**CLC/Capstone**

*Grade11/12🡪 Assignment 2 Notes on Essential Questions*

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION – YOU NEED ONE!**

***What is an essential question?***

According to Trevor Mackenzie, author of *Dive Into Inquiry* (2016):

*“Essential questions are not answered in a quick, simple Google search. They are not answered in a single lesson or in a discussion with a friend. They do not have a single answer and, in fact, our understanding of the essential question may change over time. Essential questions require higher-order thinking such as analysis, inference, evaluation, and prediction. Over time, they may raise additional questions and inspire further inquiry.” (p.75)*

It is important to create a good essential question to guide your personal inquiry for the CAPSTONE. This question must provoke deep thinking, require information gathering and evaluating, help you solve a problem, produce original ideas and encourage critical thinking.

In order to do this, you need to know how to create a good question. Here are some examples of good and not so good questions based on personal passions.

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| **SIMPLE “NOT SO GOOD” QUESTIONS** | **“GOOD” ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS** |
| **Food:** What is a local diet? | Should grocery stores encourage/support local diets? Why? |
| **Literature/Reading:** Why is *Hunger Games* the best book? | What makes a great story? |
| **Science/Biology**: Can insects survive when their environment changes? | How do organisms survive in harsh or changing environments? Who will survive? |
| **History**: What are the consequences of WW1? | Whose story is missing from WW1? |
| **PE:** Why is Kawhi Leonard a great basketball player? | What makes a great athlete? Who is a winner? |
| **Social/Cultural**: Where do marriage customs come from? | How do different cultures define good relationships and how are particular customs designed to promote them? |
| **Math:** Why is algebra important? | How do people use algebraic concepts in everyday life? |
| **Arts:** Who is Marc Chagall? | How does art reflect, as well as shape, culture? |

To get started on drafting an **essential question**, look at the following question prompts with definitions and examples for inspiration.

**WHICH ONE?** 🡪 is to be used to weigh two options and provide evidence supporting one over the other

Ex: “Which stated ideals cause progress or mask hypocrisy?”

**HOW?** 🡪 is used to evaluate, infer and possibly propose alternatives

Ex: “How well can pure mathematics model messy, real-world situations?”

**WHAT IF?** 🡪 is used as a hypothetical question and asks you to use prior knowledge to create a hypothesis and consider options

Ex: “What if we couldn’t measure time, how would life be different?”

**SHOULD?** 🡪 requests a moral or practical decision based on evidence

Ex: “When it comes to power, who should have it?”

**WHY?** 🡪 asks you to understand cause and effect relationships and helps you get to the essence of the issue

Ex: “Why are there so many health problems in North America caused by poor nutrition despite all of the available information?”