

Simple Techniques for Differentiated Instruction with Video

boclips
for teachers

Learn how you can use video to reach every student in your classroom, with minimal preparation.

Introduction

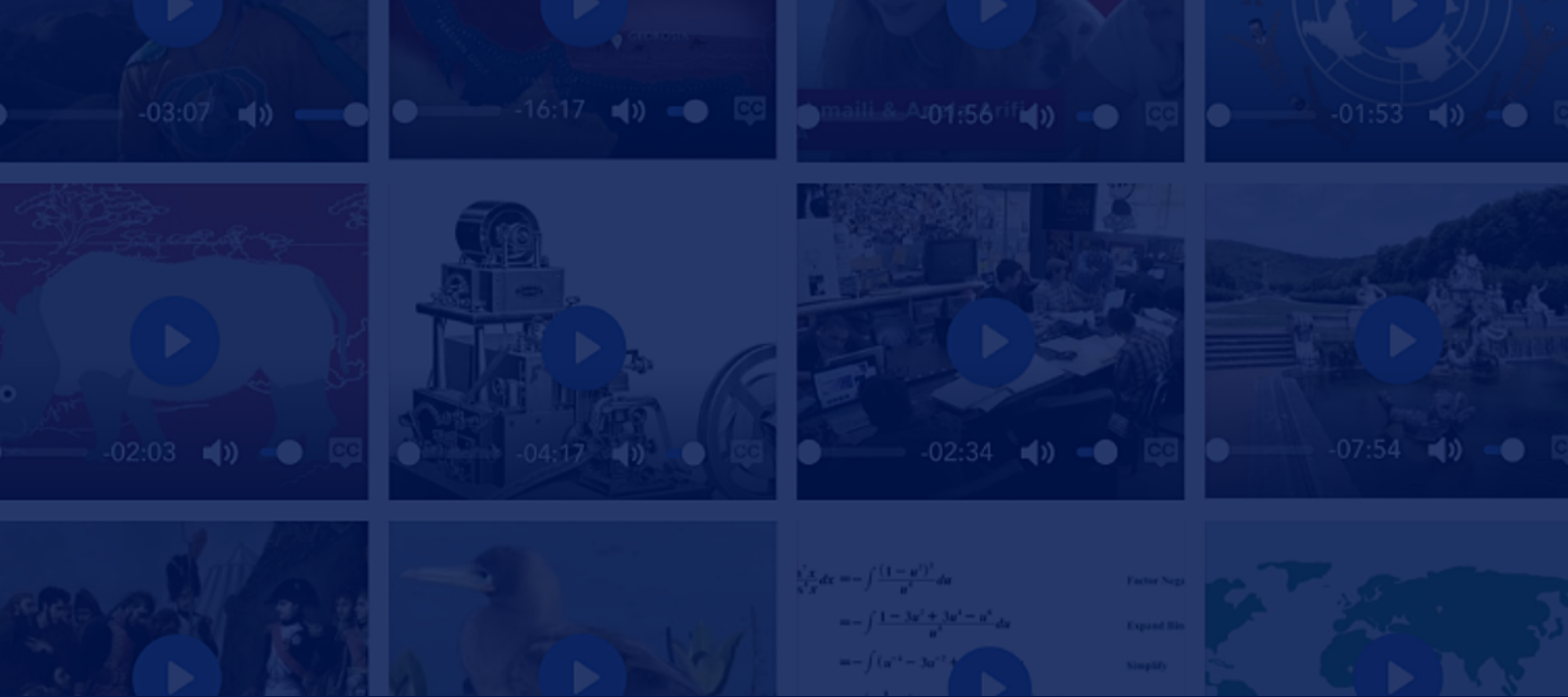
Differentiation is a lot like a class road trip. If each student were handed a map of the United States and told to plan a trip from Point A to Point B - say, Washington D.C. to San Diego - what routes would they come up with?

Some students will want to see New Orleans while others will want to spend a few nights in Monument Valley. Some might want to aim for Mt. Rushmore while others might want to head to the Redwoods before heading south. No matter which way they go, if the student can end their proposed journey in San Diego then they're on the right track. The same applies for learning outcomes. Teachers are usually focused on the skill they want their students to learn, and that skill is the destination. But how can teachers support thirty different road trips?

Differentiated instruction doesn't need to require any extra work or planning on behalf of the teacher. Differentiated instruction in schools often appears in its most labor-intensive forms: individual learning plans (IEPs), or project-based learning (PBLs). These, on top of gifted and specific needs programs, can make differentiated instruction look like a massive hill to climb. But it doesn't have to be. If the teacher has a strong knowledge of their students' learning profiles, personal interests, and individual goals, differentiating from a single lesson plan can be quite easy.

Digital media tools like video allow for differentiation to the whole classroom, often with no additional planning required. No two classrooms are the same. Different approaches reach different students, whether they're artistic doodlers, music makers, shy or bold, tech-savvy or highly emotionally intelligent.

