

Strengths and Weaknesses of Different Teaching Styles

People often talk about traditional teaching and child-centered teaching as though they were somehow opposites, like two opposing armies in a war. It has long been fashionable to criticize traditional teaching. Yet both of these approaches to teaching have their own strengths and weaknesses. A good teacher will often use aspects of both traditional teaching and child-centred teaching many times within a single lesson. The important thing is to be familiar with both approaches and to know how to use aspects of both to help your children learn. Have a look at the table below. Do you agree with our categorizations? Are there any you disagree with? Any you would like to change?

Traditional Teaching (strengths)	Traditional Teaching (weaknesses)
It's not time consuming Learners maximize on teacher's knowledge It can deliver a lot of information in a short time, especially in big classes Wide content coverage It doesn't need any preparation Easier to control class and maintain discipline	It doesn't cater for individual differences Learners become passive Fails to teach cognitive skills Shallow or superficial coverage of subject – teacher doesn't stray from the book to explore the subject in depth Boring! No room for creativity Children memorize ideas and formulae that they don't understand
Child-centered teaching (strengths)	Child-centered teaching (weaknesses)
The child's prior knowledge is tapped Children are trained to think Higher level thinking is required Full involvement of learners Children learn by doing Promotes critical thinking and problem solving	<i>It's time consuming in terms of preparation</i> <i>It challenges the teacher's ability to control the class</i> <i>Active learning methods often require expensive stationary</i> <i>Teachers often end up paying for materials from their own pocket</i>