

# Essential Questions

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# Essential Question

(How can I wrestle my entire pedagogy to the ground?)

# A career of wrestling...



# The power of the humanities...

- **To take in information, to consider it from some serious standpoints**
- **To connect it to our own experiences**
- **To know what we think....**
- **....so we can show what we think**
- **To know, and to be known (at least to ourselves)**

# Perhaps the main ideal...

- The engagement with real questions, that real people struggle with, that they will struggle with...
- ...means nobody is wasting their time.

# Subject - Humanities

- I teach English, Social Studies, Geography, Psychology
- Really, I teach the humanities

# Essential Questions

- **How does our world view shape our actions?**

# Essential Questions

- **How can the lack of power lead to human rights abuses?**



# Essential Questions

- **How can scarcity of resources lead to conflict?**

# Essential Questions

- **What are essential human rights?**

# Essential Questions

- **What does it mean to be civilized?**

# Essential Questions

- **What is the impact of technology on society?**

# Essential Questions

- **What are the costs and benefits of fitting in and not fitting in?**

# Essential Questions

- **How does geography shape history? Civilizations?**

# Essential Questions

- **To what principles do we owe our primary allegiance?**
- **What causes principles and values to change?**

# Essential Questions

- **What circumstances drive change?**



# '92- Today

- From chalkboard and textbook and library to...
- SmartBoard, iTunes, Audible, Netflix, Firefly, online shopping!, YouTube... at our fingertips.

# '92- Today

- Differentiation
- Backward Design
- ESD
- DART
- Master's Degree
- Twitter
- Blogs

# Assessment

- Skills - Direct instruction (not ass-ass), formative assessment, gradual release
- Content - part of the picture, because understanding and knowledge drive learning
- Report Cards continue to haunt me, but my assessment is now:
  - Partly or mainly portfolio - lay it all out
  - Partly or wholly cumulative

# Big Picture

- Contextualized, drawing across history to current experiences
- Involves a variety of rich texts
- Accessible to all
- Focused on skill development
- Connects to the universal human experience
- Tells a story, invites story

# A few planning tips

- Pick your skills and consider assessment - Sometimes the content drives the skill (it just fits), so you have to be flexible to go with the 'teachable moment'.

# Questions and Text

- Pick your essential question / enduring understanding and start to gather resources. They will start to JUMP out at you.
- What is your anchor text (or texts) - not complex, high impact. Movies and short films are great. Audiobook is another great choice.

# Anchor texts

- I like threes - one is okay, three is better
- I use audio books to ensure everyone has the content. I read the stories and poetry aloud. We discuss the essential questions, themes and symbols together. All students have access to the texts, regardless of ability.

# Patterns reveal the universal human experience

- Each text has its own power, its own essential questions and understandings. Aside from the primary questions, other themes and topics are discussed.
- When multiple texts are taken as a whole, common themes and symbols emerge, synthesis occurs, deepening comprehension



# Humanities 9

- How can lack of power lead to the violation of human rights?

# Humanities 9

- What conditions make it difficult for people to stand up for their own rights?
- How do people deal with adversity?
- What conditions lead to change?
- Why is it difficult for society to protect people in a global world?
- What are our fundamental human rights?

# Industrial Revolution

- This is a topic where the Eng / SS integrate beautifully

# Humanities 8

- Feudalism, World Religions, Crusades, The Plague, Exploration and Conquest
- How does our world view shape our actions?

# English 11

- *The Tale of Despereaux*
- *The Girl (Movie)*
- *The Kite Runner*
- *Macbeth.....*

# English 11

- What is the role of forgiveness in our lives?
- What are the steps to 'being good again'?
- How can acting against our nature cause us serious harm?

# Social Psychology

What are the costs and benefits of fitting in and not fitting in?

Is there a right way to be?

# English 10

- Romeo and Juliet
- What is the importance of civilization and what factors support or destroy its fabric?
- Is 'us and them' inevitable'?
- Dystopia Genre Study



# Geography 12

- Earth and humans are in a fine balance together.

# I need to be better at...

- Getting students to generate more questions more frequently
- Students should be more engaged in self-assessment
- Smoother transitions from formative assessment to summative, especially report cards

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