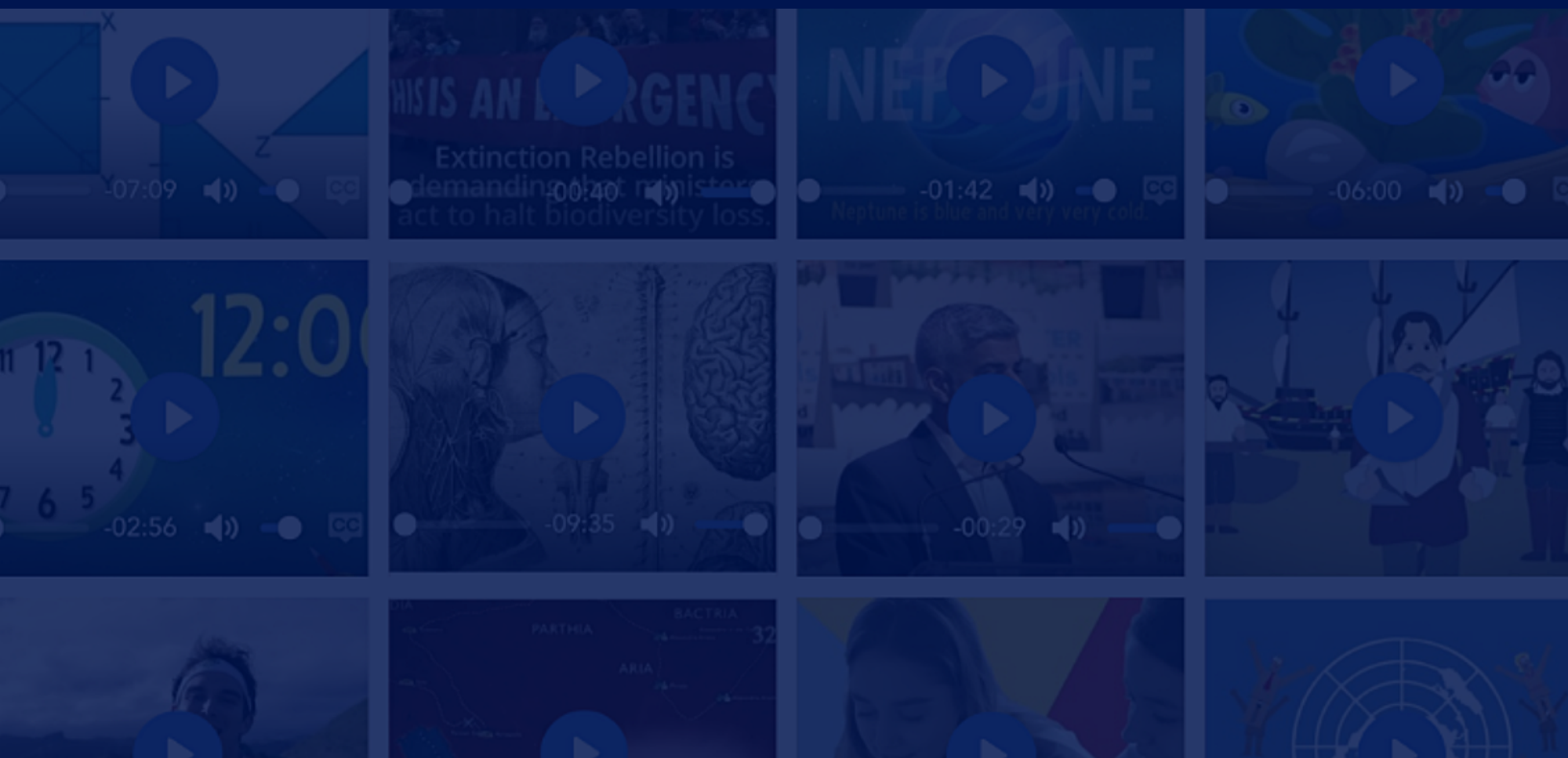
These techniques look at where video can impact a lesson from any of the four spheres of pedagogical influence: content, process, product, or learning environment.



CHAPTER 1

Differentiating Content with Video

How to differentiate by providing students with individualized learning content to meet their needs





Differentiating Content with Video

In the classroom, the teacher can provide students a variety of content and media to rotate through. Each piece of content can play to the different strengths and weaknesses of a student cohort. To teach the elements of story, a teacher might use a novel, or may opt for flash fiction in a class with a lower than average attention span. Other options abound, like comics, film, and oral storytelling.

Once the goal of the lesson is clear, it's a lot easier to see where the content that could reach that goal is flexible.

With video, students can cycle through content individually, in pairs, small groups, or as a class.

