

The ultimate, evidence-based five-star driver training program of the future

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Everyone who works in the driver training industry must have pondered the question: what would the ultimate, evidence-based and most effective driver training program look like - and would it create drivers with virtually no self-inflicted crashes? Based on 30 years of research literature in driving training, this talk will attempt to provide thought-provoking answers to the question of how such a program would need to be designed - and how realistic it would be to put it into practice. We know that many young people who start to learn driving are often faced with substantial life challenges at the same time, resulting in some feeling isolated, overwhelmed, anxious or even depressed. The program would start with a comprehensive assessment of learners' adaptive capabilities, life skills and level of life satisfaction using the latest models from Positive Psychology. If the assessment determines clearly suboptimal performance (languishing), a coaching program, including cognitive behavioural approaches, would be prescribed, attempting to transform the languishing to flourishing. The car handling skills training would be designed using effective coaching approaches to follow the new philosophy of driver education, making sure the learners will recognise the benefits of safe driving and are able to self-evaluate their skills at any time. Telematics would be used to monitor progress and help debrief unwanted driving incidents. A graduated driver licensing approach would reward drivers for positive learning outcomes with increased self-responsibility and less supervision. The top levels of the Goals of Driver Education matrix would be the main focus of the self-directed training that would improve visual search, situation awareness and risk management but also psychological aspects such as emotional and impulse control. Insights into their skills deficits would be continuously generated that would help facilitate positive adaptive behavioural change. No doubt - the program would have to be sophisticated and comprehensive, follow sound psychological principles, clearly demonstrated safety benefits and involve many modern psychological digital tools that can foster and evaluate positive (automated) driving outcomes within a short time frame. Would it be worth it? If the saying 'people drive the way they live and work' is correct - the effects of the resulting flourishing graduates of the proposed holistic five-star driving program would not only improve their crash risk, but also be positively felt within their families, communities, schools/universities - and by their employers.