Implementing Gagné's 9 Events to Improve an Instructional Program:

Guided Discussion & Workshop

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1. Program Overview

1.1 Background and Rationale

With the various learning and developmental theories that instructional designers are faced with, it may be difficult for them to extrapolate the theories into effective instruction. Recognizing this, Robert Gagné combined elements from many different learning theories to articulate the 9 events of instruction. These events are specific and concrete; they allow instructional designers and teachers to approach their instruction systematically. The systematic approach to instruction provides a formula for designing effective learning experiences—a sharp contrast to 'going with your gut' or teaching from a textbook.

The program outlined by this design document teaches students of instructional design how to apply Gagné's 9 events to improve an instructional program of their own. Students will be asked to bring an instructional program or lesson plan that they have already created, and, by the end of the session, students will have workshopped their lessons and identified a plan to improve them. The workshop will be centered on Gagné's 9 events, which are as follows:

1. Gain attention
2. Inform learners of objectives
3. Stimulate recall of prior learning
4. Present the content
5. Provide learning guidance
6. Elicit performance
7. Provide feedback
8. Assess performance
9. Enhance retention and transfer to the job

By discussing and offering examples of how these instructional events can be applied to an instructional program, students will develop the competencies necessary to apply Gagné's 9 events to improve instruction of their own. Furthermore, the instruction itself is designed in

accord with Gagné's 9 events, making the experience comprehensive and aligned with the instructional objective. Finally, as will be seen throughout this document, the lesson has been designed from a cognitive information processing perspective. This is intended to maximize retention and on-the-job transfer.

1.2 Goal Analysis

<u>Entry Requirement:</u> Leaners must have designed an instructional program or lesson plan of their own, as the instruction they have developed will be workshopped during the program.

<u>Primary goal</u>: Given a job aid listing Gagné's 9 Events of Instruction, students will be able to apply Gagné's 9 Events of Instruction to improve an instructional program.

> As the focus of this lesson is on applying the Gagné's 9 events, it is not essential that students memorize the events. Because of this, students will be provided a job aid that already has the 9 events listed. Next to each event, there will be a column to list examples of how that event can be applied in general, and there will also be a column to list ideas about how that event can be used to improve the student's specific instructional program.

<u>Subgoal 1</u>**:** Explain how each of Gagné's 9 Events can be used to improve instruction.

> Before students can apply Gagné's 9 Events to improve their own instructional programs, they must be able to articulate how each event can be used to improve instruction.

<u>Subgoal 2</u>**:** Give an example of how each of Gagne's 9 Events can be applied.

> Since Gagné's 9 Events are abstract guidelines, the students must be able to identify specific examples of how these guidelines can be implemented.

<u>Subgoal 3</u>**:** Analyze an instructional program to see which of Gagné's 9 events have already been satisfied.

It is possible that instructional programs already satisfy some of Gagné's 9 events. Because of this, it is necessary that students are able to analyze an instructional program for these events to avoid repetition.

1.3 Learner Analysis

This program is aimed at Masters students of instructional systems. Of the sample of four FSU instructional systems Masters students that I interviewed, the general characteristics are as follows:

- Millennials, aged 22-34

- Comfortable with both face-to-face and online learning

- Some level of experience with designing instruction, although this ranges from novice to proficient

- College-educated, all hold Bachelor's degrees or higher

- Familiar with Gagné, but unsure what his 9 events are or how to apply them

1.4 Statement of Delivery and Estimated Time of Completion

The content will be delivered to learners in a face-to-face environment. This allows real-time facilitation and collaboration. However, if the learners do not reside in the same geographical area, the lesson can be implemented with an online conferencing tool.

1.5 Instructional Objectives

Objective 1: Explain how each of Gagné's 9 events can be used to make instruction more effective.

Objective 2: Give 2 examples of how each of Gagné's 9 events can be applied to improve an instructional program.

Objective 3: Given a job aid listing Gagné's 9 Events of Instruction, apply Gagné's 9 Events of Instruction to improve an instructional program.

2. Pre-instructional Activities

2.1 Motivation and Objectives

At the beginning of the workshop, the facilitator will ask, "What are some adjectives that come to mind when you think of good instruction?" After the students come up with 5-8 adjectives, the facilitator will explain that the purpose of utilizing Gagné's 9 events is to create the type of good training or instruction that those adjectives describe. This question and answer will serve several purposes:

1. The learners access prior knowledge about what constitutes good instruction, thereby activating anchors beneath which the successive content will be situated. Instead of seeing Gagné's 9 events as abstract guidelines, they will see that the events can be used specifically for improving instruction.

2. It shows students that they will be able to use Gagné's 9 events in their lives: the workshop will help them create good instruction. This contributes to motivation as it shows the students what they will be able to accomplish by the end of the course.