3 ways to differentiate content

1. Allow students to select their own video resource within a given topic to compare and contrast with the main text

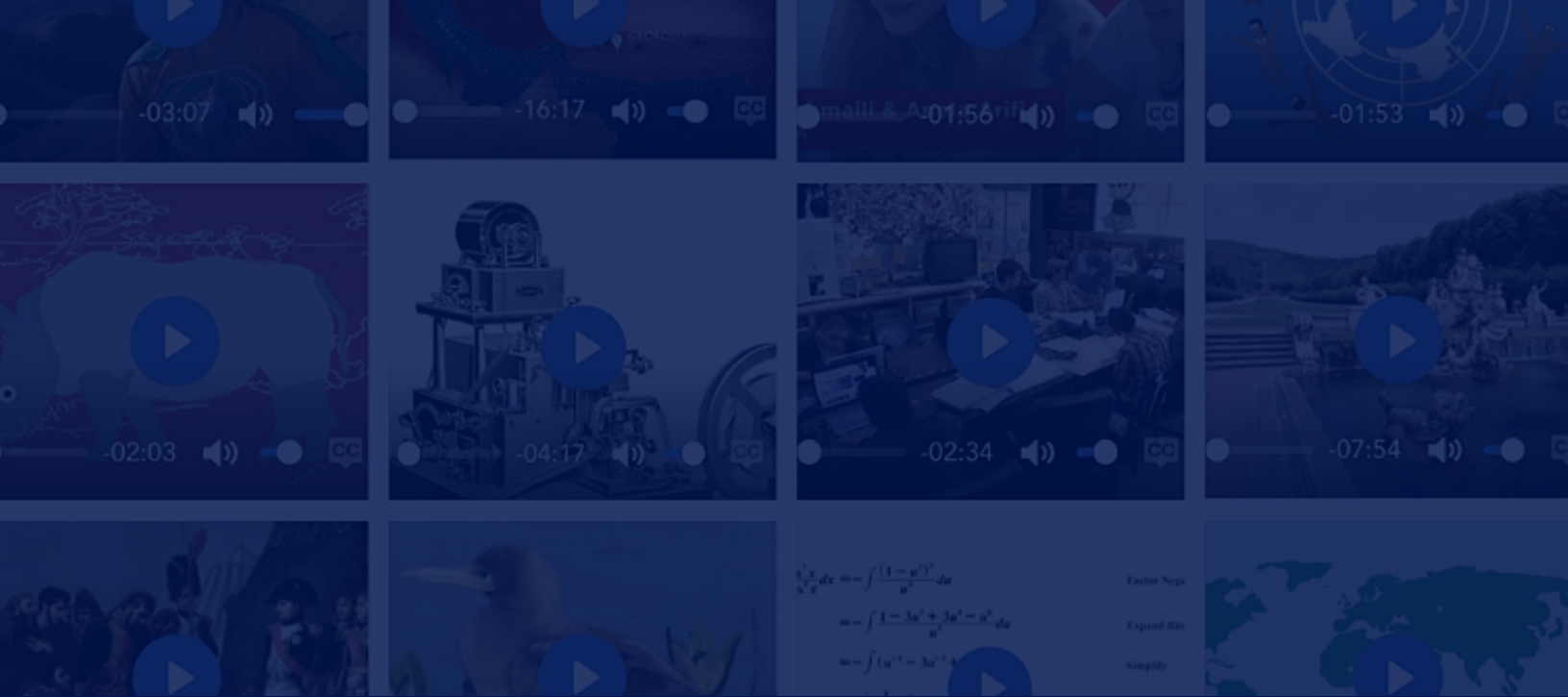
During a unit on the geography of the Middle East, students can select their own video resource to compare and analyze national maps with religious populations, major water resources, wildlife reserves, traditional trading routes, or language families.

2. Utilize videos with varying levels of depth on a given topic for small group lessons or centers

A common characteristic of videos made for the digital space is a layered approach to investigating a topic. Supported by audio-visual information, videos make use of context and case studies to ensure that students can obtain the basic knowledge they need on a topic, while also leaving opportunities for higher-order thinking.

3. Assign members within a group different videos that cover different topics on a given theme

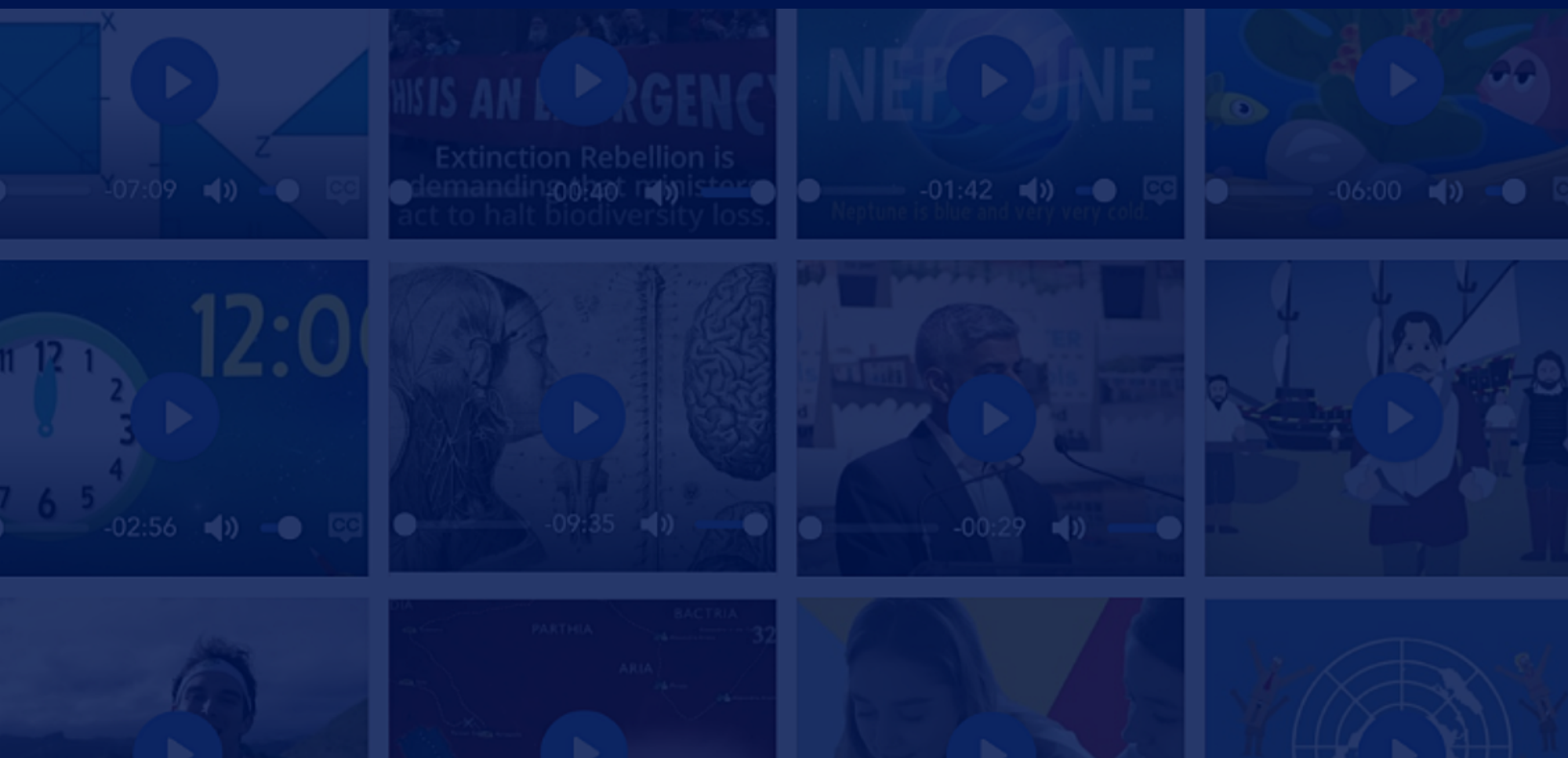
Large topics like digital citizenship or international relations lend themselves well to this approach. Once in small groups, each student uses video resources and research to become an expert on a sub-topic before returning to their peers as peer-teachers. Individual students in groups studying digital citizenship, for example, can use video resources to develop expertise on data, surveillance, cryptocurrency, social media and body image, digital activism, or misinformation and fake news.



