

TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION (Teaching about)	→ REFOCUSING QUESTIONS →	TEACHING for UNDERSTANDING INSTRUCTION
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Topic/unit The Rainforest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is worth understanding about this topic? • Why is this topic important? • Where can this topic take you? • This topic can be studied as a good example of ____? 	Possible Generative Topics Symbiotic Relationships Interdependency in Nature A Living System Ecosystems Habitats
Behavioral Objectives List 5 animals in the RF. Identify 3 reasons why the RF is endangered. Identify the parts of the RF. Do a report on an animal living in the rainforest. Create a diorama showing a section of the rainforest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want students to develop these skills because they are partial indicators of understanding _____? • The knowledge that students will develop through these activities will help students to better understand _____? 	Possible Understanding Goals Students will develop an understanding of how the survival of mammals is connected to that of other species. Students will develop an understanding of the importance of balance in a system and the threats to that balance.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Beginning Activity</p> <p>Trip to the zoo to see what the RF looks like and pick an animal to do a report on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I best introduce students to the big questions and problems of this unit? • How can I help these questions and issues emerge from the class? • How can I find out what the students already understand/think about the generative topic and understanding goals? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Possible “Introductory” Understanding Performance</p> <p>In groups students put together a pre-made but disassembled mobile. Discuss the process that went into putting it back together. Bring out importance of balance and discuss consequences of imbalance on the overall mobile.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Activities/Lessons</p> <p>Read books about RF. Write a report about the RF. Draw pictures of the RF. Write poems about the RF. Build a RF in the classroom. Create a RF diorama.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can students do this activity without understanding? • How do these activities relate to what I want my students to understand? • Do these activities help students to confront and work through the things that are particularly challenging with regard to understanding this topic? • Does this activity allow students to both develop & demonstrate their understanding? • What kind of thinking could be incorporated into these activities, and how could they make their thinking visible? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Possible “Guided Inquiry” and “Culminating” Understanding Performances</p> <p>Write a report about one animal from the rainforest and describe how the world would be a different place if this animal were extinct.</p> <p>Create posters showing how the RF operates as a system.</p> <p>Make a list of all of the things that your livelihood and enjoyment depend on in one particular day.</p> <p>Research and create a diagram showing all of the things a RF animal comes into contact with and depends on in a day.</p> <p>Compare and contrast your dependencies with that of an animal from the RF.</p>

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<p style="text-align: center;">End of Unit Evaluation</p> <p>Write a report on their favorite RF animal.</p> <p>Take a test showing that they know the parts of the RF and the names of its inhabitants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can each understanding performance tell me about what students do and do not understand? • How can I find out if students' misconceptions and stereotypes are changing? • How can I give students feedback on their progress toward developing understanding? • How can I help students assess their own work? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Possible Ongoing Assessment Opportunities</p> <p>Discuss with students and/or provide students with written criteria for the "Guided Inquiry" and "Culminating" Understanding Performances listed above.</p> <p>Identify the problems & difficulties of understanding exhibited by students in their work & provide responsive lessons or individual coaching.</p> <p>Have students reflect on their progress in reaching the unit understanding goals & ask them to provide evidence from their performances of understanding to support their assessment.</p> <p>Continually monitor for misconceptions, errors, & overgeneralizations, & then design lessons that compel students to challenge these.</p>