3. The facilitator clearly states the objective of the lesson, and it is tied directly to the benefits that accompany successful completion of the course. The more specific objectives (seen in section 1.5) are not explicitly stated as the primary focus of the course is to improve existing instruction via Gagné's 9 events. The other objectives will be satisfied through discussion and activities, all of which will lead up to the primary instructional goal.

2.2 Prerequisites

As this is a workshop-based lesson, students are required to bring an existing piece of instruction that they have created. Before beginning instruction, the facilitator will ask the students to take out their lesson plans or outlines. The facilitator will also inform the students that while they learn about Gagné's 9 events, they should consider how the events can be used to improve their own lesson plans. Furthermore, to activate prior knowledge, the instructor will ask the students what instructional approaches they took when developing the lessons that they brought to class. This will get the students thinking about instructional strategies, and it will make it easier to assimilate Gagné's 9 events into their schema for designing instruction.

3. Follow-through Activities

3.1 Review

Key information will be reviewed through discussion and group work. As the facilitator presents each of Gagné's 9 events, students will be asked to provide rationale and examples for how these events can be applied to hypothetical instructional programs. After each event has been discussed, students will be asked to work in groups to workshop their own instructional programs and discuss how they plan to improve them using Gagné's 9 events. By taking this collaborative approach, the students will be able to work with one another on their lesson plans, hear feedback on their ideas, and practice evaluating a program in terms of Gagné's 9 events.

3.2 Transfer

Real-life transfer will be facilitated by giving students time to workshop their personal lesson plans. Through discussion about how the 9 events can be used to improve an actual lesson, students will feel more comfortable utilizing Gagné's events the next time they need to design instruction. Furthermore, there will be space on the accompanying job aid for students to list how they will apply each of Gagné's 9 events generally, as well as how they can apply each event to their own instruction programs.

4. Objective Analysis: Objective #1

4.1 Instructional Objective

Explain how each of Gagné's 9 events can be used to improve instruction.

4.2 Assessment

Students will be assessed verbally on this objective during class discussion.

4.3 Instructional Methods

To teach students how each of Gagné's 9 events can be used to improve instruction, the facilitator will go through each of the events from first to last with an accompanying PowerPoint presentation. After stating each event and discussing it, the facilitator will ask students why the event would make an instructional program more effective. If necessary, the facilitator will offer further explanations.

4.4 Content Presentation

Gagné's 9 events and the rationale behind each event is necessary for fulfilling this objective. Following is an outline of this content:

1. Gain attention

   If the learner is not attending to the instruction, it will be difficult for any learning to occur. If, however, the learner is able to attend to the information, it will move into short term memory and be available for further processing and encoding. Engagement with the content will also make the course more enjoyable.

2. Inform learners of objectives

    This lets the learners know where they are going; it also lets them know what they
    should be capable of by the end of the course.

3. Stimulate recall of prior learning

    Stimulating prior learning provides anchor points for the proceeding instruction. It
    facilitates encoding from short term memory to long term memory.

4. Present the content

    This event is self-explanatory. In order to learn the content, is necessary that the
    content is presented.

5. Provide learning guidance

    Well-designed content may not matter if the learners do not have appropriate
    strategies or guidance for learning the information. It is helpful to offer this guidance
    to students, as it will facilitate retention and prevent frustration.

6. Elicit performance

    This gives the learners an opportunity to practice what they are learning. Working
    with the concept, rather than just hearing about it, offers opportunities for deeper
    learning.

7. Provide feedback

> Accurate, timely feedback helps learners perform more closely to the goal. It can help learners see where the flaws are in their thinking and make it easier for them to improve.

8. Assess performance

> This lets the instructor know if the students have achieved the learning objectives. It is useful for modifying instruction and providing further help, if necessary.

9. Enhance retention and transfer to the job

> New skills or knowledge are not useful in a vacuum. By facilitating transfer to the real world, students learn how to take the newly acquired skills with them into their daily lives.

4.5 Learner Participation

Since all learners in the target audience have some degree of experience designing instruction, they are expected to offer rationale behind each of Gagné's 9 events after each event is presented by the instructor. Only when the answers are insufficient will the instructor present the rationale outlined in the previous section. With partial answers, the instructor will provide feedback by explaining the merits of the student's response and offering the rest of the explanation. If an answer is incorrect, the facilitator will acknowledge the response and explain how it differs from the correct response.

Overall, this objective will be satisfied through verbal interaction between the students and the facilitator. After the initial presentation of the 9 events and the discussion about their

rationale, students will begin working on improving their specific instructional programs. During the accompanying group activity, students will be able to back up their ideas with the rationale learned during the previously described lecture and discussion.

5. Objective Analysis: Objective #2

5.1 Instructional Objective

Give 2 examples of how each of Gagné's 9 events can be applied to improve an instructional program.

