! etc.



How best to prepare young people to be safe and responsible drivers for now and for the future

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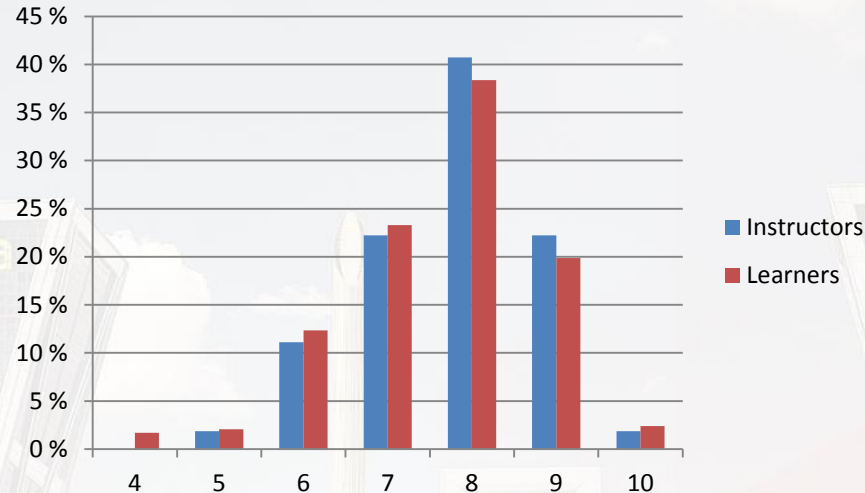




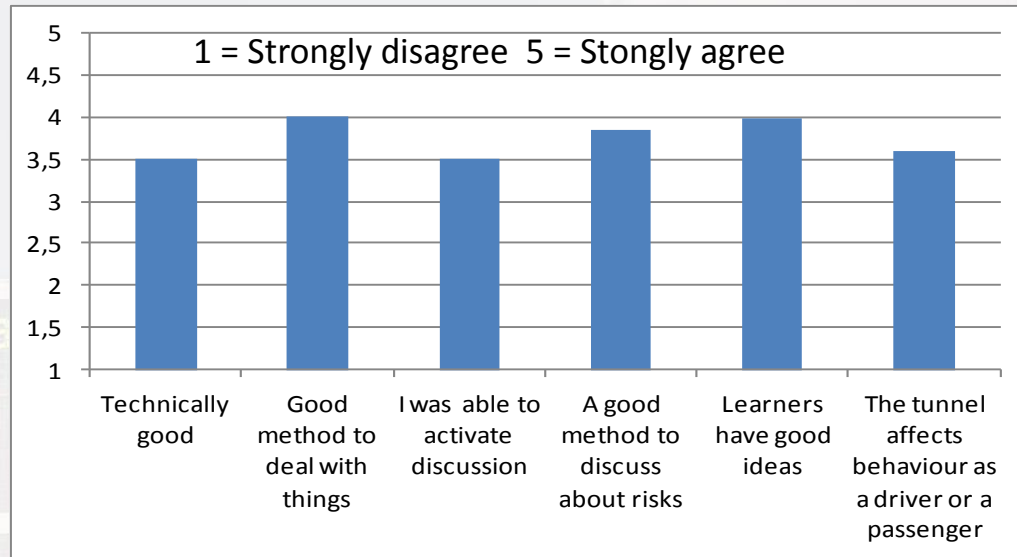
- The idea of the discussion after the tunnel is to reflect upon personal feelings caused by responding to comments and previous experiences of similar situations
 - The tunnel creates an experience that it is sometimes easy to make a stupid decision
 - The goal is to be prepared and to develop strategies in advance to avoid stupid decisions in a possible real-world situation
- Responses of the group and also responses of previous groups are produced automatically on a screen and can be used to support discussion

