

Content-Driven vs. Concept-Driven Teaching

How a concept-driven approach changes focus, the role of facts, the teacher's role, and transferability. Companion to Chapter 4 of the Unit Planning Series.

Domain	Content-Driven (Traditional)	Concept-Driven (MYP)
Focus	Memorization of factual examples.	Utilizing concepts alongside content for synergistic thinking.
Role of Facts	Facts are the end goal of the unit.	Facts support deeper conceptual understanding.
Teacher's Role	"Telling understandings to" students.	"Drawing understandings from" students through inquiry.
Transferability	Low — knowledge is siloed.	High — students apply concepts to new situations.

The Rule of One: select one Key Concept for a sharp interdisciplinary focus, then pair it with 1–3 Related Concepts for disciplinary depth. Concepts are thinking tools, not decoration — they must actively shape the questions, discussion, and assessment.