

Why Concept-Based? *"When curriculum and instruction require students to process factual information through the conceptual level of thinking, the students demonstrate greater retention of factual information, deeper levels of understanding, and increased motivation for learning."* (Erickson, 2007)

- "Educators are charged with preparing students to live and work in a globally interdependent, interactive world. Helping students learn to use their minds well must be a major focus for instruction." (pg. 1)
- Today, coverage of content and shallow teacher and learning will not produce college and career ready students at the end of 12th grade.
- Conceptual development is a lifelong developmental process. Conceptual understanding requires a higher-level, integrative thinking ability that needs to be taught systematically through all levels of schooling. Integrated thinking is the ability to insightfully draw patterns and connections between related facts, ideas, and examples, and to synthesize information at a conceptual level" (p. 8).
- "The key is to assign a conceptual lens to the study of major topics in their discipline and to teach to significant transferable understandings by using the fact base as a tool" (p. 66, 2002).
- "We can achieve high-level integration (i.e., "integrated thinking") within disciplines and among disciplines as long as we design our units of instruction using a conceptual lens to focus thinking to the conceptual level--where knowledge transfers" (p. 66, 2002).
- Learning is purposeful and goal-oriented. Students will be more engaged in their learning and will be able to transfer their learning into other situations.
- "The most significant reason that children overall are not performing as well as they should academically is that we provide teachers with intellectually shallow curriculum materials that fail to engage higher-order thinking." (pg. 9)
- "When students learn to think beyond the facts, they are able to see patterns and connections of old knowledge and new knowledge; they transfer understandings to other situations; and they systematically build conceptual depth and sophistication" (p. 41, 2002).

Definitions:

Topics – a set of facts related to specific people, places, situations, or things.

Concept – an organizing idea that provides structure for learning; it is timeless, universal in application (across disciplines), abstract and broad and represented by different examples that share common attributes.

Generalizations/Essentials or Enduring Understandings/Big Ideas – synonymous
Two or more concepts stated in a relationship that gives meaning and connection to discrete facts and skills; provides for a framework to facilitate the integration of thinking. (Erickson, 1995; Wiggins & McTighe, 1999)