Keller's ARCS Model and Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction

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Perspective Article

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Instruction design is the process of developing a curriculum for active learning, which includes the creation and delivery of educational programs. It involves examining learning needs and developing a delivery system that meets those needs. Two of the most common basic models of instructional design are Keller's ARCS model and Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction. These models are used in different environments, from schools to businesses to the military.

The ARCS model stipulates four stages of the instructional design process: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction. Keller places more emphasis on the motivational aspects of learning than on how the learning material is delivered. These elements are meant to encourage and sustain the learner's motivation. Keller also focuses on students' need for motivation in their learning. To keep students motivated, their teachers need to cultivate positive attitudes in them.

Gagne's model, on the other hand, is considered a framework for instructional design and covers many aspects of learning. The categories of learning identified in it are verbal information, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, motor skills, and attitudes. These are focused on the learner. Gagne's model also focuses on levels of learning and how each of these requires different instructions. According to Gagne, the learning process is organized into the following hierarchy of tasks: stimulus recognition, response generation, procedure following, use of terminology, discriminations, concept formation, rule application, and problem-solving [1]. This hierarchy represents a basic framework by which an instructor can arrange the following nine instructional events: reception, expectancy, retrieval, selective perception, semantic encoding, responding, reinforcement, retrieval, and generalization.

Both of these theories have strategies for piquing learners' interests. Initial interest may be fleeting; thus, maintaining learners' attention is of utmost importance. After initial interest is established, the instructor needs to switch to activities that maintain a sense of mystery. According to Keller, a teacher may choose to use specific examples, active participation, incongruity and conflict (contradicting the learners' experiences), inquiry, humor, and variability (alternating the format of instructions or the media of delivery). Similarly, Gagne argues that the first step in teaching is to grab the learners' attention. He proposes the concept of gaining learners' attention by presenting stimuli. Like Keller, he states that uncertainty, surprise, and thought-provoking questions are some of the methods an instructor can use to gain the attention of a learner. A teacher designing a course should choose an interest-arousing method according to his specific audience. This method could vary from a physical gesture to a mentally stimulating event.

Relevance is another essential element of learning theory. A learner needs clarity on why a lesson is significant, as this is focal in enhancing their motivation. The strategies Keller puts forward are experience (How will the new lessons use the learner's current skills?), present worth, future usefulness, the meeting of needs, modeling (a role model could be invited to help with tutoring) and offering choices (alternative routes the learner could use to reach a given goal). Gagne ranks "informing the learner of the learning objectives" second in his nine-step process. Though the learning objectives are more focused on the instructor, the instructor ought to break these down to their learners using informal language. This process briefs the learners on the expected goals of their learning process. The instructor may use their learners' career paths to relate the content to them.

One of the stumbling blocks for learning of information for most students is their lack of confidence in their capacity to learn new ideas. Thus, learners need assurance that the objectives stated by their instructors are attainable. They should be allowed a chance to succeed; however, they ought to be presented, to a certain degree, with challenges. Confidence can be instilled in learners by providing them with learning objectives and evaluation criteria. Ultimately, the learning process should culminate in the learner being allowed to practice the newly learned skill in a real or simulated environment. The teacher should keep in mind that satisfied students are more motivated than unsatisfied students to continue with their learning processes. Such satisfaction can be a result of verbal praise, incentives, or real rewards. Rewards could vary from candy for young students to extra tests

points in more advanced students. However, rewards should be given in moderation to maintain a level of competitiveness among the learners.

A critical difference between Keller and Gagne's models is that the latter considers the learning material and how the student internalizes it, whereas the former model focuses strictly on the learner about the expected outcome. Additionally, Keller's model seems to concentrate solely on intrinsic factors, while the Gagne model focuses on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. However, Gagne's model abandons concerns regarding the learner's motivation after their attention is established and focuses instead on other external factors, such as modes of delivery. It is therefore up to the instructor to decide which model best suits his/her needs as well as learners' needs.

Both of these approaches are useful, as they give trainers and teachers checklists to use before engaging in teaching activities. The methods are both flexible and robust in that they can be utilized in a variety of learning experiences and for a wide range of people regardless of their level of education. They can even be used together for better delivery of lessons. While Keller's model may be primarily used to keep learners motivated, Gagne's model allows teachers to provide their learners with lessons that are both beneficial and useful. For this reason, both theories are often used concurrently, which ultimately leads to successful learning [2].

REFERENCES

1. Gagne RM, Briggs LJ, Wager WW. Principles of instructional design 4th edn. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers. 1992.

2. Keller J. Motivational design for learning and performance: The ARCS model approach. New York: Springer. 2010.