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Dramatization and recording are a powerful way of teaching. Use of PPT adds to it. Generally, students are bored with one-way communication.

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Every teacher has her or his own style of teaching. And as traditional teaching styles evolve with the advent of differentiated instruction, more and more teachers are adjusting their approach depending on their students' learning needs.

But there are a few fundamental teaching styles most educators tend to use. Which one is yours?

## You've Got Style

These teaching styles highlight the five main strategies teachers use in the classroom, as well as the benefits and potential pitfalls of each.

### The Authority, or lecture style

The authority model is teacher-centered and frequently entails lengthy lecture sessions or one-way presentations. Students are expected to take notes or absorb information.

- **Pros:** This style is acceptable for certain higher-education disciplines and auditorium settings with large groups of students. The pure lecture style is most suitable for subjects like history, which necessitate memorization of key facts, dates, names, etc.
- **Cons:** It's a questionable model for teaching children because there is little or no interaction with the teacher. Plus it can get a little snooze-y. That's why it's a better approach for older, more mature students.

### The Demonstrator, or coach style

The demonstrator retains the formal authority role by showing students what they need to know. The demonstrator is a lot like the lecturer, but their lessons include multimedia presentations, activities, and demonstrations. (Think: Math. Science. Music.)

- **Pros:** This style gives teachers opportunities to incorporate a variety of formats including lectures and multimedia presentations.
- **Cons:** Although it's well-suited for teaching mathematics, music, physical education, or arts and crafts, it is difficult to accommodate students' individual needs in larger classrooms.

### The Facilitator, or activity style

Facilitators promote self-learning and help students develop critical thinking skills and retain knowledge that leads to self-actualization.

- **Pros:** This style trains students to ask questions and helps develop skills to find answers and solutions through exploration; it is ideal for teaching science and similar subjects.
- **Cons:** Challenges teacher to interact with students and prompt them toward discovery rather than lecturing facts and testing knowledge through memorization. So it's a bit harder to measure success in tangible terms.

## The Delegator, or group style

The delegator style is best suited for curricula that require lab activities, such as chemistry and biology, or subjects that warrant peer feedback, like debate and creative writing.

- **Pros:** Guided discovery and inquiry-based learning place the teacher in an observer role that inspires students by working in tandem toward common goals.
- **Cons:** Considered a modern style of teaching, it is sometimes criticized as eroding teacher authority. As a delegator, the teacher acts more as a consultant rather than the traditional authority figure.

## The Hybrid, or blended style

Hybrid, or blended style, follows an integrated approach to teaching that blends the teacher's personality and interests with students' needs and curriculum-appropriate methods.

- **Pros:** Inclusive! And it enables teachers to tailor their styles to student needs and appropriate subject matter.
- **Cons:** Hybrid style runs the risk of trying to be too many things to all students, prompting teachers to spread themselves too thin and dilute learning.

Because teachers have styles that reflect their distinct personalities and curriculum—from math and science to English and history—it's crucial that they remain focused on their teaching objectives and avoid trying to be all things to all students.

# What you need to know about your teaching style

Although it is not the teacher's job to entertain students, it is vital to engage them in the learning process. Selecting a style that addresses the needs of diverse students at different learning levels begins with a personal inventory—a self-evaluation—of the teacher's strengths and weaknesses. As they develop their teaching styles and integrate them with effective classroom management skills, teachers will learn what works best for their personalities and curriculum.

Our guide encapsulates today's different teaching styles and helps teachers identify the style that's right for them and their students. Browse through the article or use these links to jump to your desired destination.

- [What is a teaching style inventory, and how have teaching styles evolved?](#)
- [What teaching method is best for today's students?](#)
- [How does classroom diversity influence teachers?](#)

## Emergence of the teaching style inventory

How have teaching styles evolved? This is a question teachers are asked, and frequently ask themselves, as they embark on their careers, and occasionally pause along the way to reflect on job performance. To understand the differences in teaching styles, it's helpful to know where the modern concept of classifying teaching methods originated.

The late Anthony F. Grasha, a noted professor of psychology at the University of Cincinnati, is credited with developing the classic five teaching styles. A follower of psychiatrist Carl Jung, Grasha began studying the dynamics of the relationship between teachers and learning in college classrooms. His groundbreaking book, [Teaching with Style](#), was written both as a guide for teachers and as a tool to help colleagues, administrators and students systematically evaluate an instructor's effectiveness in the classroom.

Grasha understood that schools must use a consistent, formal approach in evaluating a teacher's classroom performance. He recognized that any system designed to help teachers improve their instructional skills requires a simple classification system. He developed a teaching style inventory that has since been adopted and modified by followers.

- **Expert:** Similar to a coach, experts share knowledge, demonstrate their expertise, advise students, and provide feedback to improve understanding and promote learning.
- **Formal authority:** Authoritative teachers incorporate the traditional lecture format and share many of the same characteristics as experts, but with less student interaction.
- **Personal model:** Incorporates blended teaching styles that match the best techniques with the appropriate learning scenarios and students in an adaptive format.
- **Facilitator:** Designs participatory learning activities and manages classroom projects while providing information and offering feedback to facilitate critical thinking.

- **Delegator:** Organizes group learning, observes students, provides consultation, and promotes interaction between groups and among individuals to achieve learning objectives.

Although he developed specific teaching styles, Grasha warned against boxing teachers into a single category. Instead, he advocated that teachers play multiple roles in the classroom. He believed most teachers possess some combination of all or most of the classic teaching styles.

