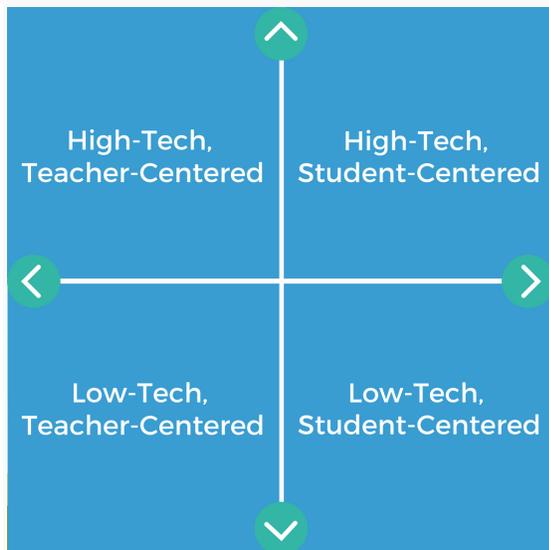


Different types of teaching methods



The term **teaching method** refers to the general principles, pedagogy and management strategies used for classroom instruction.

Your choice of teaching method depends on what fits you — your educational philosophy, classroom demographic, subject area(s) and school mission statement.

Teaching theories can be organized into four categories based on two major parameters: a teacher-centered approach versus a student-centered approach, and high-tech material use versus low-tech material use.

Interested in developing your skills as a teacher? [Explore online education short courses](#) designed to give you an in depth understanding of various skills in teaching.

Teacher-Centered Approach to Learning

Taken to its most extreme interpretation, teachers are the main authority figure in a teacher-centered instruction model. [Students are viewed as “empty vessels”](#)

[External link](#)

Who passively receive knowledge from their teachers through lectures and direct instruction, with an end goal of positive results from testing and assessment. In this style, teaching and assessment are viewed as two separate entities; student learning is measured through objectively scored tests and assessments.

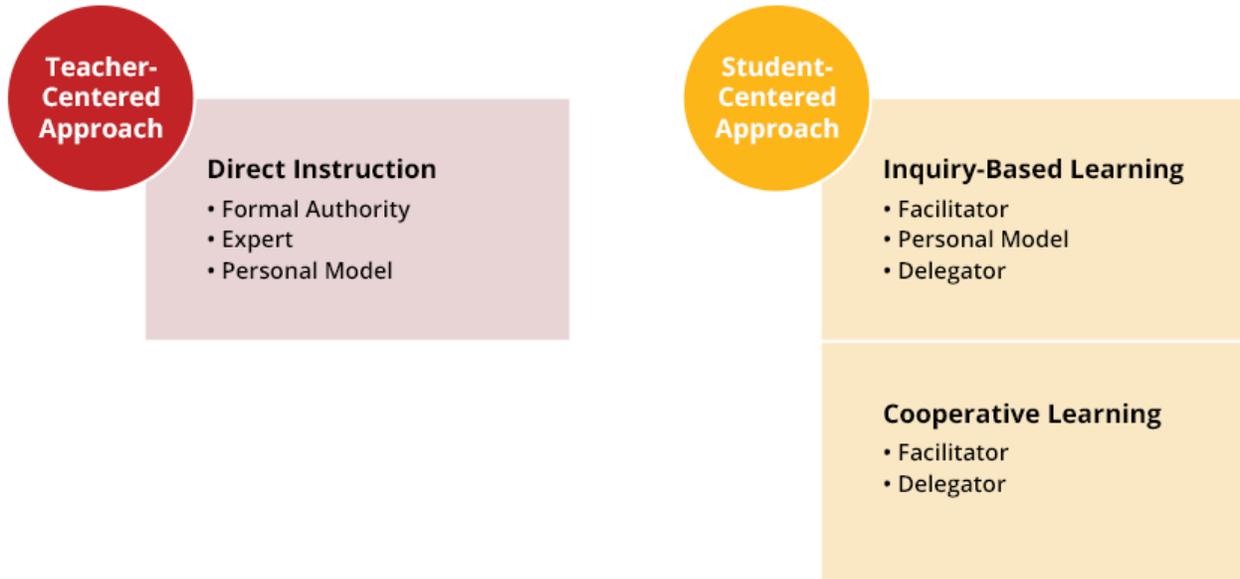
[Learn more about the different teaching styles that use a teacher-centered approach.](#)