CHAPTER 2

Differentiating Process with Video

How to differentiate teaching by adapting the learning process to reflect individual learning styles.





Differentiating Process with Video

At the Process stage, students have begun to develop a sense of ownership of the content. The teacher's goal is to provide students with various opportunities to exercise and practice that knowledge with the room to make mistakes, with each mistake furthering their mastery of the material.

3 ways to differentiate process

1. Have students keep learning journals

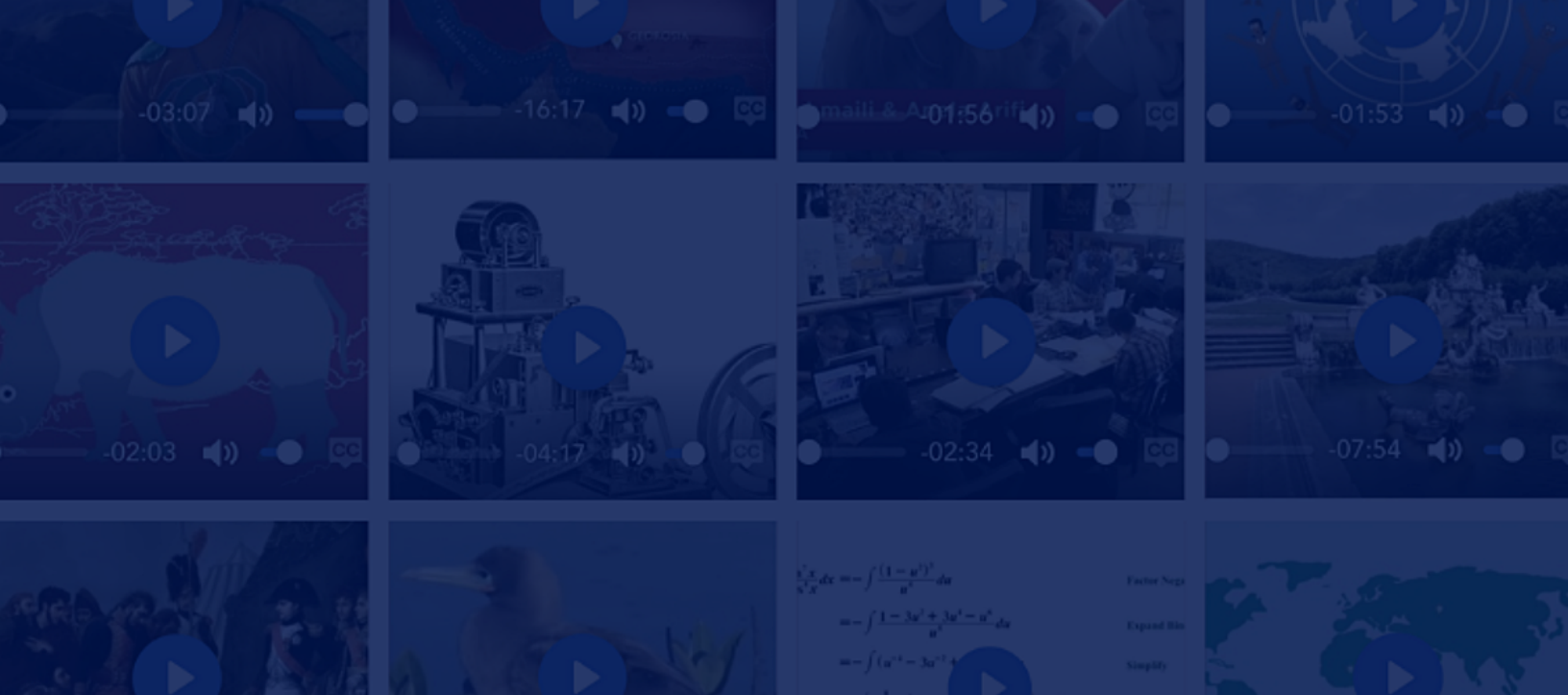
Create time for students to explore topics outside of the curriculum and ask them to record their learning in a learning journal. This can be a digital document or a physical notebook where students write summaries of videos, articles, presentations, lectures, or even puzzles that they've learned from. Keeping an eye on these journals can help the teacher gain a clearer picture of each student's individual interests. This process makes an excellent substitute for traditional homework.

2. Partner up students to pair-share their reviews

After a TED Talk or a news clip, ask students to share their personal response to the material with a peer. Note-taking templates are available on Boclips for Teachers which guide students to identify main ideas and supporting details. These notes can be used by students in their pair-share to support their own opinions and ideas in response to the content.