Results of feedback study

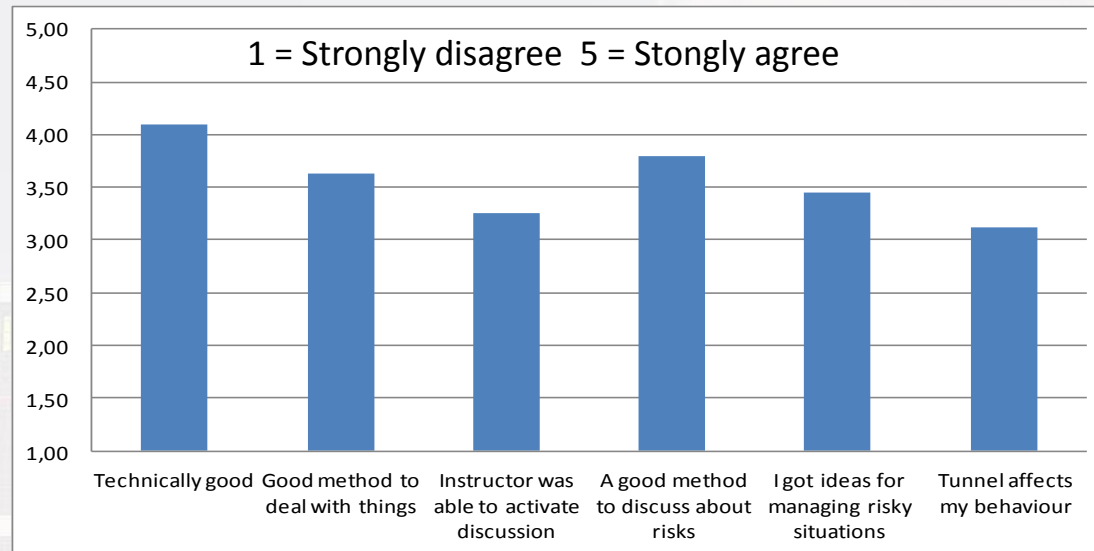
- The tunnel was evaluated positively by traffic instructors and young drivers. On a scale 4-10 mean value for instructors 7,76 and for young drivers 7,64. Mode value 8.



- The instructors evaluated six statements about the tunnel. Instructors agreed especially with statements on tunnel's suitability for activating a good quality discussion on young driver's risks

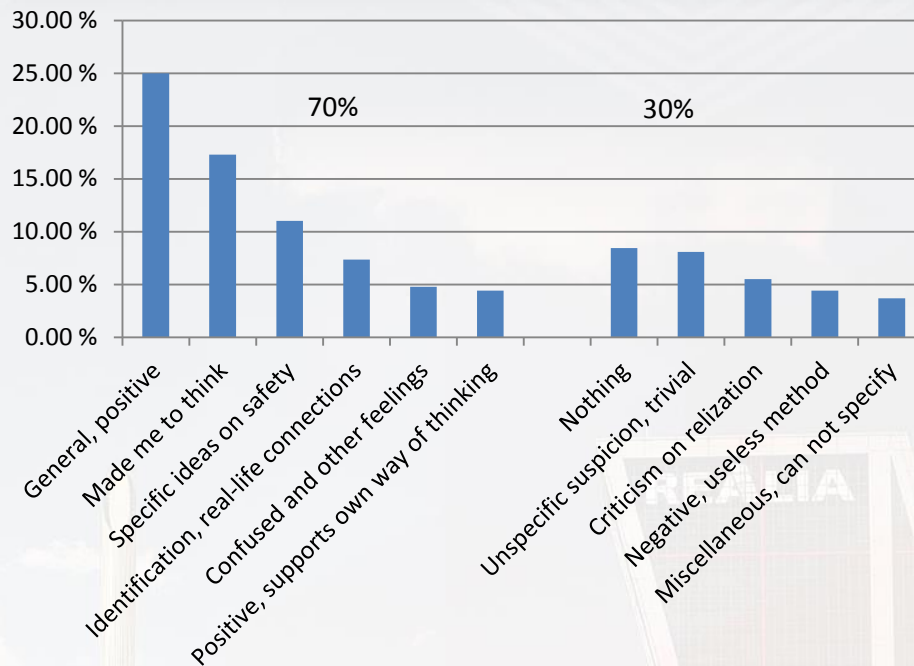


- Also the learners evaluated six statements about the tunnel. The learners agreed especially with statements on good technical realization and suitability to activate discussion and to deal with risks





- “What kind of ideas the tunnel brought to you?”
- 70% positive
 - general positive comments
 - specific safety ideas
 - activation of personal thinking.
- 27% of the responses included criticism or lack of any effects
 - 4% miscellaneous





Conclusions

- The results of feedback study show that the tunnel of choices supports the young drivers' thinking of risks
- Majority of young drivers seemed to like the approach
- The tunnel of choices brought a good new tool for driving instructors to be used to activate discussion
- Majority of instructors have started to use the method