Student-Centered Approach to Learning

While teachers are still an authority figure in a student-centered teaching model, teachers and students play an equally active role in the learning process.

The teacher's primary role is to coach and facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material, and to measure student learning through both formal and informal forms of assessment, like group projects, student portfolios, and class participation. In the student-centered classroom, teaching and assessment are connected because student learning is continuously measured during teacher instruction.

[Learn more about the different teaching styles that use a student-centered approach.](#)



High Tech Approach to Learning

Advancements in technology have propelled the education sector in the last few decades. As the name suggests, the high tech approach to learning utilizes different technology to aid students in their classroom learning. Many educators use computers and tablets in the classroom, and others may use the internet to assign homework. The internet is also beneficial in a classroom setting as it provides unlimited resources. Teachers may also use the internet in order to connect their students with people from around the world.

Below are some tech tools used in classrooms today:

- [G Suite](#)
- [External link](#)
- (Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Classroom, Drive, and Calendar)
- Tablets/laptops
- Gamification software (such as [3DGameLab](#))
- [External link](#)
- and [Classcraft](#)
- [External link](#)

- Education-focused social media platforms (such as [schoology](#)
- [External link](#)
- and [seesaw](#)
- [External link](#)
- [Technology accessibility](#)
- [External link](#)
- for students with disabilities

Harvard's Bok Center for Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning Strategies for Higher Education



Discover Harvard's Bok Center for Teaching and Learning

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Low Tech Approach to Learning

While technology undoubtedly has changed education, many educators opt to use a more traditional, low tech approach to learning. Some learning styles require a physical presence and interaction between the educator and the student. Additionally, some research has shown that low-tech classrooms may boost learning. For example, [students who take handwritten notes have better recall than students who take typed notes](#)

[External link](#)

Another downside of technology in the classroom may be that [students exposed to spell check and autocorrect features at an earlier age may be weaker in spelling and writing skills](#)

