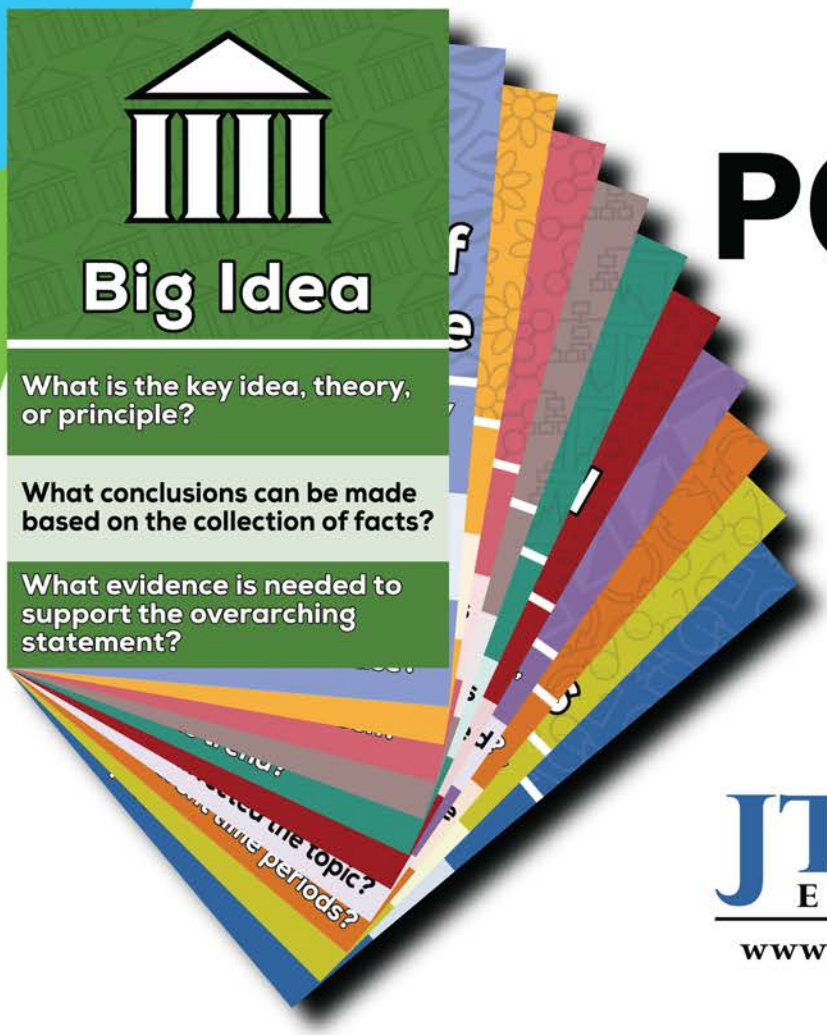
The Depth & Complexity

ICON POSTERS



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The Depth & Complexity* ICON POSTERS** activate deep levels of knowledge and add instant rigor and complexity to class lessons and discussions. ***Each of the depth and complexity icon posters,11 in all, contain questions that trigger high-level thinking and responses related to what is most relevant for students to know about a topic, subject area or discipline. Educators must select the questions that are best aligned to the needs of the varied levels of learners in their classrooms. As the Depth & Complexity Framework and specifically the dimensions/icons were intended, students and teachers should consider the types of knowledge that distinguish individuals who are experts in a field of study. Although it may be tempting to have students attend to several of these questions in a single lesson, unit of study or subject area, the selection of one or two significant prompts to provide focus while delving into and comprehending content often times generates a richer, deeper response.

BENEFITS of ***The Depth & Complexity* ICON POSTERS**

- ✓ **Encourage** learners to generate ideas.
- ✓ **Guide** learners to explicitly search for deep answers at sophisticated levels.
- ✓ **Foster** independence where students are in charge of their learning.
- ✓ **Direct** students to approach topics the way an expert in that field would.
- ✓ **Steer** students toward meaningful information (*limits superficial information*).

8 *DEPTH ICON POSTER QUESTIONS*

create opportunities for learners to delve deeper into a subject by:

- utilizing the language of the experts in the field. (**LANGUAGE OF THE DISCIPLINE**)
- noting key details. (**DETAILS**)
- discussing the dilemmas and controversies. (**ETHICS**)
- generating an overarching statement. (**BIG IDEA**)
- discovering patterns to make predictions. (**PATTERNS**)
- figuring out rules of systems. (**RULES**)
- noting factors that affect the trends. (**TRENDS**)
- exploring what is still unknown or ambiguous about a topic. (**UNANSWERED QUESTIONS**)

3 *COMPLEXITY ICON POSTER QUESTIONS*

create opportunities for learners to:

- make connections across several topics or academic disciplines to enhance the meaning of a unit of study. (**ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES**)
- see and identify related ideas through different time periods. (**OVER TIME**)
- find multiple solutions from different points of view. (**MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES**)

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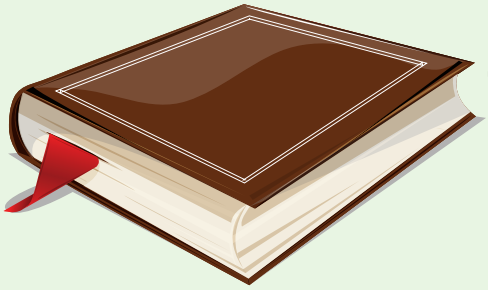
The Depth & Complexity ICON POSTERS

are used by



TEACHERS

and

STUDENTS...

- **Students** generate sophisticated information about their topic.
- **Students** engage in a higher level of thinking by altering the questions.
- **Teachers** plan rigorous lessons (hook, objective, culmination, or enrichment activity).
- **Teachers** differentiate instruction by altering the questions.
- **Teachers** pose the questions to the entire class to discuss.
- **Teachers** divide the class into small groups that choose a different depth or complexity icon question poster to focus on. The various groups may come back together to discuss their findings with the class.
- **Individual students** choose one or several icon poster questions to focus on.

It is imperative as educators that we empower students to have a genuine thirst for real-world application and connection of knowledge that is gained at school. Discovering and interpreting subject matter through the lenses of depth and complexity not only meets students' intellectual interests, but differentiates and deepens their understanding of content. Additionally, it creates a renewed excitement within the learning process. **The Depth & Complexity Framework and specifically the Icons are tools that prompt students to delve deeper into current areas of study while allowing teachers to see evidence of high-level, critical thinking skills.**

An IDEA for Introducing and Using *The Depth & Complexity* Icon Posters...

1. **Select a topic** (*ex., Cinderella*).
2. **Select and Define a Depth or Complexity Icon** (*ex., Ethics is having a dilemma over an issue or looking at controversial arguments*).
3. **Use the question prompts from the poster to ask thought-provoking questions about a topic.**
    1. *What are some underlying values that exist in the story of Cinderella?*
    2. *How has bias affected the way the stepmother treated Cinderella?*

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