

What does the death of a Connecticut lawmaker have to do with SF362 HF769 (Online driver education programs provided)?

Prepared by John W. Palmer, PhD,
Minnesota Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association,
01/30/2023

Death of Conn. lawmaker spotlights wrong-way driving

State Rep. Quentin Williams, D-Middletown, applauds during Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont's state of the state address, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023, in Hartford, Conn. Williams was killed overnight in a wrong-way highway crash after having attended the governor's inaugural ball hours and after having been sworn in to a third term, House Democratic leaders said Thursday. (Brian O'Connor/Connecticut House Democrats via AP)



Wrong-way-driving on a limited access road is clearly something that is against the law and when it is related to driving while impaired it is doubly wrong. It is likely the driver that killed Rep. Williams knew it was against the law to drive while impaired and drive in the wrong direction but knowing something is against the law is only one of the factors that influence the decision making of drivers. In order to engage in lawful driving behavior a driver needs to have the knowledge, the inclination and the skill to do the right thing.

The unfortunate death of Rep. Williams offers an example of why driver education needs to address all the domains of learning. These domains of learning correspond to the three things leading to a decision to do the right things while driving.

SF362 HF769 (Online driver education programs provided) if enacted would make it possible for novice drivers to fulfill the classroom requirements of driver education without addressing the critical factor of inclination/emotional domain of learning.

<https://blog.udemy.com/domains-of-learning/>

Online computer managed driver education is a form of programmed learning. According to Encyclopedia Britannica **programmed learning**, educational technique characterized by self-paced, self-administered **instruction** presented in logical sequence and with much repetition of concepts. Programmed learning received its major **impetus** from the work done in the mid-1950s by the American behavioral psychologist B.F. **Skinner**.

The online computer managed driver education based on programmed learning method only address knowledge based objectives.

How Effective Is Online Learning? Drawing on <https://www.edweek.org/technology/opinion-how-effective-is-online-learning-what-the-research-does-and-doesnt-tell-us/2020/03>

<https://teachonline.asu.edu/2018/09/best-practices-for-teaching-online/>

<https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-courses/>

the following conclusions can be made made:

Only a little research has assessed the effects of online lessons for elementary and high school students, and even less has used the “gold standard” method of comparing the results for students assigned randomly to online or in-person courses.

In comparisons of online and in-person classes, online classes aren’t as effective as in-person classes for most students.

Students who struggle will likely struggle more online

In online classes, the teacher is supposed to provide opportunities for students to engage thoughtfully with subject matter, and students, in most cases, are required to interact with each other virtually..

Online teachers will need to consider the needs of less-engaged students and work to engage them.

When considering best practices for online classes the presumption is the presence of the instructor.

During the forced closing of in school teaching as a response to Covid-19 it became apparent that online and virtual teaching was related to a decline in student achievement. Why would we take the chance of allowing Minnesotan's to use a flawed method to satisfy the classroom requirements of our state's driver education requirements? There is no guarantee that a driver education program that addresses all domains of learning and decision making will instill the knowledge, inclination and skills to always do the right things when driving. However, using a one dimensional teaching based on a 1950's method (programmed learning) certainly will not result in more drivers having the knowledge, inclination and skills associated with safe driving.

In the case of the driver that killed Rep. Williams we know they failed to do the right thing. Passage of SF362/HF769 will not reduce the chances that Minnesota drivers will choose to wrong things.

What does the death of a Connecticut lawmaker have to do with SF362 HF769 (Online driver education programs provided)? The death of Rep. Williams is an illustration of what can happen when a driver lacks in knowledge, inclination and skill. SF 362/HF769's passage will make it more likely that some Minnesota novice drivers will not secure the knowledge, inclination and skill to do the right thing.