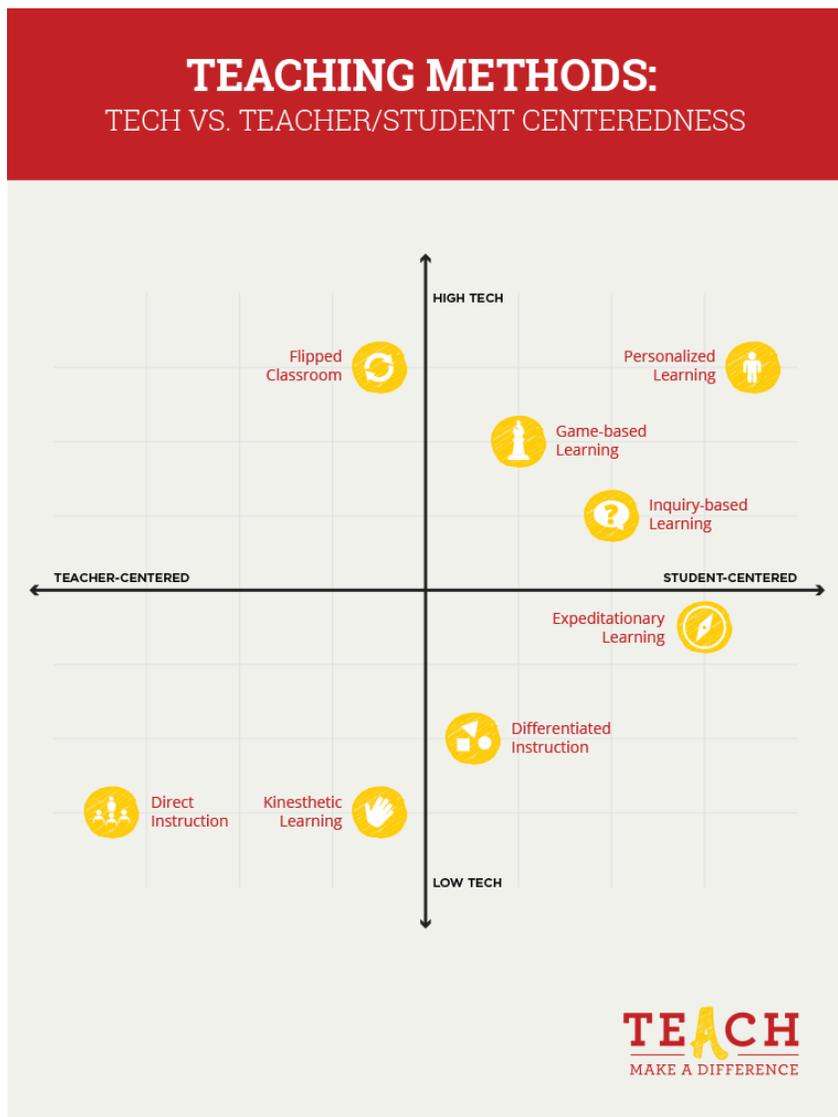
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Ultimately, tailoring the learning experience to different types of learners is incredibly important, and sometimes students work better with a low-tech approach.

Here are some examples of low technology usage in different teaching methodologies:

- Kinesthetic learners have a need for movement when learning. Teachers should allow students to move around, speak with hands and gestures.

- Expeditionary learning involves “learning by doing” and participating in a hands-on experience. Students may participate in fieldwork, learning expeditions, projects or case studies to be able to apply knowledge learned in the classroom to the real world, rather than learning through the virtual world.
- Many types of vocational or practical training cannot be learned virtually, whether it be a laboratory experiment or woodworking.



Through these different approaches to teaching, educators can gain a better understanding of how best to govern their classrooms, implement instruction, and connect with their students. Within each category of teacher and student centeredness and tech usage, there are specific teaching roles or “methods” of instructor behavior that feature their own unique mix of learning and assessment practices. Learn more about each one to find the best fit for your classroom.

Teacher-Centered Methods of Instruction



Direct Instruction (Low Tech)

Direct instruction is the general term that refers to the traditional teaching strategy that relies on explicit teaching through lectures and teacher-led demonstrations.

In this method of instruction, the teacher might play one or all of the following roles:

| Formal Authority | Expert | Personal Model |
|--|--|--|
| Formal Authority teachers are in a position of power and authority because of their exemplary knowledge and status over their students. Classroom management styles are traditional and focus on rules and expectations. | Expert teachers are in possession of all knowledge and expertise within the classroom. Their primary role is to guide and direct learners through the learning process. Student are viewed solely as the receptors of knowledge and information (“empty vessels.”) | Teachers who operate under the “Personal Model” style are those who lead by example, demonstrating to students how to access and comprehend information. In this teaching model, students learn through observing and copying the teacher’s process. |

As the primary teaching strategy under the **teacher-centered approach**, direct instruction utilizes passive learning, or the idea that students can learn what they need to through listening and watching very precise instruction. Teachers and professors act as the sole supplier of knowledge, and under the direct instruction model, teachers often utilize systematic, scripted lesson plans. Direct instruction programs include exactly what the teacher should say, and activities that students should complete, for every minute of the lesson.

Because it does not include student preferences or give them opportunities for hands-on or alternative types of learning, direct instruction is extremely teacher-centered. it’s also fairly low-tech, often relying on the use of textbooks and workbooks instead of computers and 1:1 devices.



