



In this book, **Carol Ann Tomlinson** and **Jay McTighe** examine the essential underpinnings of Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design and demonstrate how the logic of each intersects with the other to promote classrooms that provide rich, durable, meaningful curriculum for the full range of learners that typify today's schools. The fusion is based on the belief that skillful instruction is an imperative in order to bring curriculum to life for young learners, and flexible instruction is necessary to make curriculum work for academically diverse student populations. The rationale behind

Integrating

+ Differentiated Instruction UNDERSTANDING *by* DESIGN

is really that straightforward. It's about connecting content and kids. High-quality learning should be the outcome of classrooms in which teachers consistently ask these essential questions: "How can I get to know my students and their needs?" "What is most important and enduring for my students to learn about this topic?" "How can I ensure that each of my students learns as effectively and efficiently as possible?" "How will I know if my students have learned what matters most?" The two models fuse to help educators meet the goal of **Connecting Content and Kids** and to guide the professional growth of teachers who wish to develop the skills needed to answer these questions more fully through their practice.

Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe

Integrating

& Differentiated Instruction

UNDERSTANDING *by* DESIGN

Connecting Content and Kids



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Integrating

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Preface	iv
Acknowledgments	vii
1. UbD and DI: An Essential Partnership	1
2. What Really Matters in Teaching? (The Students)	12
3. What Really Matters in Learning? (Content)	24
4. What Really Matters in Planning for Student Success?	38
5. Considering Evidence of Learning in Diverse Classrooms	59
6. Responsive Teaching with UbD in Academically Diverse Classrooms	83
7. Teaching for Understanding in Academically Diverse Classrooms	108
8. Grading and Reporting Achievement	128
9. Bringing It All Together: Curriculum and Instruction Through the Lens of UbD and DI	141
10. Moving Forward to Integrate UbD and DI	166
Appendix	173
References	187
Index	192
About the Authors	196

PREFACE

Both authors of this book have worked on the ideas in it in one way or another for careers that now span well over three decades. Our particular personalities, experiences, talents, and predilections have led us to think about the varying and complementary facets of teaching and learning. We share a common attraction to classrooms. We have both been classroom teachers. We have both been administrators. We have both been teachers of teachers. Our professional paths have led us in different yet highly complementary and overlapping directions. We certainly have not come down these roads alone. Each of us has been nurtured by mentors, extended by professional partnerships, and challenged by minds that see further than we do—or differently.

Over the past nine years (give or take), we have each pursued a body of work that was born of our particular experiences and passions—and that continues to feed those passions as well. Tangible evidence of that work has emerged as ASCD has shepherded a series of books, videos, online courses, Web sites, and other tools for educators related to what we now call Understanding by Design (UbD) and Differentiated Instruction (DI).

We knew each other—and learned from each other's work. And we kept doing what busy people do. We worked diligently in the directions that we felt enhanced our work.

About four years ago, Sally Chapman from ASCD arranged a dinner for the two of us along with Grant Wiggins, Jay's colleague in UbD. The goal of the dinner was to explore the idea of a book or some sort of project that connected the two bodies of work on backward design and differentiation.

The dinner was good. We saw the logic of connecting the two models, and then we went back to busy lives and consuming agendas.

There was another dinner a year later—again at Sally’s behest. We were again persuaded that her logic was sound and that the field would benefit from an explicit connection. After all, UbD and differentiation represent the elements of curriculum and instruction—the two halves of the classroom puzzle. The dinner was great. Our intentions for collaboration were sincere. We went home and again lost ourselves and our intentions in the tasks at hand.

Not easily dissuaded, Sally tried a different approach. She arranged for Jay, Grant, and Carol to present at an annual ASCD conference on the linkages between UbD and DI. That approach was concrete and inescapable. It required action.

The response from those in attendance was immediate and positive. “This is what we’ve been looking for,” they told us. And they wanted more than we were prepared to give them.

Taking no chances on the future, Sally arranged a second joint presentation at a following ASCD conference, and with her ASCD colleagues Leslie Kiernan and Ann Cunningham-Morris, she began making longer-term plans for a UbD/DI collaboration (sometimes referred to as the UbDI project).

An ASCD summer conference linking UbD and DI was in the offing. The two ASCD professional development cadres that work with educators across the country and internationally to share ideas from the two bodies of work came together at ASCD to learn from one another about the two models and to shape the upcoming special conference—which would ultimately evolve to be more than a single event. Cannily, Sally and Leslie reserved a space in which Carol and Jay could work uninterrupted for a day to outline a book detailing the linkages between UbD and DI.

The rest of the story is predictable and plays out in the pages that follow. But it’s not quite as straightforward as that. In the time intervening between the first dinner and the publication of this book, those of us who work with UbD and DI have been encouraged by the swell of interest in blending the two facets of educational practice. The questions we’ve been asked by practitioners about the linkages—and the role of UbD and DI in contemporary educational settings—have informed our work. Our colleagues have

continued to push and refine our thinking. And we have benefited greatly from the “arranged marriage” of our ideas.

Our work is evidence of our belief that quality curriculum and instruction are—as they have always been—the bedrock of education and the avenue to developing thoughtful and fulfilled human beings. In addition, *skillful* instruction is an imperative in order to bring curriculum to life for young learners, and *flexible* instruction is necessary to make curriculum work for academically diverse student populations. Understanding by Design reflects our best professional understanding of curriculum. Differentiation reflects our best professional understanding of skilled and flexible instruction. High-quality learning should be the outcome of classrooms in which teachers consistently ask essential questions: “How can I get to know my students and their needs?” “What is most important and enduring for my students to learn about this topic?” “How can I ensure that each of my students learns as effectively and efficiently as possible?” “How will I know whether my students have learned what matters most?” As one expert explains, it takes robust curriculum and flexible instruction “if teachers are to have a realistic opportunity to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms, a truly daunting challenge given the increasing diversity of the student population” (Kameenui, Carnine, Dixon, Simmons, & Coyne, 2002, p. 27).

The linkage between UbD and DI is really that straightforward. The two models fuse to guide the professional growth of teachers who have the will to continue developing the skill necessary to answer those questions more fully through their practice. The book that follows examines the essential underpinnings of both models and demonstrates how the logic of each intersects with the other to promote classrooms that provide rich, durable, meaningful curriculum for the full range of learners that populate today’s schools.

We are grateful to those who continue to work with us, those who are interested in our work, and those who hold our ideas to the fire. We’d like to think this book is just a step in a shared direction—for us, and for those who read what follows.

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