3. Save time for independent learning with multimedia

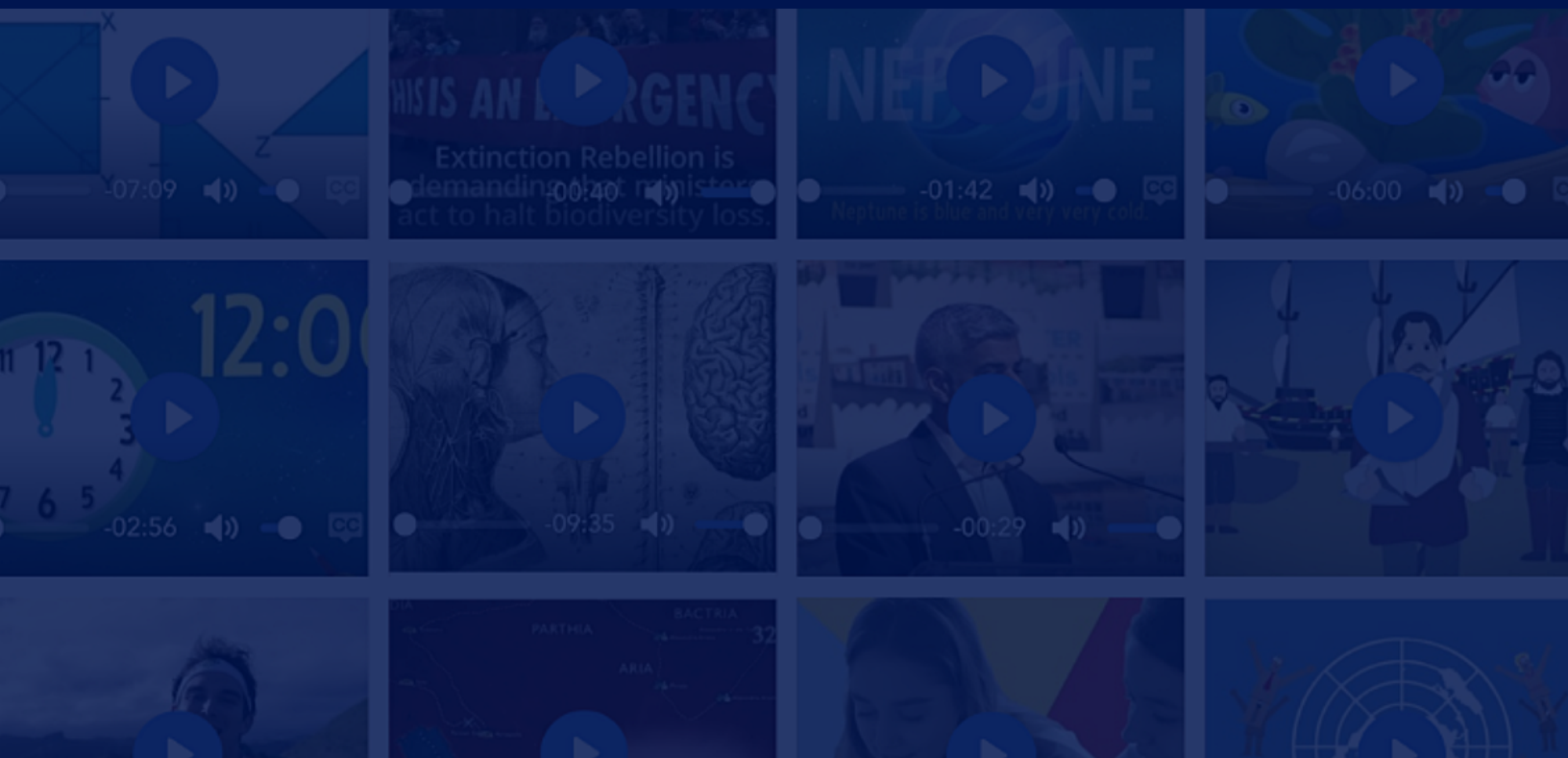
Especially before test time, it's tempting to crunch the prior units into two or three days of study packets in the classroom. Instead, try assigning students individual video or digital resources to practice and review skills they're still strengthening. LearnZillion and Crash Course are particularly good for this!



CHAPTER 3

Differentiating Product with Video

How to differentiate by allowing students to demonstrate their learning in the way that best reflects their strengths





Differentiating Product with Video

On the other end of the process of learning is the product. Product is what is being assessed, and more often the product is moving away from exams and tests and into presentations, projects, and performances. Teachers can provide students with options on how they want to prove their mastery of a skill or content area.

Differentiating around the product of learning can be a challenge for teachers because all new rubrics and metrics need to be designed for them. This is where qualitative feedback and project proposals come in. Try allowing students to determine, in the beginning, how they want to be assessed.

4 ways to differentiate product

1. Allow students to choose their assignment

This is the simplest approach to differentiating around product. Many teachers will have an anchor chart in their classroom with the common choices students can select from throughout the year, with six or nine options being the most common. Try surveying your students every so often about what assignment ideas they have and putting them on the list! With these traditional assignments, ask students to include a comparative element such as selecting a video to compare with the text.

