



Differentiated pacing case studies

*How do you prepare for differentiated pacing and progress among your learners?
What practical advice do you have for educators to differentiate their lessons?*

"Iterate until release"

I tell them to iterate. Create an MVP, then iterate. It can always be better. You iterate until release.

Show-and-tell new features

I may recommend, or the student may even suggest, the possibility of adding additional features, beyond the scope of the project/course. I think allowing students to explore on their own is great, and I will often encourage them to share what they implemented with the rest of the class to demonstrate other methods or features that are possible.

Take a competency-based approach

My courses are e-learning or blended learning, with different completion times, before or close to deadlines. For me, the classroom is a workshop where students can move on or improve their projects if done early.

Group according to progress

Each lesson, I have a time permitting activity, depending on where we are in the process. It could be to start the next lesson or improve your lab. Students are seated together according to progress, so they're encouraged to ask their peers for help before asking me.

Establish tiered project requirements

I encourage the student to push past the brief and see if they can explore further enhancements to the project that excite and challenge them even more. In my assignment brief I usually define tiers of requirements as follows: 1. Basic functionality or scene description 2. Optimisation, advanced functionality, more complex scenes 3. Enhancements (this is where the strong students can shine). You can also encourage them to help others and/or provide them with additional challenges.

Working with English as a second language (ESL) students

I make it very clear that I am not a native speaker of their language, and they are not native speakers of my language, and that is OK. We are all here to make real-time applications. If we need to stop and have something clarified, we will. I will do my best to explain it in a different way, and if that doesn't work, another student can translate it.

Design each class as a video game level

My strategy is to design each class at a video game level by asking myself, "What kind of challenge does the player (student) have to solve in each class?" "What skills do I need to pass the level?" "What conditions determine a good game?" "What is the difference between this level and the next one?" "How does this level connect to the next one?" "How do the student's skills progress in each level (class)?" "Is the level (class) correctly balanced (complexity, help, and rest)?"

Engage and empower students with a theme

I think that a changeable theme can be applied to a standard template. For example, one year I set a theme of Brexit to be applied to student games, later it was COVID-19; previously I let the student group select their preferred genre or theme for projects.