

Differentiation

Live!

Blending UbD and Differentiated Instruction Principles for Teaching and Learning



Viewing Guide

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DVD Introduction

The increasing diversity in classrooms encourages professional educators to proactively create invitations to learn that respect the uniqueness of each student's learning profile. Teachers rely on standards to inform us what to teach, but the "how to teach" comes from knowing our students well.

This DVD provides glimpses into the classroom of several elementary and middle school teachers who are at the beginning of their differentiated instruction journey. Like you, their focus has always been on the student as an individual and as a learner. And, like you, they have high expectations for all of their students. Dianna, Lisa, Kristin and Sheri are beginning to use the framework of Understanding by Design to develop of solid, quality curriculum. Merging the principles of Differentiated Instruction with UbD provides the frame of mind to ensure that students' readiness levels, interests and learning profiles are the foundation for choice in meaningful learning experiences. These teachers focus on what they know about their students and what more they need to know in order to provide opportunities that move students beyond recitation to realization.

Admittedly, the teachers were initially a little overwhelmed until they came to understand that Understanding by Design and Differentiated Instruction are frames of mind. With that meaning, their work became purposeful and students became more independent, as this DVD demonstrates.

We all know there is no perfect classroom or group of students. As is most likely true in your school, there is great diversity, never enough time and much to accomplish. You will notice several management strategies in all of the classrooms. Transitions are planned, practiced and reviewed. Students are clear on expectations on what is to be accomplished and ways to use their time. Student choice is embedded throughout the days. Students know how and when to work together. Flexible grouping is planned and appropriate to the learning. The teachers demonstrate warmth, caring and respect for each learner. While the scenes you will watch are unrehearsed, keep in mind (as Dianna explains so well) this was filmed in mid-year. The students are clear on the high expectations for both behavior and for performance.

The purpose of this DVD is actually two-fold. The first is to further your understanding of the design of quality curriculum that serves as the basis for instructional planning. The second is to provide glimpses of real classrooms that demonstrate ways in which these professional educators are responsive to students' learning preferences, strengths and challenges.

Understanding by Design Framework

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goals: standards, content goals, objectives

Understandings: enduring understandings that may cross content and grade levels – big ideas and specific understandings

Essential Questions: questions that promote interest, inquiry and transfer or learning

Know and Do: knowledge and skills that will be acquired and what students will be able to do as a result of acquiring that knowledge and those skills

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Task(s): the evidence needed to validate/document that student learning reflects the Stage 1 desired results, typically the final product(s)

Other evidence: ongoing, formative assessment and student reflections

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities: the experiences, instruction, sequence and resources that enable students to achieve the desired results

Section Talking Points _____

UbD Framework:

The six-week unit focused on the global understanding of the history of that time period and how it impacted us today. In what ways do you use enduring understandings to encourage inquiry?

Ongoing assessment and support:

Dianna uses assessment to derive information about students' learning styles and prior knowledge to plan instruction. In what ways did that information support her planning efforts?

Dianna, like all good teachers, is a keen observer of students' strengths and challenges. What are some of the ways she supports students?

Not bad, huh? If you want to read and use the next eighteen pages you're gonna have to buy the DVD. Thanks for your interest.