Robert Gagné’s
Nine Events of Instruction

“Organization is the hallmark of effective instructional materials”

Robert Gagné
1916-2002

Art Wolfkill, ALEG 601

Gagné’s Theoretical Background

- Robert Gagné is best known for his:
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Learning Conditions
  - Nine Events of Instruction

- Gagné’s theories have been applied to instructional design in many other areas:

Gagné’s Theoretical Background

- Gagné’s theory should be classified as instructional theory - as opposed to learning theory.

  A learning theory consists of a set of propositions and constructs that account for how changes in human performance abilities come about.

  An instructional theory describes the conditions under which one can intentionally arrange for the learning of specific performance outcomes.
Gagné’s Theoretical Orientation

- Gagné’s instructional theory tends to side with behavioristic principles (teacher-centered approach)
  - He focuses on outcomes/behaviors that result from instruction
  - He believes that the results of learning are measurable through testing, and that drill, practice, and immediate feedback are effective.
  - As a result, he does have some hecklers!

Gagné’s Theoretical Orientation

- Gagné’s theories became influenced by cognitive theorists. He proposed that the information-processing model of learning could be combined with behaviorist concepts to provide a more complete view of learning tasks (Molenda, 2002)

Tying the Nine Events of Instruction to Learning

- When the Events of Instruction occur, internal learning processes take place that lead to various learning outcomes. (Campos, 1999)
  - The Events of Instruction constitute a set of communications to the student, which have the aim of aiding the learning process.
  - Instruction consists of a set of events external to the learner designed to support the internal processes of learning. (Gagné, Briggs, & Wager, 1988)
  - The theory outlines Nine Instructional Events and their corresponding processes.
The Nine Events of Instruction

Event of Instruction | Learning Process
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1. Gaining attention | Attention
   Giving learner a stimulus to ensure reception of coming instruction
2. Informing the learner of the objective | Expectancy
   Telling learner what they will be able to do for the instruction
3. Stimulating recall of prior learning | Retrieval to working memory
   Asking for recall of existing relevant knowledge

Event of Instruction | Learning Process
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4. Presenting the stimulus | Pattern recognition; selective perception
   Displaying the content
5. Providing learner guidance | Chunking, rehearsal, encoding
   Supplying organization and relevance to enhance understanding
6. Eliciting performance | Retrieval, responding
   Asking learners to respond, demonstrating learning

Event of Instruction | Learning Process
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7. Providing Feedback | Reinforcement, error correction
   Giving immediate feedback on learner's performance.
8. Assessing performance | Responding, retention
   Assessing and providing feedback to learners
9. Enhancing retention and transfer | Retention, retrieval, generalization
   Providing diverse practice to generalize the capability
Gagné’s Detractors

- Donald Clark:
  - Called Gagné “a closet behaviourist”
  - “Gagné’s Nine Dull Commandments”
  - Follow the recipe and learning will surely follow!


The Nine Events of Instruction

- Keep in mind that the exact form of these events is not something that can be specified in general for all lessons, but rather must be decided for each learning objective.

- The events of instruction must be deliberately arranged by the teacher to support learning processes.

  (Gagné, Briggs, & Wager, 1988)

References