2. Support students in project design

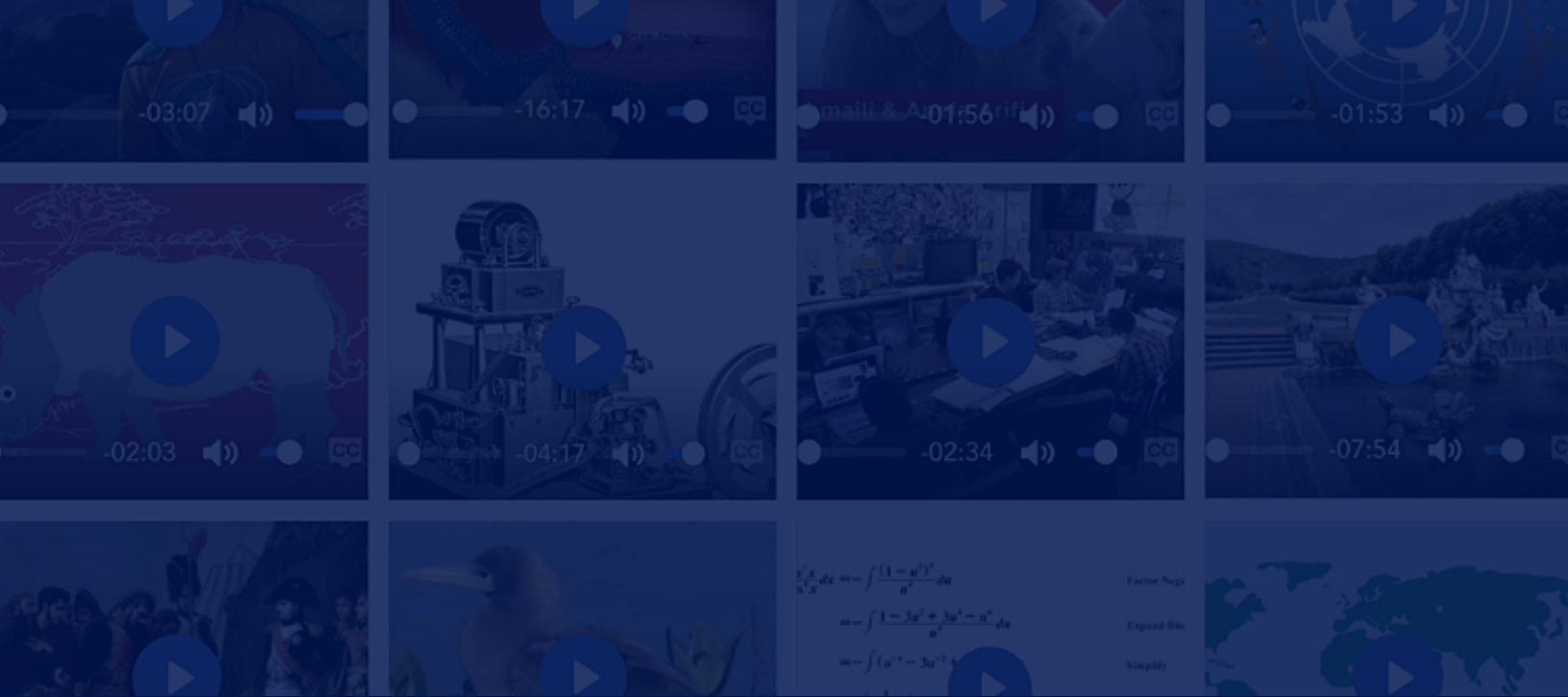
In agreement with the teacher, students can create their own timeline, draft deadlines, and goals with the teacher. When given free rein to express their learning, students will often reach above and beyond - and learn all the time management and practical skills they need to reach that goal along the way.

3. Place traditional assignments in the digital context

The digital context is exciting and familiar for students. By asking them to create a podcast on the topic, they're actually practicing their oral presentation skills. By assigning them a recorded video summary of a novel with a script, they're actually writing! A character map could become an Instagram page, or a current event report could be written as a news piece.

4. Bring the video essay into the classroom

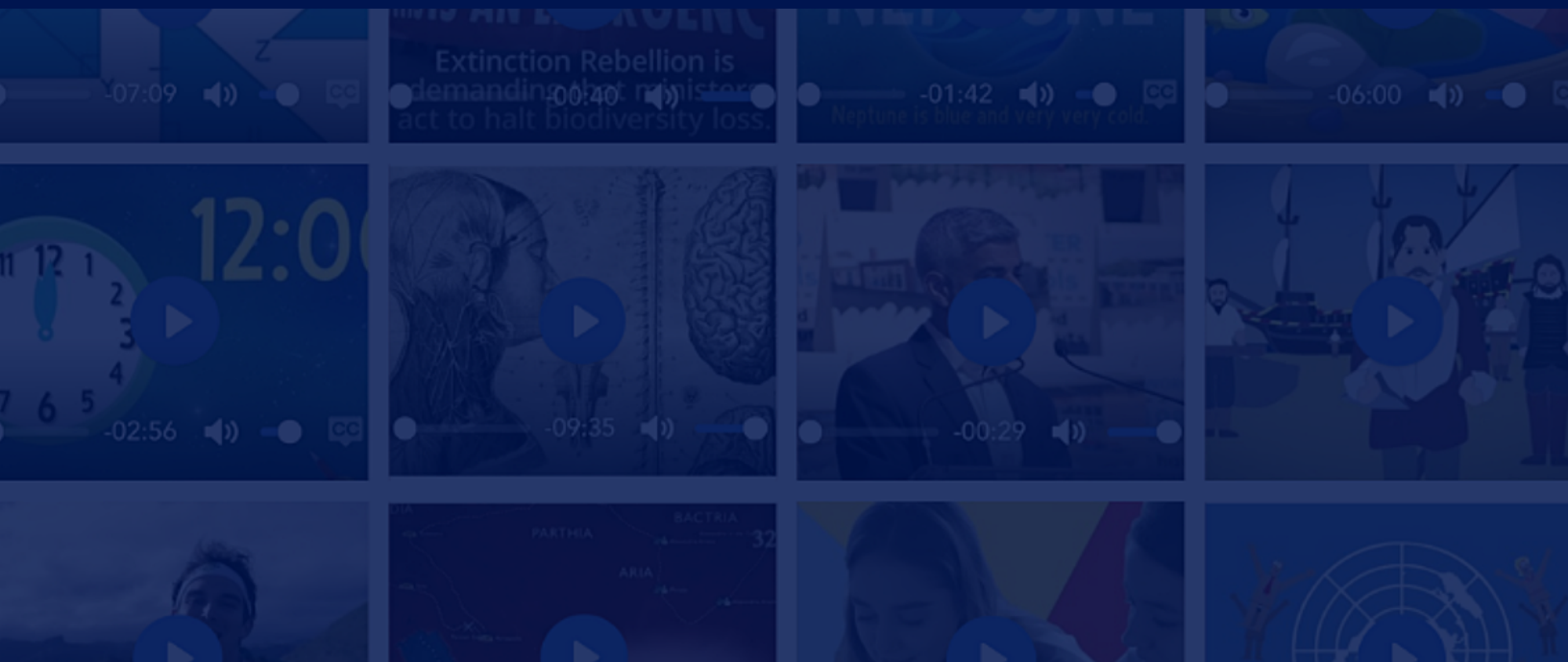
Video essays are an increasingly popular style in digital content that can be utilized as an instructional tool. These videos take on the technique of the traditional essay while incorporating multimedia such as audio, stills, clips, and screenshots for supporting evidence. Students watch the video essay format and often don't realize they're doing so, especially video game or movie reviews. Take the transcript of these videos and ask students to identify the traditional essay components. Then, they can make their own!



