USING GAGNE'S MODEL OF INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN TO DEVELOP AN ENGAGING GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE FOR FULLY ONLINE DELIVERY

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PROBLEM

Designing fully online courses that are engaging can be inherently challenging due to their asynchronous nature. General education courses come with the added challenge of needing to accommodate students with diverse educational backgrounds and different interests.

PLAN

The course, "Genetics and Society", was designed with a scaffolded modular structure, with each module building on the previous. Gagne's nine events of instruction were applied to design learning and assessment activities in each module. Appropriate educational technologies were then used to develop and deliver these activities.

ACTION

The course has been offered by the Faculty of Science at the University of New South Wales to over 150 students from all levels of study and all faculties.

REFLECTION

The flexibility of Gagne's framework enabled presenting complex genetic concepts and applications through a variety of activity types in each module. This facilitated accommodating students with different levels of content knowledge, while ensuring constructive alignment of each learning and assessment task with the learning outcomes, at both course and individual module level. The model also allowed for seamless integration of assessments with the learning activities, making them an extension to learning as opposed to stand alone tasks. Student feedback highlighted the clear and concise easy to follow structure of the course. They also appreciated the variety of learning and assessment tasks that provided them with an engaging educational experience, as well as the flexibility to focus on areas that were of interest to them.