

Differentiating Instruction and Meeting the Needs of Striving Readers



Differentiation for **ALL** learners is possible when we make it easier for teachers to accomplish.

All Learners Can Succeed

Our educational system is charged with preparing every student to become an active participant in the civic process, as well as to get students ready for college and careers. This need has become more urgent as a result of the growing English Language Learner populations and special education students in each and every classroom. In order to ensure that **ALL** learners can succeed, research shows that we must differentiate their instruction.

The body of knowledge on the value of differentiated instruction has expanded in the last few years. Teachers have become more discerning when choosing materials to support differentiation. Moving from a “one-size-fits-all” approach, teachers now look for a variety of additional resources such as videos, activities, and vocabulary support to support different student populations.

The Problem with Leveled Texts

Many publishers have begun offering student texts in low level and high level format. For the striving readers, they are offering low level texts. According to expert

Elfrieda H. Hiebert of the TextProject and the University of California-Santa Cruz, many of the low level texts do not meet the needs of striving readers. In fact, according to Hiebert, “For striving readers, two features of text matter a great deal—the vocabulary and the volume of reading. The perspective underlying the texts for striving readers in these programs of low level texts goes in the opposite direction of what striving readers need. Rather than getting texts with more accessible vocabulary, they get texts where the ideas have been sacrificed or simplified to comply with the aim of achieving a target text complexity.” In short, most of the low level texts are not meeting the needs of striving readers.

Differentiated Support for Striving Readers

Experts argue that true differentiation does not mean providing two levels of text. Instead, it means adopting a holistic approach that centers on the learner. Higher expectations can be met not by watering down the curriculum, but by giving all learners just the right level of support so they can read complex text, acquire core content knowledge, and tackle rigorous questions.



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What if we could differentiate Social Studies instruction so that **ALL** students have access to rigorous content?



Differentiation: a teacher's proactive response to the learner's needs

What is Differentiated Instruction?

Carol Ann Tomlinson, an acknowledged expert in this area, recently defined differentiated instruction in this way:

"Differentiation is a teacher's proactive response to learner needs shaped by mindset and guided by five elements of differentiation—Environment, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, and Classroom Management.

Teachers can differentiate through content, process, product, and affect/environment according to the student's readiness, interest, and learning profile." There are several factors in successful differentiated instruction:

- Meaningful work, authentic inquiry
- Flexible pacing and grouping
- Emphasis on thinking skills and allowing for a range of responses
- Allowing for student choice
- Ongoing assessment, varied assessment

In truth, the concepts behind differentiated instruction are not new—many teachers consider this “plain old good teaching.” Many of the best techniques and resources for differentiating instruction are already in use in classrooms today. However, what could be revolutionary is actually being able to accomplish differentiation in today's busy classrooms. When looking at how to ensure that all learners have access to content and are able to make progress, it is clear that we need new ways to make differentiated instruction easier and more effective.

Best Practices in Action: PEARSON Social Studies

The team of authors, experts, and teacher collaborators who developed PEARSON Social Studies programs believe that:

- All students should have access to rigorous content
- Materials should allow content, process, and product to be differentiated according to students' readiness, interest, and learning profile
- All levels of learners should be supported in making substantial growth, there should be ongoing assessment of this growth, and students should be assessed in a variety of ways
- Differentiated instruction should be possible for teachers to accomplish within the resources and time they have.

Pearson's new Social Studies programs on the Realize platform were designed for this exact purpose.





Using a blend of print and digital materials to make rigorous content and critical thinking skills accessible, teachers using PEARSON's Social Studies programs can proactively tailor support for each student.

Differentiation is variation of instruction

One key element of effective differentiation is to vary content, process, product, and affect/environment to

address student differences in readiness, interests, and learner profiles. Instead of eliminating access to complex text by giving students lower level texts, PEARSON Social Studies offers support for varying instruction in multiple ways. Topic and lesson materials are chunked into smaller, manageable pieces, and comprehensive instructions, rubrics, and extra support are provided for assignments. All materials are enhanced with rigorous higher order thinking questions. Explicit instruction is provided for reading in the content area, especially through extra support for Primary Source activities. All digital activities focus on the core content for each lesson, with an emphasis on tested standards. In this way, teachers can be assured that no matter which resources students use, they are helped to focus on the "key takeaways" that they need to master for that lesson.