CHAPTER 4

Differentiating The Learning Environment with Video

How to differentiate by adapting the classroom environment to allow for greater flexibility for your students



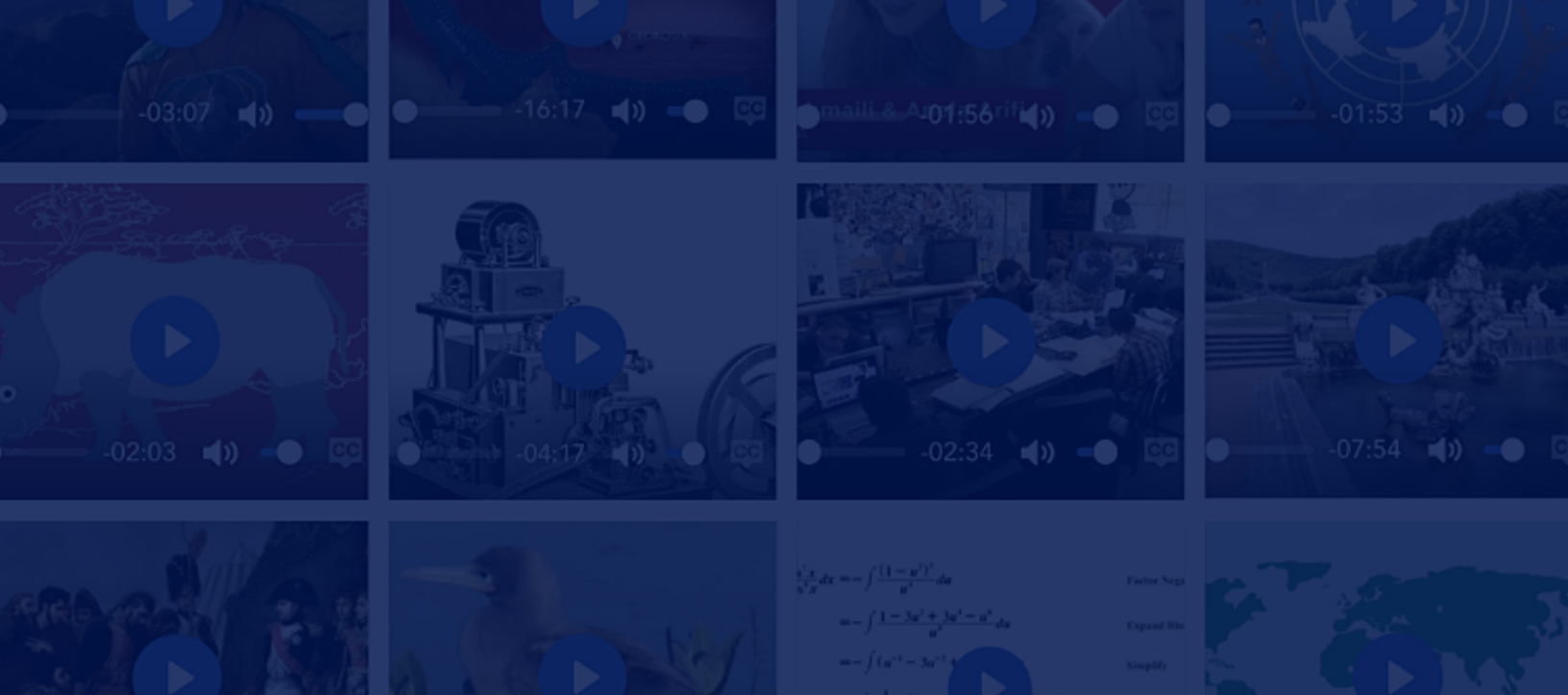


Differentiating Environment with Video

Learning environments can be switched up with changes as easy as music playing during study breaks. Techniques can be as simple as allowing students to sit on their desks, stand while they read, work on assignments outside, or collaborate on projects in the library.

Video is versatile by nature because there are so many avenues to access the content. Phones, computers, iPads, or projects for the whole class to sit together on the floor are all viable options. Thinking about how the learning environment can change in response to a video-based lesson is one of the simplest ways for the teacher to meet varying needs.