5.2 Assessment

Students will be assessed verbally during class discussion, as well as through self-assessment when filling out the job aid provided by the facilitator.

5.3 Instructional Methods

Similar to the previous objective, this objective will be satisfied through a facilitator-led, PowerPoint-guided presentation accompanied by class discussion. After the students state the rationale for each of Gagné's 9 events (discussed in section 4), the facilitator will ask the students to provide examples for how each of these events can be applied in an instructional setting.

5.4 Content Presentation

Specific examples for how each of Gagné's 9 events can be applied are necessary to satisfy this objective. Following is an outline of this content:

1. Gain attention

    This can be done by asking an interesting question, posing a problem that needs to be solved, or even telling an engaging story.

For example: A math teacher introduces her students to variables by showing them an equation with an 'x' variable in it, asking if anyone has seen that before.

2. Inform learners of objectives

Objectives can be posted on a slide in a slideshow, stated by the instructor, or printed on a student hand-out. The objectives can be presented less formally than they are written by the instructional designer.

For example: The previously mentioned math teacher tells her students that they will know what that 'x' is by the end of the lesson.

3. Stimulate recall of prior learning

This can be accomplished by asking students to draft word associations or create a mind map. Another strategy is to present students with a situation and ask how they would deal with it.

For example: In this lesson, students are asked what instructional strategies they used to create the lesson plan that they brought to the workshop.

4. Present the content

Content can be presented via slideshow presentation, lecture, multimedia, projects, small group work, readings, and more.

For example: A science teacher gives his students an instruction sheet that explains how to conduct a lab on friction in small groups.

5. Provide learning guidance

   This can be done by providing rubrics, checklists, study guides, and even mind maps that show where the to-be-learned information fits in.

   For example: An English professor provides her students a rubric and assignment instructions when assigning an essay. This helps the students structure their essay in a way that achieves the desired results.

6. Elicit performance

   To give the learners a chance to practice, the instructor can assign group work, essay drafts, or other class activities.

   For example: The aforementioned English professor asks her students to submit a draft three weeks before the final copy is due.

7. Provide feedback

   Feedback can be provided verbally or written, either by the instructor or peers.

   For example: The aforementioned English professor leaves detailed comments on each student's draft, and then returns the comments to the students so that they can make the necessary revisions before their final submission.

8. Assess performance

   Students can be assessed via written assessments, project deliverables, verbal assessment, or on-the-job performance.

For example: A supervisor monitors his employee's performance metrics after the employee took a required training.

9. Enhance retention and transfer to the job

This can be accomplished by relating the knowledge to personal or work-related tasks and experiences. Another strategy is to summarize the lesson at the end of the session to enhance retention.

For example: In this workshop, students will be applying Gagné's 9 events to their own instructional programs to enhance transfer.

5.5 Learner Participation

Just as with the previous objective, learners will practice this objective during the class discussion via participation, and they will also use these examples to guide them when workshopping their own instructional programs towards the end of the session. Feedback will be offered by the facilitator during the discussion, and the facilitator will be available during the workshopping period to answer any questions. To assist learners with practice and retention, there will space on the job aid hand-out to list 2 examples for how each of Gagné's 9 events can be used in an instructional setting. By writing down these examples, students will develop their own job aid and reinforce what they are learning.

6. Objective Analysis: Objective #3

6.1 Instructional Objective

Given a job aid listing Gagné's 9 Events of Instruction, apply Gagné's 9 Events of Instruction to improve an instructional program.

6.2 Assessment

Students will be assessed at the end of session; the facilitator will ask the students to explain how the 9 events were used to improve their instructional program.

6.3 Instructional Methods

Learners will attain this objective by first brainstorming individually, then workshopping their instructional programs in small group settings. Once Gagné's 9 events have been introduced and discussed, the students will be given five minutes to brainstorm and write ideas about how Gagné's 9 events can be applied to their programs. After this, they will be separated into groups of 3-4 where they will workshop their ideas and hear the ideas of their peers.

6.4 Content Presentation

At the time of the workshop, all of the requisite content will have been already presented by the facilitator. Students will be advised to first look at their instructional programs to see which of Gagné's 9 events have already been satisfied, then determine how they can apply Gagné's 9 events to make their instructional program more comprehensive and effective. The facilitator will be available if any students need additional help analyzing their programs or applying the events.

6.5 Learner Participation

Learners will have the opportunity to practice applying Gagné's 9 events both individually and in a group setting. After the 5 minute brainstorming session, students will be able to work together, both taking advice from their peers and acting as consultants themselves. This peer-to-peer feedback allows students to have their application strategy constructively criticized. It also gives the students a chance to evaluate their peers' programs in terms of Gagné's 9 events, making it easier to transfer this skill to the workplace as they get additional practice.

7. Sources

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