Flipped Classrooms (High Tech)

The idea of [the flipped classroom began in 2007 when two teachers began using software that would let them record their live lectures](#)

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By the next school year, they were implementing pre-recorded lectures and sharing the idea of what became known as the flipped classroom.

Broadly, the flipped classroom label describes the teaching structure that has students watching pre-recorded lessons at home and completing in-class assignments, as opposed to hearing lectures in class and doing homework at home. Teachers who implement the flipped classroom model often film their own instructional videos, but many also use pre-made videos from online sources.

A key benefit of the flipped classroom model is that it allows for students to work at their own pace if that is how the teacher chooses to implement it. In some cases, teachers may assign the same videos to all students, while in others, teachers may choose to allow students to watch new videos as they master topics (taking on a more “differentiated” approach).

But despite this potential for more student-centeredness, flipped classroom models are still mostly based on a teacher’s idea of how learning should happen and what information students need, making it chiefly teacher-centered. From a technology perspective, the system hinges on pre-recorded lessons and online activities, meaning both students and teachers need a good internet connection and devices that can access it.



Kinesthetic Learning (Low Tech)

Sometimes known as tactile learning"or "hands-on learning", kinesthetic learning is based on the idea of [multiple intelligences](#)

[External link](#)

Requiring students to do, make, or create. In a kinesthetic learning environment, students perform physical activities rather than listen to lectures or watch demonstrations. Hands-on experiences, drawing, role-play, building, and the use of drama and sports are all examples of kinesthetic classroom activities.

Though a great way to keep students engaged and, at times, simply awake, very few classrooms employ kinesthetic learning activities exclusively. One reason is that, despite the popularity of learning style theories, there is a lack of research-based evidence that shows that [teaching to certain learning styles produces better academic results](#)

[External link](#)

One upside is that kinesthetic learning is rarely based on technology, as the method values movement and creativity over technological skills. That means it's cheap and fairly low-barrier to adopt, as well as a welcome break from students' existing screen time. Kinesthetic learning can be more student-centered than teacher-centered when students are given the choice of how to use movement to learn new information or experience new skills, so it's also adaptable to a teacher's particular classroom preferences.

Student-Centered Methods of Instruction



Differentiated Instruction (Low Tech)

Differentiated instruction is the teaching practice of tailoring instruction to meet individual student needs. It initially grew popular with the [1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)

[External link](#)

(IDEA), which ensured all children had equal access to public education. The [Individualized Education Programs](#)

[External link](#)

(IEPs) that started under IDEA helped classroom teachers differentiate for students with special needs. Today, differentiated instruction is used to meet the needs of all types of learners.

Teachers can differentiate in a number of ways: how students access content, the types of activities students do to master a concept, what the end product of learning looks like, and how the classroom is set up. Some examples of differentiation include: having students read books at their own reading levels, offering different spelling lists to students, or meeting in small groups to reteach topics.

Though differentiation is focused on individual student needs, it is mostly planned and implemented by the teacher. And technology, though a potential aid, is not a hallmark of the differentiated teaching style, making it a fairly traditional, low-barrier method to adopt.

Inquiry-based Learning (High Tech)

Based on student investigation and hands-on projects, inquiry-based learning is a teaching method that casts a teacher as a supportive figure who provides guidance and support for students throughout their learning process, rather than a sole authority figure.