## How does differentiated instruction affect teaching styles?

Carol Ann Tomlinson, a professor at the University of Virginia, is an early advocate of differentiated instruction and a pioneer in the development of learning-based teaching styles. If Grasha laid the groundwork for 20th-century teachers to adopt styles tailored to match their personalities and strengths, Tomlinson has advanced this theme into the 21st century by focusing on differentiated instruction.

In the simplest terms, differentiated instruction means keeping all students in mind when developing lesson plans and workbook exercises, lectures, and interactive learning. These student-focused differences necessitate instructional styles that embrace diverse classrooms for students at all learning levels and from various backgrounds without compromising the teacher's strengths.

## What teaching style is best for today's students?

Whether you're a first-year teacher eager to put into practice all of the pedagogical techniques you learned in college, or a classroom veteran examining differentiated instruction and new learning methodologies, consider that not all students respond well to one particular style. Although teaching styles have been categorized into five groups, today's ideal teaching style is not an either/or proposition but more of a hybrid approach that blends the best of everything a teacher has to offer.

The traditional advice that teachers not overreach with a cluster of all-encompassing teaching styles might seem to conflict with today's emphasis on student-centered classrooms. Theoretically, the more teachers emphasize student-centric learning, the harder it is to develop a well-focused style based on their personal attributes, strengths, and goals.

In short, modern methods of teaching require different types of teachers—from the analyst/organizer to the negotiator/consultant. Here are some other factors to consider as teachers determine the best teaching method for their students.

**Empty vessel:** Critics of the “sage on the stage” lecture style point to the “empty vessel” theory, which assumes a student's mind is essentially empty and needs to be

filled by the “expert” teacher. Critics of this traditional approach to teaching insist this teaching style is outmoded and needs to be updated for the diverse 21st-century classroom.

**Active vs. passive:** Proponents of the traditional lecture approach believe that an overemphasis on group-oriented participatory teaching styles, like facilitator and delegator, favor gifted and competitive students over passive children with varied learning abilities, thereby exacerbating the challenges of meeting the needs of all learners.

**Knowledge vs. information:** Knowledge implies a complete understanding, or full comprehension, of a particular subject. A blend of teaching styles that incorporate facilitator, delegator, demonstrator, and lecturer techniques helps the broadest range of students acquire in-depth knowledge and mastery of a given subject. This stands in contrast to passive learning, which typically entails memorizing facts, or information, with the short-term objective of scoring well on tests.

**Interactive classrooms:** Laptops and tablets, video conferencing, and podcasts in classrooms play a vital role in today’s teaching styles. With technology in mind, it is imperative that teachers assess their students’ knowledge while they are learning. The alternative is to wait for test results, only to discover knowledge gaps that should have been detected during the active learning phase.

**Constructivist teaching methods:** Contemporary teaching styles tend to be group-focused and inquiry-driven. Constructivist teaching methods embrace subsets of alternative teaching styles, including modeling, coaching, and test preparation through rubrics scaffolding. All of these are designed to promote student participation and necessitate a hybrid approach to teaching. One criticism of the constructivist approach is that it caters to extroverted, group-oriented students, who tend to dominate and benefit from these teaching methods more than introverts; however, this assumes introverts aren’t learning by observing.

Student-centric learning does not have to come at the expense of an instructor’s preferred teaching method. However, differentiated instruction demands that teachers finesse their style to accommodate the diverse needs of 21st-century classrooms.

## The ‘sage on the stage’ meets the ‘tiger mom’

The objective of blending teaching styles to leverage the teacher’s strengths while meeting the demands of diverse students has become increasingly difficult, as parents take a decidedly proactive role in child-learning techniques.

The traditional authoritative/expert, or “sage on the stage” lecture style, has come under attack by some parents—and contemporary educational leaders—who emphasize that

a more diverse approach to teaching is necessary to engage students. This is compounded by the rise of “tiger moms,” a term made popular by parents devoted to improving the quality of education with laser-precision focus on A-list schools and a highly competitive job market.

## Age of the proactive parent

Regardless of what style a teacher adopts, it’s important for teachers to develop positive attitudes, set goals, and establish high expectations for students.

“Assume students can excel!” education authors Harry and Rosemary Wong declare. As former teachers with a combined 80-plus years of educational experience, the Wongs emphasize in their best-selling book, *The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher* and their more recent, *The Classroom Management Book* that successful teachers share three common characteristics:

- effective classroom management skills
- lesson mastery
- positive expectations

All instructors, when developing their teaching styles, should keep in mind these three goals, as well as the primary objective of education: student learning.

## How does classroom diversity influence teachers?

It is abundantly clear that today’s teachers are responsible for students with a diverse range of learning abilities. The 21st-century teacher does not have the luxury of “picking the low-hanging fruit” and then leaving the rest of the tree for experts who specialize in children with behavioral issues or learning disorders.

Today’s teachers must develop instructional styles that work well in diverse classrooms. Effective teaching methods engage gifted students, as well as slow-learning children and those with attention deficit tendencies. This is where differentiated instruction and a balanced mix of teaching styles can help reach all students in a given classroom—not just the few who respond well to one particular style of teaching.

The wonderment of teaching, what author/educator Dr. Harry Wong refers to as “that a-ha moment” when a child “gets it,” is one of the most rewarding and seemingly elusive benefits of becoming a teacher. This transfer of knowledge from expert to student is an art form and a skill. Fortunately, both can be learned and perfected.

Knowing how to engage students begins with selecting the teaching style that’s right for you. And remember, even though you may prefer one teaching style over another, you

must find the style that works best for your students! Try different styles to meet different objectives, and always challenge yourself to find ways to reach each student.

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