Gagné's Nine Events of Instruction

In 1965, Robert Gagné proposed a series of events that are associated with and address the mental conditions for learning. Each of the nine events of instruction is highlighted below, followed by sample methods to help implement the events in your own instruction. Use Gagné's nine events in conjunction with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to design engaging and meaningful instruction. The following steps have been adapted from Gagné, Briggs, and Wager (1992).

1. Gain attention of the students

Ensure the learners are ready to learn and participate in activities by presenting a stimulus to capture their attention.

These are a few methods for capturing learners' attention:

- Stimulate students with novelty, uncertainty, and surprise
- Pose thought-provoking questions to students
- Have students pose questions to be answered by other students
- Lead an ice breaker activity

2. Inform students of the objectives

Inform students of the objectives or outcomes for the course and individual lessons to help them understand what they are expected to learn and do. Provide objectives before instruction begins.

Here are some methods for stating the outcomes:

- Describe required performance
- Describe criteria for standard performance
- Have learners establish criteria for standard performance
- Include course objectives on assessment prompts

3. Stimulate recall of prior learning

Help students make sense of new information by relating it to something they already know or something they have already experienced.

There are numerous methods for stimulating recall:

- Ask questions about previous experiences
- Ask students about their understanding of previous concepts

- Relate previous course information to the current topic
- Have students incorporate prior learning into current activities

4. Present the content

Use strategies to present and cue lesson content to provide more effective instruction. Organize and group content in meaningful ways, and provide explanations after demonstrations.

The following are ways to present and cue lesson content:

- Present multiple versions of the same content (e.g. video, demonstration, lecture, podcast, group work, etc.)
- Use a variety of media to engage students in learning
- Incorporate active learning strategies to keep students involved
- Provide access to content on Blackboard so students can access it outside of class

5. Provide learning guidance

Advise students of strategies to aid them in learning content and of resources available. In other words, help students learn how to learn.

The following are examples of methods for providing learning guidance:

- Provide instructional support as needed – i.e. scaffolding that can be removed slowly as the student learns and masters the task or content
- Model varied learning strategies – e.g. mnemonics, concept mapping, role playing, visualizing
- Use examples and non-examples – examples help students see what to do, while non-examples help students see what *not* to do
- Provide case studies, visual images, analogies, and metaphors – Case studies provide real world application, visual images assist in making visual associations, and analogies and metaphors use familiar content to help students connect with new concepts

6. Elicit performance (practice)

Have students apply what they have learned to reinforce new skills and knowledge and to confirm correct understanding of course concepts.

Here are a few ways to activate learner processing:

- Facilitate student activities – e.g. ask deep-learning questions, have students collaborate with their peers, facilitate practical laboratory exercises
- Provide formative assessment opportunities – e.g. written assignments, individual or group projects, presentations
- Design effective quizzes and tests – i.e. test students in ways that allow them to demonstrate their comprehension and application of course concepts (as opposed to simply memorization and recall)

7. Provide feedback

Provide timely feedback of students' performance to assess and facilitate learning and to allow students to identify gaps in understanding before it is too late.

The following are some types of feedback you may provide to students:

- **Confirmatory feedback** informs the student that they did what they were supposed to do. This type of feedback does not tell the student what she needs to improve, but it encourages the learner.
- **Evaluative feedback** apprises the student of the accuracy of their performance or response but does not provide guidance on how to progress.
- **Remedial feedback** directs students to find the correct answer but does not provide the correct answer.
- **Descriptive or analytic feedback** provides the student with suggestions, directives, and information to help them improve their performance.
- **Peer-evaluation and self-evaluation** help learners identify learning gaps and performance shortcomings in their own and peers' work.

8. Assess performance

Test whether the expected learning outcomes have been achieved on previously stated course objectives.

Some methods for testing learning include the following:

- Administer pre- and post-tests to check for progression of competency in content or skills
- Embed formative assessment opportunities throughout instruction using oral questioning, short active learning activities, or quizzes
- Implement a variety of assessment methods to provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency
- Craft objective, effective rubrics to assess written assignments, projects, or presentations

9. Enhance retention and transfer

Help learners retain more information by providing them opportunities to connect course concepts to potential real-world applications.

The following are methods to help learners internalize new knowledge:

- Avoid isolating course content. Associate course concepts with prior (and future) concepts and build upon prior (and preview future) learning to reinforce connections.
- Continually incorporate questions from previous tests in subsequent examinations to reinforce course information.
- Have students convert information learned in one format into another format (e.g. verbal or visuospatial). For instance, requiring students to create a concept map to represent connections between ideas (Halpern & Hakel, 2003, p. 39).
- To promote deep learning, clearly articulate your lesson goals, use your specific goals to guide your instructional design, and align learning activities to lesson goals (Halpern & Hakel, 2003, p. 41).

Summary

Gagné's nine events of instruction can help you build a framework to prepare and deliver instructional content while considering and addressing conditions for learning. Ideally, you should prepare course goals and learning objectives before implementing the nine events—the goals and objectives will help situate the events in their proper context. The nine events of instruction can then be modified to fit both the content and students' level of knowledge.

References

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Halpern, D. F., & Hakel, M. D. (2003). Applying the science of learning to the university and beyond: Teaching for long-term retention and transfer. *Change, 35*(4), 36-41. https://seaver-faculty.pepperdine.edu/thompson/projects/wasc/Applying%20the%20science%20of%20learning.pdf

Selected Resources

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