



Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design: Connecting Content and Kids

Carol Ann Tomlinson, Jay McTighe

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Teachers struggle every day to bring quality instruction to their students. Beset by lists of content standards and accompanying “high-stakes” accountability tests, many educators sense that both teaching and learning have been redirected in ways that are potentially impoverishing for those who teach and those who learn. Educators need a model that acknowledges the centrality of standards but also ensures that students truly understand content and can apply it in meaningful ways. For many educators, Understanding by Design addresses that need.

Simultaneously, teachers find it increasingly difficult to ignore the diversity of the learners who populate their classrooms. Few teachers find their work effective or satisfying when they simply “serve up” a curriculum—even an elegant one—to students with no regard for their varied learning needs. For many educators, Differentiated Instruction offers a framework for addressing learner variance as a critical component of instructional planning.

In this book the two models converge, providing readers fresh perspectives on two of the greatest contemporary challenges for educators: crafting powerful curriculum in a standards-dominated era and ensuring academic success for the full spectrum of learners. Each model strengthens the other. Understanding by Design is predominantly a curriculum design model that focuses on *what* we teach. Differentiated Instruction focuses on *whom* we teach, *where* we teach, and *how* we teach. Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe show you how to use the principles of backward design and differentiation together to craft lesson plans that will teach essential knowledge and skills for the full spectrum of learners.

Connecting content and kids in meaningful ways is what teachers strive to do every day. In tandem, UbD and DI help educators meet that goal by providing structures, tools, and guidance for developing curriculum and instruction that bring to students the best of what we know about effective teaching and learning.

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