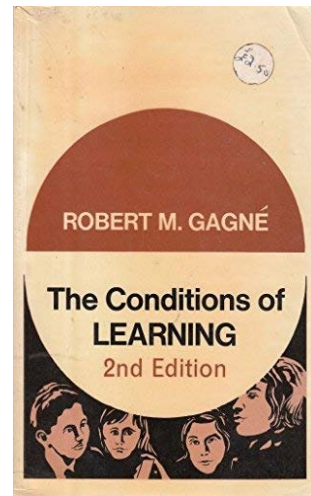# GAGNÉ'S NINE EVENTS OF INSTRUCTION

In 1965, Robert Gagné -an educational psychologist- published a book called "The Conditions of Learning" in which he discussed a nine-step model called the "Events of Instruction" designed to help educators structure their instruction or training sessions in an engaing and meaningful way. Each of the nine events of instruction discussed below provides an outline for designing an effective learning process.

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These events can serve as a blueprint for the learning experience you plan to provide your students with. You can use these events to craft lesson plans, or create an online learning module.

Preparation Events

Event 1. Gain attention of the students

Try to get everyone focused by grasping the attention of the learners so that they will listen carefully when you present the content. Some techniques for gaining attention might include;

- Using ice breaker activities, case studies, current news and events, YouTube videos, and TED Talks and asking questions about the ideas presented in the videos.

- Telling an engaging story.

- Using the discussion board in online and hybrid classes to discuss current events or a controversial issue.

- Having students pose thought-provoking questions to be answered by other students.

Event 2. Inform students of the objectives

To assist students comprehend what they are expected to learn and do, you can inform them about the objectives or outcomes for the course. Provide objectives before instruction begins. Some techniques for providing objectives might include;

- Including learning objectives in weekly lecture slides, the syllabus, module pages as well as in instructions for activities.

- Making a connection between lesson objectives and assessments to come.

- Providing learners with some measurable criteria you expect them to meet at the end of the lesson.

Event 3. Stimulate recall of prior learning

From a cognitivist perspective, learning happens when we connect new knowledge and new skills to knowledge and skills we already have in our long term memory. So help students make sense of new information by relating it to something they already know or have already experienced. Some techniques for stimulating recall might include;

- Briefly summarizing or reviewing previous lessons.

- Asking students to tell what they remember from previous lessons.

- Asking students questions that draw on their pre-existing knowledge such as their understanding of previous concepts.

- Getting students to develop a concept map about previous information related to the current topic.

Instruction and Practice Events

Event 4. Present the content

Use strategies to present lesson content to provide more effective instruction. At this stage, you will be showing and explaining material you want your students to learn. Some techniques for presenting the content might include;

- Presenting multiple versions of the same content (e.g. video, demonstration, lecture, podcast, hands-on practice, etc.)
- Using a variety of media to engage students in learning.
- Incorporating active learning strategies to keep students involved (e.g. interactive tools like discussion boards, blogs, and polls).

Event 5. Provide learning guidance

Before and during the presentation, offer your students guidance on how to learn a new concept or skill so that they won't base their performance on incorrect facts or poorly understood concepts. Helping students learn content in an efficient way is the key at this stage. Some techniques for providing learning guidance might include;

- Offering instructional support, such as scaffolding that may be gradually withdrawn as the learner understands the task or content.
- Modeling a variety of learning techniques, such as mnemonics, concept mapping, graphics and analogies.
- Role playing to visualize application.
- Using rubrics for projects and activities to clarify expectations, instructions, and timelines.

Event 6. Elicit performance (practice)

The aim of this stage is to provide students with practice opportunities. Those opportunities should be low risk. If students fail a practice quiz, for instance, they should just be able to try again. Some techniques for eliciting performance might include;

- Designing group or individual projects to make it possible for students to apply what they are learning in a safe, stress-free environment.
- Creating formative, low-stakes evaluations; tests and quizzes should include comprehension questions and application opportunities, not just recall or simple memorization.
- Having students complete a role-playing activity.

Event 7. Provide feedback

This stage goes hand-in-hand with providing practice opportunities. It is better if you can provide feedback on student performance as soon as possible so that no one is off track, or if so, they can adjust accordingly. It gives students a chance to learn from their mistakes. Some techniques for providing feedback might include;

- Giving timely and detailed feedback on assignments, indicating what was done well and what needs to be improved. When providing feedback, you may use rubrics.
- Using tools such as Turnitin or "track changes" for written assignments.
- Getting peers to give feedback to each other, or using self-assessment methods.

Assessment and Transfer Events

Event 8. Assess performance

We need to determine whether the previously stated objectives have been achieved. This will help us to evaluate how effective the instructional events were. Providing students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their competency is critical. Some techniques for assessing performance might include;

- Written tests
- Oral quizzes
- Short essays
- Questionnaires
- Pre and post-lesson quizzes
- Observation

Event 9. Enhance retention and transfer

Prepare students to apply information to personal contexts. Personalizing information increases retention. Some techniques for enhancing retention and transfer might include;

- Using classroom simulations
- Having students create job-aids as a connector between the learning experience and the actual job.
- Relating the content to real-world situations.
- Having students reflect on what they have learned and how they can relate it to their personal experiences.
- Having students convert information learned in one format into another format. For instance, require students to create a concept map to represent connections between ideas (Halpern & Hakel, 2003, p. 39).
- Having students summarize content, generte examples, and create mind maps.

As instructors plan a lesson, they should keep these 9 mental conditions for learning in mind so that their lessons will rest on a stronger foundation.

References

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Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. (2020). Gagné's nine events of instruction. In *Instructional guide for university faculty and teaching assistants.* Retrieved from https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide

University of Florida, Center for Instructional Technology and Training. (2018). Gagné's 9 events of instruction. Retrieved from https://citt.ufl.edu/tools/gagnes-9-events-of-instruction/

Further Reading and Resources

- Instructional planning sheet based on Gagné's nine events of instruction

  https://www.itma.vt.edu/courses/currip/lesson2/currip2.doc

- Gagné's nine events of instruction

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-31fCUQ2htU