Here are some of the many resources in PEARSON Social Studies programs that teachers can use to vary instruction:

Content

- Student Text
- Lesson Summaries (English and Spanish)
- Audio Support (English and Spanish)
- Editable Presentations
- Flipped Videos
- Interactive Features
- Core Concepts

Process

- Interactive Reading Notepad
- 21st Century Skill Tutorials
- Active Classroom Strategies
- Quest Projects, Discussions, DBQ Essays

Product

- Lesson Synthesis Activities
- Quizzes
- Topic Synthesis Activities
- Topic Tests
- Benchmark Tests
- Topic Inquiry End Products

Affect/Environment

- myStory Videos
- Essential Question Activities
- Start Up Activities
- Classroom Discussion Board
- Rubrics
- Professional Development



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Instruction suggestions for different student populations

Active Classroom Strategies

To engage all of the learners in the class and boost participation, teachers can use Active Classroom strategies. Described in the front of the Teacher's Edition and suggested in each lesson of the Teacher's Edition at point-of-use, these strategies harness research on best practices to increase participation, raise student energy levels and attentiveness, check understanding, and differentiate instruction. Active Classroom strategies are used to facilitate a quick, in-class experience that covers and reinforces core content. They also provide teachers with the opportunity to model critical thinking skills and to encourage students to support their arguments with evidence from text and primary sources.

Focus on the student

Connecting to students' own experiences and prior knowledge is one of the most effective ways to provide differentiated instruction. Brain research shows that making a personal and emotional connection to content helps a person retain that content. By creating this connection, participation, engagement, and understanding are boosted for all levels of learners. For this reason, each topic of instruction starts off with a *myStory* Video. Developed in partnership with NBCLearn, these videos tell the stories of people who had personal experiences related to the content students will be learning about. In addition, teachers can connect to students' own experiences through essential questions. An Essential Question posed at the beginning of each topic helps students connect to prior knowledge, develop curiosity, and make connections to other disciplines or the real world. Using essential questions to create intellectual meaning and stories to create emotional meaning have both been shown to increase longterm understanding and retention of learning.

Student ownership at the most fundamental level, while using a digital course, provides students with the element of choice and encourages ownership of their own learning. For 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, students can choose how to navigate the content and what assets to replay or use as study tools. Even if a teacher assigns the *Flipped Video* to the entire class,

having access to this video at any time means an individual student can choose to rewatch it, turn on closed captioning, stop and start, and replay key portions as many times as they need in order to understand. No longer does a student have to rely solely on in-class reviews for a test—every learner can review content in whatever mode that helps them retain content best.

Inquiry creates meaningful work

Beyond just delivering the content through multiple modalities, teachers can frame instruction with inquiry for maximum impact. Over the past ten years, there has been a growing body of research about the effectiveness of inquiry-based instruction for meeting the needs of all learners. Project-Based Learning has been shown to have significant impact on students' content and skills mastery and their application to real-world challenges. Many teachers are using Project-Based Learning (PBL) as a way to help all of their students learn, apply, and retain content knowledge. Preparing students for college, career, and civic life means preparing them to take part in meaningful conversations in which they can formulate an argument or point of view, elaborate and clarify their point, support their ideas with examples, build on or challenge someone else's ideas, listen, paraphrase someone else's ideas, and summarize conversation points.

"[We need to] build students' academic communication skills, which are the skills that tend not to be practiced in social situations outside of school, particularly in low-income homes and communities that do not speak mainstream dialects of English. These highly valued oral skills are not emphasized in most state tests, curriculum programs, or intervention efforts, yet academic and professional success depends on them. They are major gatekeeper skills, and too many students who lack them are being stopped and turned away at this gate." — Zwiars and Crawford



If the number one enemy of differentiation is **time**, what if new technology could provide quicker ways to assign different materials to classes, groups, and individual students?

Pearson partnered with the Buck Institute and The Constitutional Rights Foundation to provide step-by-step resources for three different forms of inquiry — Project-Based Learning team projects, Document-Based Question writing assignments, and Civic Discussion activities.



Designed to be accomplished without adding a lot of extra time, overarching Quest Project is introduced at the beginning of the topic, worked on throughout the topic, and used as a performance-based, authentic assessment at the end of the topic. Each Quest comes with step-by-step instructions and rubrics that support all learners. The Inquiry was designed so teachers could assign only the ones they want to use, as well as to provide suggestions for varying the end product for different students or to make it less technology dependent.

Ongoing Assessment to Help Adapt Instruction

To differentiate successfully, teachers need to measure each student's progress and adapt instruction to further this progress. All levels of learners should be supported in making substantial growth, there should be ongoing assessment of this growth, and students should be assessed in a variety of ways.

Formative assessment Each lesson in PEARSON Social Studies provides a quick auto-graded quiz that gives your students instant feedback about which objectives they learned and which they still need to master. This formative assessment provides each student with remediation recommendations based on their individual performance.

Summative tests At the end of every topic, there is a summative test. This test provides a more comprehensive assessment that includes primary sources, maps, and other visual stimulus, and rigorous open-ended writing prompts.

