**The way in which information is taught**

The way in which information is taught can vary greatly across cultures and time-periods. Entering a British primary school classroom from the early 1900s, for example, one gains a sense of austerity, discipline and a rigid way of teaching. Desks are typically seated apart from one another, with straight-backed wooden chairs that face directly to the teacher and the chalkboard. In the present day, British classrooms look very different. Desks are often grouped together so that students face each other rather than the teacher, and a large floor area is typically set aside for the class to come together for group discussion and learning.

Traditionally, it was felt that teachers should be in firm control of the learning process, and that the teacher's task was to prepare and present material for students to understand. Within this approach, the relationship students have with their teachers is not considered important, nor is the relationship students have with each other in the classroom. A student's participation in class is likely to be minimal, aside from asking questions directed at the teacher, or responding to questions that the teacher has directed at the student. This style encourages students to develop respect for positions of power as a source of control and discipline. It is frequently described as the 'formal authority' model of teaching.

A less rigid form of teacher-centred education is the 'demonstrator' model. This maintains the formal authority model's notion of the teacher as a 'flashlight' who illuminates the material for his or her class to learn, but emphasises a more individualised approach to form. The demonstrator acts as both a role model and a guide, demonstrating skills and processes and then helping students develop and apply these independently. Instructors who are drawn to the demonstrator style are generally confident that their own way of performing a task represents a good base model, but they are sensitive to differing learning styles and expect to provide students with help on an individual basis.

Many education researchers argue for student-centred learning instead, and suggest that the learning process is more successful when students are in control. Within the student-centred paradigm, the 'delegator' style is popular. The delegator teacher maintains general authority, but they delegate much of the responsibility for learning to the class as a way for students to become independent thinkers who take pride in their own work. Students are often encouraged to work on their own or in groups, and if the delegator style is implemented successfully they will build not only a working knowledge of course specific topics, but also serf-discipline and the ability to co-ordinate group work and interpersonal roles.

Another style that emphasises student-centred education is the 'facilitator' mode of learning. Here, while a set of specific curriculum demands are already in place, students are encouraged to take the initiative for creating ways to meet these learning requirements together. The teacher typically designs activities that encourage active learning, group collaboration and problem solving, and students are encouraged to process and apply the course content in creative and original ways. Whereas the delegator style emphasises content, and the responsibility students can have for generating and directing their own knowledge base, the facilitator style emphasises form, and the fluid and diverse possibilities that are available in the process of learning. Until the 1960s, formal authority was common in almost all Western schools and universities. As a professor would enter a university lecture theatre, a student would be expected to rush up, take his bag to the desk, and pull out the chair for the professor to sit down on . This style has become outmoded over time. Now at university, students and professors typically have more relaxed, collegiate relationships, address each other on a first name basis, and acknowledge that students have much to contribute in class. Teacher-centred education has a lingering appeal in the form of the demonstrator style, however, which remains useful in subjects where skills must be demonstrated to an external standard and the learning process remains fixed in the earlier years of education. A student of mathematics, sewing or metalwork will likely be familiar with the demonstrator style. At the highest levels of education, however, the demonstrator approach must be abandoned in all fields as students are required to produce innovative work that makes unique contributions to knowledge. Thesis and doctoral students lead their own research in facilitation with supervisors.

The delegator style is valuable when the course is likely to lead students to careers that require group projects. Often, someone who has a high level of expertise in a particular field does not make for the best employee because they have not learnt to apply their abilities in a co-ordinated manner. The delegator style confronts this problem by recognising that interpersonal communication is not just a means to learning but an important skill set in itself. The facilitator model is probably the most creative model, and is therefore not suited to subjects where the practical component necessitates a careful and highly disciplined manner, such as training to be a medical practitioner. It may, however, suit more experimental and theoretical fields ranging from English, music and the social sciences,to science and medical valuable research that takes place in research labs. In these areas, 'mistakes' in form are important and aspects of the learning and development process.

Overall, a dear evolution has taken place in the West from a rigid, dogmatic and teacher-dominated way of learning, to a flexible, creative and student-centred approach. Nevertheless, different subjects, ages and skill levels suit different styles of teaching, and it is unlikely that there will ever be one recommended approach for everyone.