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Using Gagné's 9 events to create effective online courses

Let's find out how to apply one of the most popular instructional design models in the world to eLearning: Gagné's 9 events.

In the field of **eLearning design**, there are several didactic models that help trainers and designers to create extremely effective courses from a training point of view, that is, able to better guide the learner's learning.

One of the best-known **learning models** is the 9-event instructional model developed by Gagné.

American pedagogist, **Robert Mills Gagné** (1916 - 2002) is considered one of the fathers of Instructional Design. According to Gagné, we can speak of learning when a stimulus affects the subject to the point of modifying his performance.

Furthermore, Gagné believes that every **learning sequence** is composed of 5 common characteristics:

- Registration
- Acquisition
- Storage
- Recovery
- Recollection

From this framework, Gagné has developed a **9-step process** (also known as "instructional events" or "levels of instruction") that helps teachers, trainers, and instructional designers create effective learning experiences. Keeping **Gagné's 9 instructional events** in mind when designing an online course can therefore provide a solid foundation for lesson and content planning.

In this article, we'll look at each of the 9 steps, while also providing practical examples that are useful in **designing an eLearning course**.

1. Getting the learner's attention

The first and most important step is to get the **student's attention**. After all, there is no learning without engagement. From this point of view, the most important element you will have to work on is the introduction of the course (or of the individual modules, if the course is very long).

There are many **ways to get learners' attention**. For example, you might begin the course by asking your learners a question or problem related to their work activities. In the first case, you'll aim to immediately open the learner's mind; in the second case, you'll stimulate the participants' reflection, who will be urged to analyze the problem, think about a solution and its consequences.

2. Inform the student of the objectives

Another important aspect is to inform the student of the **objectives of the course** that is about to begin. Sharing the objectives of the course with the student enables him to feel responsible for his own learning and more inclined to learn, because he knows the direction in which he is moving.

This is a good way to make sure that you know what you are going to learn, how the course content can be applied to your work, and what benefits you will gain.

3. Stimulate recall of prior learning

Before providing new skills, it is a good idea to help students relate **prior knowledge** to the new information they will acquire during the training.

For example, help the student recap current skills, ask him questions about his previous experiences, and have him reflect on what he already knows. Then, as you move forward with the modules, be sure to facilitate your students' learning by providing a brief recap of previous lessons.

4. Presenting the content

At this stage, it will be important to logically organize the course content and choose formats carefully. Consider the **teaching approach** you want to use, based on the material you create.

Generally, it is preferable to create short portions of the course as they are better consumed and retained, avoiding **cognitive overload**. Also, be sure to combine the right elements (images, audio, video, etc.) in order to keep the student interested.

5. Provide guidance for learning

All students, even the most experienced ones, may need support during training. It is therefore useful to provide a **learning guide** that includes instructions on how to learn or how to use the delivery platform. In addition, you should include examples, case studies, or presentations that help the learner codify the course information.

Make the learning experience as simple and straightforward as possible. Sometimes that means providing exact instructions on where to click. It may seem intuitive to you, but it may not necessarily be to someone using your platform for the first time. Include tips on how to best navigate within the course and create a clear, intuitive layout.

6. Promote practical performance

After presenting the content, allow your learners time to practice. Training courses should allow the student to **practice what they learn**.
Make your course interactive and ask your students to apply what they have learned. This will provide you with a double benefit: on the one hand, it will reinforce the learners' learning; on the other hand, it will allow you to confirm that they understand the content correctly.

7. Provide feedback

Feedback is a key element in the learning process because it allows you to reinforce the correct information and prevent incorrect learning of the content before it is too late.

In this regard, make sure that your feedback is accurate, timely and detailed so that you can immediately highlight the learner's strengths and weaknesses. Here are some types of feedback you can include in your online course:

- **confirmatory feedback**: informs the student that they have done what they should have done;
- **evaluative feedback**: informs the student of the accuracy of their response;
- **corrective feedback**: directs the student to find the correct answer, without providing it directly to the student;
- **analytical feedback**: provides the student with suggestions for improving their performance;
- **peer and self-assessment**: allows students to identify their own and peers' deficiencies.

8. Evaluate student performance

At this point, check whether the **learning outcomes** have been achieved. You can do this through learning tests, assignments, projects, or presentations.

This step is particularly important not only to assess the learner's performance, but also to identify any weaknesses in the course.

9. Improving information retention

Finally, remember that the course can only be considered effective if learners are able to **apply what they learn in the training in the real world**.

So make sure that the impact of the training is not limited to the duration of the course, and help your students retain the concepts they have learned. For example, you can provide them with short videos, checklists, discussion groups, or other materials that will be a valuable contribution even after the course is over.

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