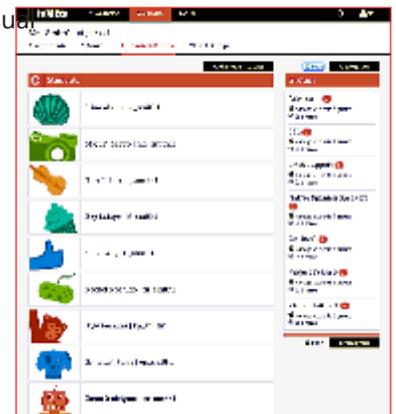
Portfolio and authentic assessment The student work throughout the year in the Pearson Social Studies programs can be used to build assessment portfolios. Topic and lesson Synthesis activities are perfect to show growth over time. The end product of the Quest Project, Civic Discussions, and DBQ essays are excellent examples of student work that show deep understand and standards mastery.

What if Differentiated Instruction Was Easier?

If there is a gap between what we know we should be doing and what we are actually able to accomplish in today's classrooms, what is the fundamental issue at the heart of this problem? **Time.**

Due to growing class sizes, reduced planning time, and shrinking resources, most teachers find it nearly impossible to select and provide the appropriate materials for each individual student

within the time they have available. Using the current way of doing things, it takes too long for teachers to continuously assign, assess, and remediate content and skills to students.



Data Drives Instruction for the Striving Reader

Data Driven Instruction

Teachers can use **data** to guide instruction and immediately see how classes and individual students are progressing towards mastery. The visual dashboard you see here allows teachers to check progress after lessons and chapters, get real-time in-depth reporting, automatic remediation support, and monitor students' time spent on assignments and tests. Links to additional resources and content help teachers support the struggling learner to understand concepts.

Integrated Professional Development

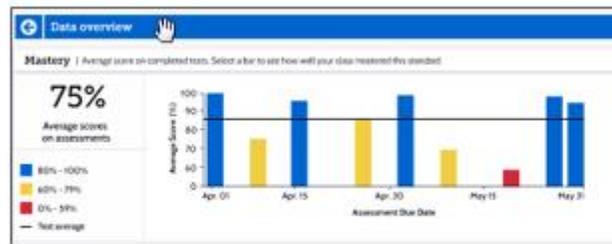
Integrated professional development is key part of the online teaching resources. Professional development on differentiating instruction is provided in the Differentiated Instruction Overview, giving examples of how to use these resources for different populations. There are also high-quality professional development training modules that teachers can access 24/7 for free on topics such as Project-Based Learning, Civic Discussions, Literacy, and 21st Century Skills. In addition, teachers can access in-depth technology training at myPearsonTraining.com

myPearsonTraining.com

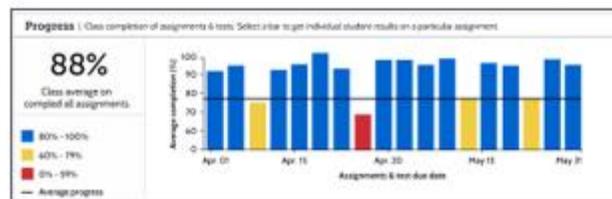
Pearson Commitment

In conclusion, Pearson is committed to helping educators offer effective differentiated instruction. Accessibility is not about offering the same thing at different levels, but ensuring that each student's work is interesting, appropriate, well supported, and worthy. Pearson respects teachers' dedication and time, so we built instructional materials that make it easier to achieve true differentiation.

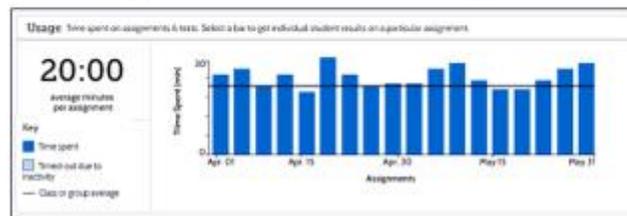
- o **Mastery** covers test scores and standard skill mastery for your class and for individual students. For more details see [Mastery data](#).



- o **Progress** shows which students have completed their assignments, who's in progress, and who's not started yet. For more details see [Progress data](#).



- o **Usage** data shows how much time each student spent in Realize doing specific assignments. For more details see [Usage data](#).



We invite you to reimagine personalized teaching and learning using our Social Studies programs.

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- See also "Differentiated Instruction: Resource Roundup," Edutopia, 2014.
<http://www.edutopia.org/article/differentiated-instructionresources>

Program Partners



NBC LEARN, the educational arm of NBC News, develops original stories for use in the classroom and makes archival NBC News stories, images and primary source documents available on-demand to teachers, students and parents. NBC Learn partnered with Pearson to produce the myStory videos that support this program.



Constitutional Rights Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan, organization focused on educating students about the importance of civic participation in a democratic society. Constitutional Rights Foundation is the lead contributor to the development of the Civic Discussion Topic Inquiries for this program. Constitutional Rights Foundation is also the provider of the Civic Action Project (CAP) for the *Economics* and *Magruder's American Government* programs. CAP is a project-based learning model for civics, government, and economics courses.