

## **Indicators of Enduring Ideas/Understandings and Essential Questions**

### *Indicators of an Enduring Idea/Understanding*

- If your syllabus or program were cut in half, you would still want students to explore it in depth.
- It is key to connecting and making sense of lots of discrete knowledge — it “connects the dots.”
- It is key to understanding other important ideas.
- It is unlikely to be fully understood by studying it just once.
- It is unlikely to be understood through textbook accounts only.
- There are different ways to study it, to teach it, and to apply it.
- It is not obvious, it is often misunderstood, but it is worth the trouble.
- It involves the kind of problems, challenges, and work that adults do.
- It is significant within the arts.

### *Indicators That an Enduring Idea/Understanding Is Not Specific Enough*

- Different teachers cannot agree on exactly what is to be taught or emphasized in the unit.
- Different teachers cannot agree on what should be assessed.
- Students and parents cannot tell from the course or unit description exactly what is to be learned and how “success” will be determined.
- Students do not know what to study or how to study it.

### *Indicators of Essential Questions*

- They have no one obvious right answer.
- They raise other important questions.
- They address the philosophical or conceptual foundation of a discipline.
- They are about concepts, not skills.
- They reoccur naturally throughout our lives.
- They are framed to provoke and sustain student interest.

Adapted from McTighe, J. and Wiggins, G. *The Understanding by Design Handbook*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1999. Used with permission.