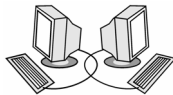## Chapter VIII

Events of Instruction:
Gaining Attention and Stimulating Motivation

Making Connections

In previous chapters, we explored systematic instructional design, learner-centered instruction, and objective writing. Now we will give you some nuts and bolts on specific lesson planning and methods to gain attention and stimulate motivation in distance education. What are Gagné's Nine Events of Instruction and how do these events impact lesson planning? Why use icebreakers and openers in the lesson? How do you stimulate learner motivation? What kinds of things should be included in the closing segment of a lesson?

Introduction

You may recall in Chapters III and IV discussions about memory. Learners are constantly building mental models of the environment through experiences. The cognitive map provides a link between the thought process and the physical

environment. About 95% of all new learning takes place through sight, hearing, and touch. Obviously, most of what comes in through the senses is sorted out very quickly through our perceptual or sensory registry. This process occurs in three to five seconds and must go into short-term memory for actual processing. Information that is transferred to short-term memory can remain active for about 15 to 20 seconds without rehearsal and generally has a limit of about five to seven items. We can think of short-term memory as a workbench area where we can build, take apart, or rework ideas for eventual storage. It is difficult to remember things for very long, such as a phone number we use for pizza delivery, unless we decide that the information is important.

- Does this information make sense?
- Can this information be understood based upon experience?
- Does the information fit into what is currently known about how the world works?
- Is it relevant?
- What is the purpose?

If the learner decides that the information presented makes sense and has meaning, then it is more likely to be stored in long-term memory (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968; Good & Brophy, 1986).

Thought and Reflection

MAKING A MEMORY

Memories are located throughout the brain. Explicit long-term memories are formed in the hippocampus while implicit long-term memories are formed elsewhere. Recall is found in specific locations in the cerebral cortex. The integration of facts and factoids blended with beliefs and experience, imbued with emotion, are combined and stored in different parts of the cortex forming the foundation of recall or reassembly as needed. Think of an important event in your life. Why can you remember details of this event more than less significant events?
Source: Zull (2002)

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