

CRAFTING ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

John L. David
Region 10 ESC

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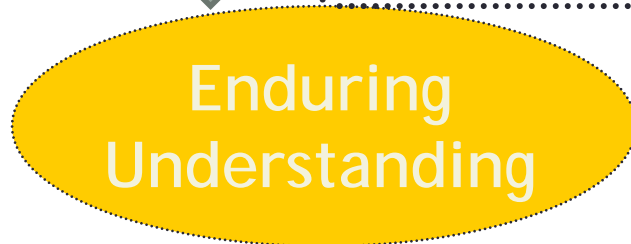
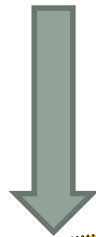


Goals

- What is an enduring understanding?
- How do I write effective enduring understandings?
- What is an essential question?
- How do I write effective essential questions?

Making the Connection

What overarching conceptual understanding do I want students to perceive?

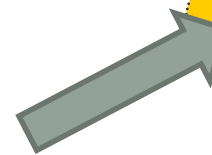


Topic or Content Standard



What broad or topical conceptual question do I want students to be able to answer?

What is the issue, challenge, investigation, scenario, or problem?



Definitions of Enduring Understandings

Enduring understandings:

- are statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom.
- synthesize what students should understand—not just know or do—as a result of studying a particular content area.
- articulate what students should “revisit” over the course of their lifetimes in relationship to the content area.

Characteristics of Enduring Understandings

Enduring Understandings

- frame the big ideas that give meaning and lasting importance to such discrete curriculum elements as facts and skills
- can transfer to other fields as well as adult life
- “unpack” areas of the curriculum where students may struggle to gain understanding or demonstrate misunderstandings and misconceptions

Characteristics of Enduring Understandings

Enduring Understandings

- provide a conceptual foundation for studying the content area and
- are deliberately framed as declarative sentences that present major curriculum generalizations and recurrent ideas.

Examples of Enduring Understandings

- English Language Arts Enduring Understandings
- Conventions of language help readers understand what is being communicated.
- The impact of a text on a reader is influenced by the reader's experience.
- Math Enduring Understandings
- Change is fundamental to understanding functions.
- The probability of an event can be used to predict the probability of future events.

Enduring Understandings can be focused on:

- Concepts
- Themes
- Issues/Debates
- Problems/Challenges
- Processes
- Theories
- Paradoxes
- Assumptions/Perspectives

Examples of Enduring Understandings

- Science Enduring Understandings
- The structures of materials determine their properties.
- There are observable, predictable patterns of movement in the Sun, Earth, and Moon system that account for day/night.

Examples of Enduring Understandings

- Social Studies Enduring Understandings
- Students will understand that the principles and ideals underlying
- American democracy are designed to promote the freedom of the American people.
- Distinctions between a citizen's rights, responsibilities, and privileges help to define the requirements and limits of personal freedom.

Definition of Essential Question

- One that lies at the heart of a subject or a curriculum and promotes inquiry and uncoverage of a subject.

Characteristics of Essential Questions

- Have no simple “right” answer
- Provoke & sustain inquiry
- Address conceptual or philosophical foundations
- Raise other important questions
- Naturally & appropriately recur
- Stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking

Characteristics of Essential Questions

- Recurs throughout all our lives
- Refers to core ideas & inquiries within a discipline
- Helps students effectively inquire and make sense of important but complex ideas, knowledge, know-how
- Engages a specific & diverse set of learners

Examples of Essential Questions

- What is a true friend?
- To what extent does art reflect culture or shape it?
- Is everything quantifiable?
- To what extent is DNA destiny?
- In what ways is algebra real and in what ways is it unreal?
- To what extent is U.S. history a history of progress?

Examples of Essential Questions

- Must heroes be flawless?
- Who is entitled to own what?
- Is the subjunctive necessary?
- What makes writing worth reading?
- Does practice makes perfect?
- What is healthy eating? Healthy living?

Intent, not Language, is the Key

- Why we pose the question
- How students are to tackle it
- What learning activities & assessments we expect

Types of Essential Questions

- Overarching: Frame courses and programs of study around truly big ideas
- Topical: Are unit specific but still promote inquiry

**GOOD TEACHING USES
BOTH!**

Overarching Essential Questions

- More general, broader
- Point beyond specific topics or skills
- Promote transfer of understanding
- This should be the focus of your authentic or problem based lesson.

Examples of Overarching EQ

- Can a fictional story be “true”?
- How do a region’s geography, climate, and natural resources affect the way people live and work?
- How does technological change influence people’s lives? Society?
- How does *what* we measure influence *how* we measure?

Examples of Overarching EQ

- How do we classify the things around us?
- Do artists have a responsibility to their audience? To society?
- How does language shape culture?
- Is pain necessary for progress in athletics?

Topical Essential Questions

- Unit specific - used to guide individual units
- Promote inquiry
- Resist simple answers
- Require explanation & justification
- One could be more than one in a unit.

Examples of Topical EQ

- How might Congress have better protected minority rights in the 1950s & 1960s?
- Should we require DNA samples from every convicted criminal?
- Are we going into a recession?

Examples of Topical EQs

- What is the value of place value?
- What is electricity?
- How do we hit with greatest power without losing control?

Writing EUs and EQs

Step 1 - Identify desired results

- What curriculum expectations do we need to meet? (TEKS)
- What should they know and be able to do (filter TEKS – Content, Skills, Concepts)?
- What do they need to understand?
 - Big Picture, Big Concepts, What is the “Unit” about?
 - This can come from the standards and your objectives for the unit.

Filtering the standards

What are the concepts?

Identify the big concepts in the TEKS

Example:

	American Revolution
8.19	Citizenship. The student understands the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States. The student is expected to:
8.19A	Define and give examples of unalienable rights.
8.20	Citizenship. The student understands the importance of voluntary individual participation in the democratic process. The student is expected to:
8.20C	Analyze reasons for and the impact of selected examples of civil disobedience in U.S. history such as the Boston Tea Party and

Filtering the standards – Social Studies

What are the major concepts/Big Ideas?

- Government, Citizenship, Principals, Rights, civil disobedience

What is the Enduring Understanding that you want students to come away with?

- Sometimes the people believe they need to change or overthrow government to protect their rights and liberties.

What is the Essential Question that you want students to be able to answer?

- Overarching: When is it acceptable for the people to overthrow a government?
- Topical: Were the American colonist justified in starting the Revolution?

Filtering the standards - ELA

What are the major concepts/Big Ideas?

- “I want students to understand the powerful impact that literature can have on a society.”

What is the Enduring Understanding that you want students to come away with?

- Art both shapes and reflects the culture in which it is created.

What is the Essential Question that you want students to be able to answer?

- Overarching:
Does literature primarily reflect culture or shape it?
- Topical:
What does *Romeo & Juliet* teach us about Shakespeare’s view of destiny? How does it compare to yours?

Filtering the standards

Practice – Participants will go to TEKS in their unit and use these to work with developing EUs and EQs.

- **What are the major concepts/Big Ideas?**
- **What is the Enduring Understanding that you want students to come away with?**
- **What is the Essential Question that you want students to be able to answer?**
- Overarching:
- Topical: