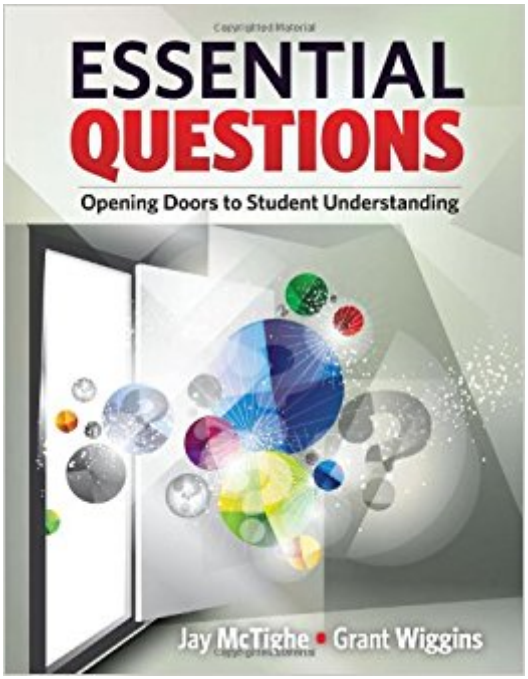
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# Essential Questions: Opening Doors To Student Understanding




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## Synopsis

What are essential questions, and how do they differ from other kinds of questions? What's so great about them? Why should you design and use essential questions in your classroom? Essential questions (EQs) help target standards as you organize curriculum content into coherent units that yield focused and thoughtful learning. In the classroom, EQs are used to stimulate students discussions and promote a deeper understanding of the content. Whether you are an Understanding by Design (UbD) devotee or are searching for ways to address standards local or Common Core State Standards in an engaging way, Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins provide practical guidance on how to design, initiate, and embed inquiry-based teaching and learning in your classroom.Offering dozens of examples, the authors explore the usefulness of EQs in all K-12 content areas, including skill-based areas such as math, PE, language instruction, and arts education. As an important element of their backward design approach to designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the authors *Give a comprehensive explanation of why EQs are so important;*Explore seven defining characteristics of EQs;*Distinguish between topical and overarching questions and their uses; *Outline the rationale for using EQs as the focal point in creating units of study; and *Show how to create effective EQs, working from sources including standards, desired understandings, and student misconceptions. Using essential questions can be challenging for both teachers and students and this book provides guidance through practical and proven processes, as well as suggested response strategies to encourage student engagement. Finally, you will learn how to create a culture of inquiry so that all members of the educational community students, teachers, and administrators benefit from the increased rigor and deepened understanding that emerge when essential questions become a guiding force for learners of all ages.

## Book Information

Paperback: 119 pages
Publisher: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development; F First Edition edition (April 9, 2013)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 1416615059
ISBN-13: 978-1416615057
Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 0.2 x 11 inches
Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 52 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #22,339 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 inÃ Â Books > Textbooks > Education > Administration #43 inÃ Â Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Education Theory > Administration #656 inÃ Â Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Instruction Methods

## Customer Reviews

What are "essential questions," and how do they differ from other kinds of questions? What's so great about them? Why should you design and use essential questions in your classroom? Essential questions (EQs) help target standards as you organize curriculum content into coherent units that yield focused and thoughtful learning. In the classroom, EQs are used to stimulate students' discussions and promote a deeper understanding of the content. Whether you are an Understanding by Design (UbD) devotee or are searching for ways to address standards local or Common Core State Standards in an engaging way, Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins provide practical guidance on how to design, initiate, and embed inquiry-based teaching and learning in your classroom. Offering dozens of examples, the authors explore the usefulness of EQs in all K 12 content areas, including skill-based areas such as math, PE, language instruction, and arts education. As an important element of their backward design approach to designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the authors *Give a comprehensive explanation of why EQs are so important; *Explore seven defining characteristics of EQs; *Distinguish between topical and overarching questions and their uses; *Outline the rationale for using EQs as the focal point in creating units of study; and *Show how to create effective EQs, working from sources including standards, desired understandings, and student misconceptions. Using essential questions can be challenging for both teachers and students and this book provides guidance through practical and proven processes, as well as suggested "response strategies" to encourage student engagement. Finally, you will learn how to create a culture of inquiry so that all members of the educational community students, teachers, and administrators benefit from the increased rigor and deepened understanding that emerge when essential questions become a guiding force for learners of all ages.

This text continues the necessary discussion of designing curriculum for higher-order thinking by placing essential questions at the center of UbD. The benefit of this book is that while in their first work Understanding by Design they cover the issue of Essential Questions in one chapter, this time

around the authors flesh out issues around using EQs in the classroom. Although some of the material in the first three chapters was already covered in the first book, additional charts, and a greater explanation on how teachers can make essential questions based on skills is much more useful. As a language teacher I definitely find these sections very useful.The book is also an answer to schools already applying UbD, and thus, it focuses a lot more on classroom processes than on theoretical foundations. As a result, it gives in-depth discussion as to how to keep alive the EQs throughout the school year, covers how many EQs per lesson are possible, and reinforces the idea that EQs should be at the center of the classroom. In addition to this, W&M make connections between EQs with older ideas, such as Socratic Questioning and The Paideia Proposal. The authors also make sure that this text is teacher-friendly, allowing for reasonable time to adapt new ways of thinking classroom planning as well as discussing potential problems that may arise in the classroom.A caveat is that this book is not about specific strategies or methodologies, or about curriculum philosophies albeit Socrates and Plato are briefly discussed with respect to questioning methods in the classroom. This is a text that is specifically designed as a follow up on how to design and use EQs within the Understanding by Design planning templates, and thus can be helpful for the curriculum maps.

In my school district we are required to write essential questions. Sometimes it is difficult coming up with higher level thinking questions (HOTS). Reading this book has been very helpful because it gives great suggestions for all content areas.

Don’t let the title fool you....Jay McTighe also talks about other types of questions, even if only to compare/contrast them with Essential questions. The term, essential questions, is one of those education buzzwords that everybody uses but very few actually know anything about. This book will help the beginner and new-to UbD lesson planning.

I borrowed this from the school’s professional development library, then left it behind when I was on a trip. So I bought the Kindle edition. The Kindle edition is fine, but actually, it’s a book I’d like to mark up and annotate extensively, so I kinda wish I’d sprung for the hard copy to begin with. It’s a book that I’m going to be referring to constantly until I make McTighe and Wiggins approach to essential questions my own by instinct.

This is a good book which makes a serious contribution to the development of

teachersÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ skills in questioning. But, the book does not give any background on how questions are currently used (or not used). It does make a comment about the difficulty teachers face, too much content to cover and not enough time to cover it thoroughly. That is an important problem but the authors say little about how to help teachers solve it. Chapter Six, which covers implementation, makes many good suggestions but does not truly show the teacher how to solve the content pressure. In some ways the essential questions are basically those that fall into the top three levels of BloomÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s taxonomy (particularly the new Anderson, et.al. version) but McTighe and Wiggins never mention that. The types of questions considered essential do represent the higher levels of learning and thinking, as I explained in my book on teaching critical thinking (available from ).

A very good book. This one ties into their previous book Understanding by Design. If you have not read it, this should still be incredibly accessible. This book is designed to help you focus on the overarching ideas for each class. In literature, what is the 1-2 topics that all the books have in common? What is the meaning of life? Are we ruled by fate or free will? The types of questions that cannot be answered with a yes/no response and require thought. The difficulty of this book is that while they give an abundance of examples, the onus to create essential questions for the classroom is up to you. This is rightfully so as each classroom is different in scope than all others, but it does require quite a bit of work outside of the time put into reading. They give you "homework" of sorts that is very rewarding, but you should not expect to be given the answers. I learned more from this one than any of the education books I read this summer.

I have seen essential questions and have had people talk about essential questions. Now, I really understand the purpose, format and how to create an essential question

This book should be on every educator’s shelf. The ideas here are wonderful, practical, insightful, clearly presented and invaluable for increasing student engagement and critical thinking in any subject area. As a teacher of students with learning disabilities I teach five different subjects to a wide variety of learners. I instantly felt that the strategies in this book would be easily used with my learners, are easy to differentiate, and can be applied to every subject that I teach. I can’t wait to start using them in my classroom!

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