



# Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding

*Jay McTighe , Grant P. Wiggins*

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This book from the authors of *Understanding by Design* explores how to design and frame essential questions that prompt students to think deeply and create a more stimulating environment for learning.

## Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding Details

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# From Reader Review Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding for online ebook

**jeffrey s. edwards says**

**4.5 stars**

Gave me a much better understanding of how teacher questions can drive student inquiry, especially in the PYP framework. Definitely recommended for teachers interested in concept based learning and inquiry.

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**Jayson says**

Finished it a while back...a good reference to go back to time after time. I have used parts of it in my professional learning with staff over the past couple of years.

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**Cathy says**

Enjoyed the discussion since I never feel I nail the EQ in my units. Turns out, I do, but I primarily use topical essential questions, not over-arching essential questions. Good summer review before I start planning for 2016-2017.

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**Ann says**

This is an easy read for a PD book. It gets right to the point, is filled with excellent examples of what essential questions are (and are not), and doesn't leave out subjects like foreign language or the arts. All this and without being preachy or overly dramatic about the research (or heavy handed about UbD). The one area where I think it would be helpful to have more specific examples is the end of unit project or assignment that ties back to the essential questions. These are mentioned but only briefly and superficially in my opinion.

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**Robert Dorough, Jr. says**

McTighe and Wiggins effectively and succinctly define, explain, and pave the way toward a culture of inquiry that may be applied to virtual any field of learning. Rather than focusing *merely* on rote memorization and regurgitation of material for exams to be graded based solely on “right or wrong” answers, we aid our students (and one another) by considering larger concerns—what McTighe and Wiggins call *Essential Questions*, those that require continued thought and inquiry. By encouraging better thinkers, we encourage better learners and doers. Packed with helpful charts, examples, Q&As, problems and resolutions that address a number of fields (the arts, English, history, literature, and mathematics, to name a few) this will prove to be helpful for any educator, regardless of field, venue, and age/level of student. I recommend this book as a “must read” for any educator, and I would go so far as to encourage students to read it, as well.

It will likely cause a complete reassessment of one's own teaching and learning experience!

A fellow teacher gave me the gift of *Essential Questions* by McTighe and Wiggins when I was sitting in on a brainstorming and planning session he and my wife were having in preparation for a class they are tag-teaming. He has several copies on a bookshelf in his office, I imagine just for this purpose, and I'm grateful for being one of the recipients!

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### **Tara says**

The Good: Slim volume clearly achieves its purpose through multiple examples and explanations. Effective organization. Doesn't belabor points. Offers a great entry into essential questions for teachers.

The Bad: This slim volume with its 8.5x11 size is actually unwieldy and difficult to hold. I don't understand the thinking behind making the pages so big.

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### **Kevin says**

This book was provided to all of the teachers in my building for a book study, as the administration (myself included) will be focusing on questioning and essential questions during evaluations in the coming school year. The content of the book is important, and it's filled with excellent examples of essential questions in several content areas.

I personally found the book to be quite dry, but I could tell the authors were attempting to make the subject as interesting as possible with their content-specific examples of questions and the parallels the authors drew between teaching, questioning, and coaching sports. I think I would have enjoyed reading it more had I read it as part of a discussion group that met regularly to reflect upon the book.

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### **Michelle Hall says**

The authors have filled this book with great examples of what good essential questions look like, and clearly laid out the 7 defining characteristics of good essential questions. This book is a great read for those interested in creating a more dynamic culture of inquiry in their classroom - worth the read.

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### **Jordan says**

A quick, easy-to-read guide to encouraging student inquiry in the classroom, and designing challenging lessons for that purpose. This book challenges me to press beyond the transmission/recall approach to curriculum, and instead design my lessons around clear, substantive questions that students can continue to contemplate long after school is out. This is the first of my textbooks to offer practical advice on creating meaningful curricula, and deserves a permanent place in my professional library.

Buy this title from Powell's Books.

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### **Jen says**

5 stars = It was amazing; that's a pretty high bar, but this book reached it. I'm going to have to buy another copy to share with our principal, because my copy has notes and tabs all over it! I'm looking forward to reading UbD & some of this teams' other work, but I think I will keep coming back to this one.

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### **Ted Mallory says**

A little dry sometimes but eminently practical. This was exactly what I'd been looking for. Inquiry and curiosity are paramount if we are going to actually teach students to think for themselves. This book helps you use them. I am so glad I found it and read it. I wish our entire district was using it for staff development.

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### **Jan Michael says**

Quizzical on how to write understanding questions for exams? Much more increase your students opportunity to develop critical thinking, problem solving, and understanding? This books get into the deep of tackling how to write essential questions that guide not only classroom discussions but forming deeper understanding.

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### **Rick Silva says**

This book focuses on a very specific aspect of teaching: The framing and use of essential questions in the classroom. Essential questions are questions that are open-ended, provoke meaningful discussion and inquiry, and can be revisited throughout a unit, a curriculum, or even across disciplines or grade levels.

There are a lot of good ideas and inspiration in this book for creating a more inquiry-based classroom, whether or not you decide to go all-in with essential questions as a central device for the curriculum.

There is a lot of influence from Understanding by Design, which was developed by the authors of this book, and teachers already working with UbD will find this to be a nice supplement. It also stands reasonably well on its own, although UbD is referenced a fair amount.

As with other professional development books I've read that focus on a specific topic, there were places here where it felt like the author was stretching. A section on action research in the final chapter felt shoehorned in, and there was a bit more repetition of ideas than was really necessary in the early chapters. That being said, the books is a quick read, and generally keeps to its focus, while delivering a nice set of practical ideas that can be put to immediate use in the classroom.

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**Natalie Salazar says**

Very useful.

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**Sadie says**

A fairly easy read with many good examples to guide teachers through creating meaningful units of study for and with students. It emphasized the importance of questioning in how we see and read the world.

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