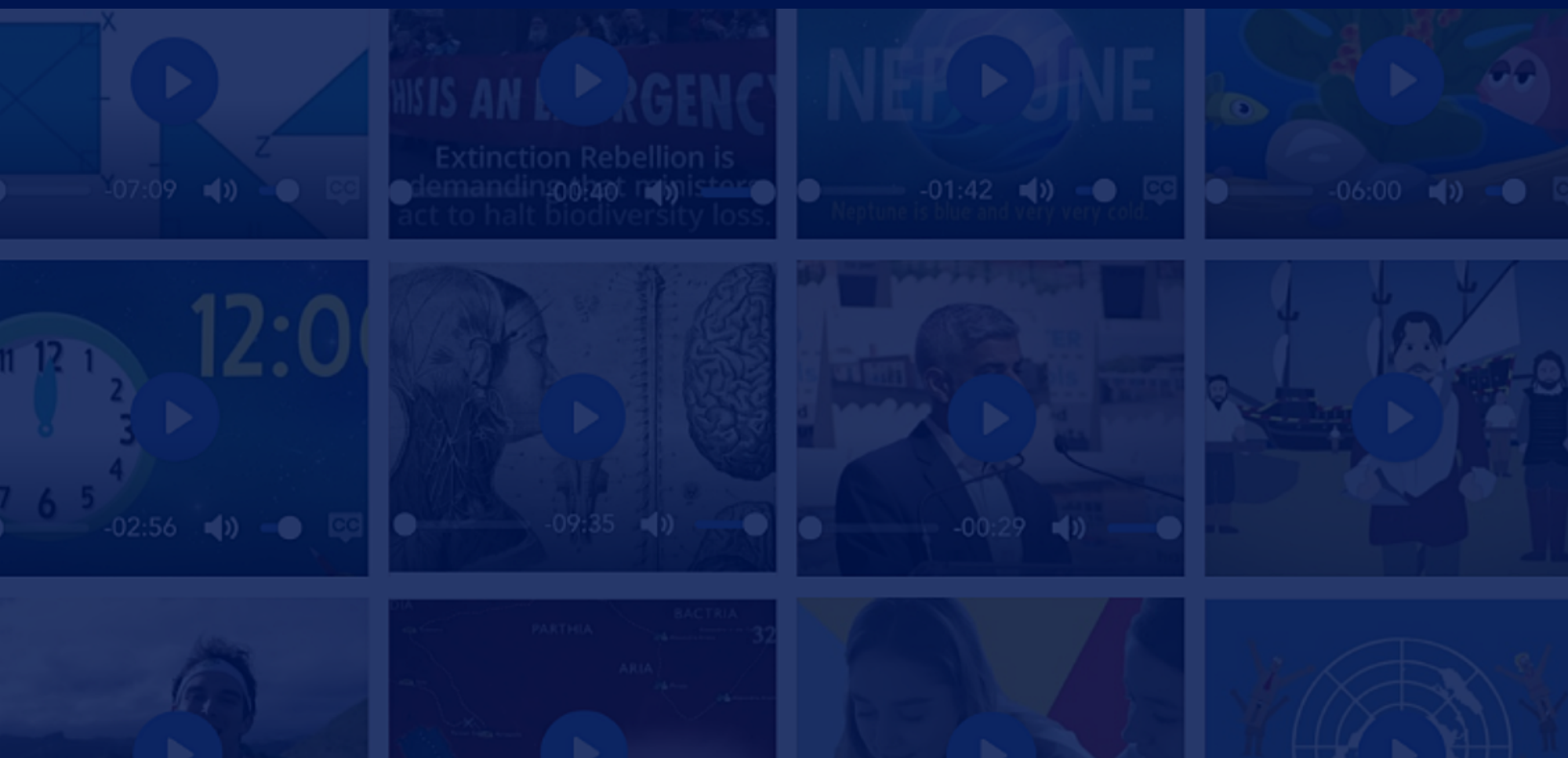
Many literacy centers utilize student computers or iPads, allowing space for independent or group learning. Assigning content in digital classrooms can allow students to learn at their own pace and at times that make the most sense for them.



CHAPTER 5

Quick Tips for Differentiation

Want to get started right away? We've got 6 tips that you can implement immediately



Quick Tips for Differentiation

Ask Students Their Opinion

Don't be shy about surveying your students. Ask them what their favorite types of lessons are, what in-class activities they like, what projects they're most proud of, or what videos they want to watch together. This will give you an idea of how your students reflect on their own learning.

Make the Most of Your LMS

Use technology to differentiate assignments. If you're using something like Blackboard, Google Classroom, or Edmodo, you can assign different materials and tasks to your students - especially groups of students based on ability.

Break The Rules

A great way to get your feet wet with instructional flexibility is to experiment with your classroom rules, or break them completely. If you have assigned seating, try getting rid of it. If you don't have assigned seating, try assigning table groups every few weeks to mix up the class. Allow students to use their phones if it's for a vocabulary app or educational video, let them read on the floor, or stand at the back while you lecture.

Fight Fake News

Help your students understand trustworthy and untrustworthy sources. If you're utilizing the digital space, keep in touch with their digital literacy development too.

Flip the Classroom

If you're still getting to know your students and want to build a relationship with them, try flipping the classroom. This will not only establish some trust between you and your students, but will give them a chance to shine.

Share Your Findings

Finally, share! Show your students interesting videos you've found in your off time, or cool tools and generators they can use to get creative. Create a digital space in your classroom - or a physical pinboard - for students to share anything that sparks their curiosity. A culture of learning and sharing will relieve stress from students and allow them to practise expressing their individual interests and strengths to the wider class.

Want to learn more about video in the classroom?

In 2018, Boclips conducted a survey with teachers around the globe to understand how video is used in schools.

Download our whitepaper to learn more about the findings of our research, along with the safety risks and challenges teachers face when using video in the classroom.

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