In this method of instruction, the teacher might play one or all of the following roles:

| Facilitator | Personal Model | Delegator |
|---|--|--|
| Facilitators place a strong emphasis on the teacher-student relationship. Operating under an open classroom model, there is a de-emphasis on teacher instruction, and both student and educator undergo the learning process together. Student learning loosely guided by the teacher, and is focused on fostering independence, hands-on learning, and exploration | Teachers who operate under the “Personal Model” style are those who lead by example, demonstrating to students how to access and comprehend information. In this teaching model, students learn through observing and copying the teacher’s process. | Teachers act as a “resource” to students, answering questions and reviewing their progress as needed. Teachers play a passive role in student’s learning; students are active and engaged participants in their learning. The main goal of a Delegator is to foster a sense of autonomy in the learning process. |

Teachers encourage students to ask questions and consider what they want to know about the world around them. Students then research their questions, find information and sources that explain key concepts and solve problems they may encounter along the way. Findings might be presented as self-made videos, websites, or formal presentations of research results.

Inquiry-based learning falls under the student-centered approach, in that students play an active and participatory role in their own learning. But teacher facilitation is also extremely key to the process. Usually, during the inquiry cycle, every student is working on a different question or topic. In this environment, teachers ask high-level questions and make research suggestions about the process rather than the content. At the end of the inquiry cycle, students reflect on the experience and what they learned. They also consider how it connects to

other topics of interest, as an [inquiry on one topic often results in more questions and then an inquiry into new fields](#)

[External link](#)

Inquiry-based learning can make great use of technology through online research sites, social media, and the possibility for global connections with people outside of the community. But depending on the subject at hand, it doesn't necessarily require it.



Expeditionary Learning (High Tech)

Expeditionary learning is based on the ideas of the educator who founded [Outward Bound](#)

[External link](#)

And is a form of project-based learning in which students go on expeditions and engage in in-depth study of topics that impact their schools and communities.

The learning in this model includes multiple content areas so that students can see how problem-solving can happen in the real world--ideally, their own worlds. A student in a big city, for example, might study statistics about pollution, read information about its effects, and travel to sites in their city that have been impacted by the problem. When they have a good understanding of the circumstances, students and teachers work to find a solution they can actively implement.

Technology-wise, G Suite (Google Docs, Sheets, and Drive) and internet access can aid student research, presentation, and implementation of projects. But it's the hands-on work and getting out into the community that's the cornerstone of this methodology.



Personalized Learning (High Tech)

Personalized learning

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is such a new educational model that its definition is still evolving. At the heart of the model, teachers have students follow personalized learning plans that are specific to their interests and skills. Student self-direction and choice in the curriculum are hallmarks of personalized learning.

Assessment is also tailored to the individual: schools and classrooms that implement personalized learning use competency-based progression, so that students can move onto the next standards or topics when they've mastered what they're currently working on. That way, students in personalized learning classrooms can progress to work beyond their grade level as they master topics, while students who need additional help have that time built into their daily schedules as well.

There's also room for an emphasis on college and career readiness in personalized learning environments. Students who don't require remediation or extension work can instead work with teachers to nurture social skills and other or 21st-century skills lessons and receive mentoring.

Personalized learning is extremely student centered, but teachers are required to teach lessons, look at frequent assessment data, and meet with students to make any necessary changes to their learning plans. They'll also need to have a certain comfort level with technology: the differentiated and personalized instruction that students receive often come in the form of online lessons and programs, so teachers must be able to navigate virtual platforms with ease



Game-based Learning (High Tech)

Game-based learning comes from the desire to [engage students in more active learning in the classroom](#)

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Because they require students to be problem solvers and use soft skills that they will need as adults, games are a great way to encourage a “mastery” mindset, rather than a focus on grades.

In a game-based learning environment, students work on quests to accomplish a specific goal (learning objective) by choosing actions and experimenting along the way. As students make certain progress or achievements, they can earn badges and experience points, just like they would in their favorite video games.

Game-based learning requires a lot of time and planning on the teachers' part. Fortunately, there is software that makes this process much easier, like [3DGameLab](#)

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and [Classcraft](#)

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Teachers who use this software may be better at differentiating quests for students because of the data the programs provide.

Because teachers play a big role in planning and creating content under this model, game-based learning isn't completely student-centered. But it is still very much focused on the student, who works at their own pace and makes independent choices in a gamified environment.

