

# My Unit Assessments: An Analysis

<b>Formative Tests</b>	<b>Summative Tests</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> selected response <input type="checkbox"/> essay <input type="checkbox"/> performance <input type="checkbox"/> personal communications  <div style="text-align: center;">Facets Assessed</div> <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretation <input type="checkbox"/> Application <input type="checkbox"/> Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy <input type="checkbox"/> Self Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> selected response <input type="checkbox"/> essay <input type="checkbox"/> performance <input type="checkbox"/> personal communications  <div style="text-align: center;">Facets Assessed</div> <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretation <input type="checkbox"/> Application <input type="checkbox"/> Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy <input type="checkbox"/> Self Knowledge
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# Assessing My Unit's Assessments

Unit title: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment(s)

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Essential

Understandings: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Essential

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Facets Assessed

- Know/Explain
- Interpretation
- Apply
- Empathy
- Perspective
- Self Knowledge

## Example

Grade: 5

Unit Title: Animals and Their Habitats

Essential Understanding: An animal's patterns of behavior are related to its environment.

Essential Questions: How does environment affect an animal's behavior?

What patterns of behavior do animals have?

Assessment(s) Description: In your animal teams, create a 3 minute skit/drama. Provide some props to tell us about the environment in which you live. Decide who will be the predators and prey. Show in your skit how your environment is an advantage or disadvantage for the predators and prey.

## Facets of Understanding

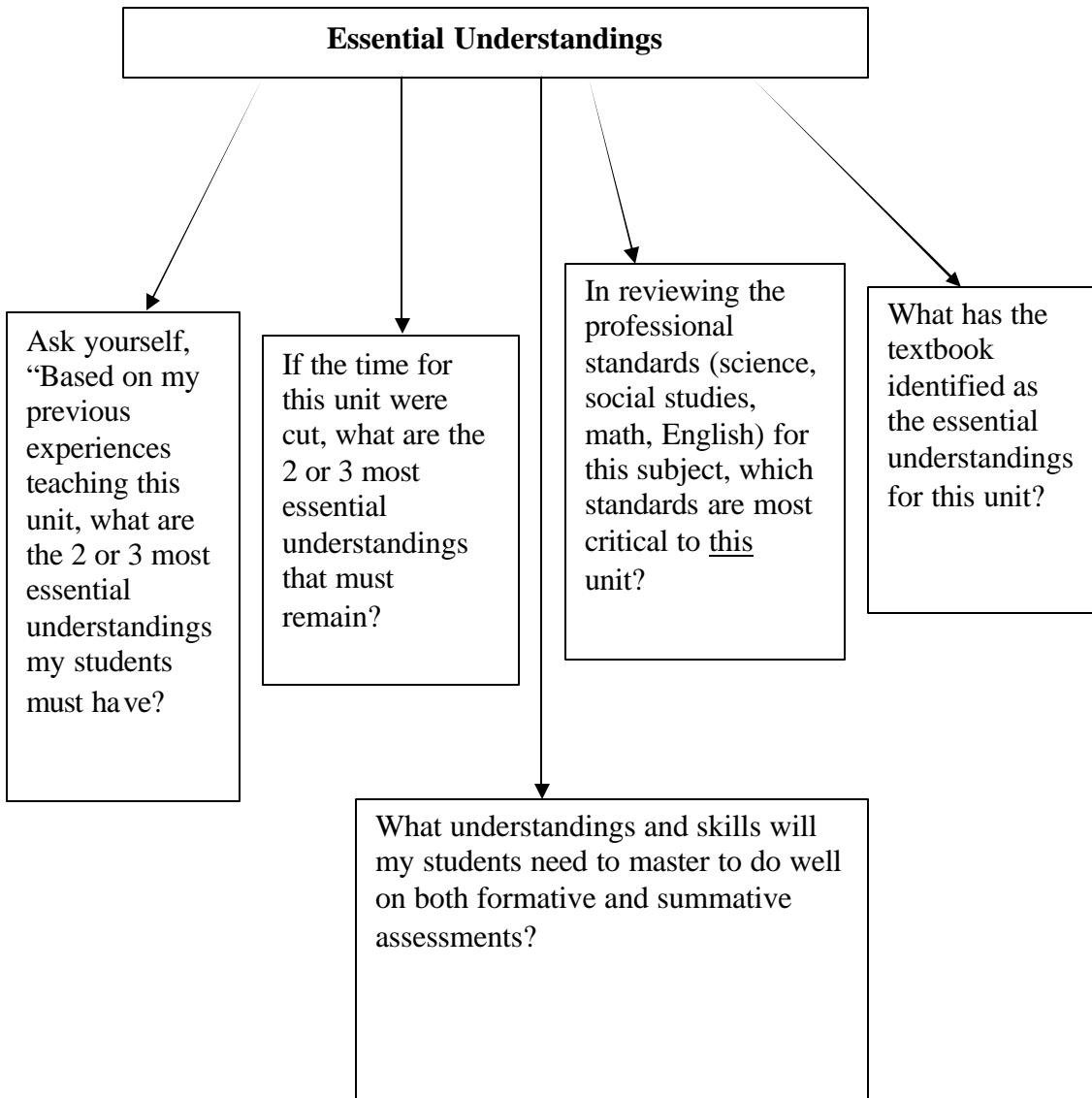
- Know/Explain
- Interpretation
- Apply
- Empathy
- Perspective
- Self Knowledge

## Ways In Which Expert Teacher Differ Cognitively From Novices from *Cognitive Coaching* by Garmston and Costa

<p><b>Knowledge Expert Teachers Have</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have more knowledge</li> <li>• organize knowledge differently</li> <li>• integrate knowledge more thoroughly</li> <li>• use more complex and interconnected planning structures</li> <li>• generate examples and explanations more easily</li> <li>• relate student questions to lesson objective more effectively</li> <li>• have practical knowledge of the social and political context within which teaching occurs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Potential Impact on Student Achievement</b></p>
<p><b>Efficiency Expert Teachers Have</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan, monitor, and revise their approach to teaching</li> <li>• use applicable cognitive processes with greater speed and accuracy</li> <li>• use richer and more interpretive think-aloud protocols</li> <li>• use higher order executive processes more effectively to plan ongoing learning</li> <li>• are more likely to monitor their teaching and students' learning</li> <li>• are more likely to be reflective and continuously learn through experiences</li> <li>• use new problems as opportunities to expand their knowledge and competence</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Insight Expert Teachers Have</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are more likely to arrive at creative solutions to problems</li> <li>• reach ingenious and insightful solutions that do not occur to others</li> <li>• do better at distinguishing relevant from nonrelevant data</li> <li>• combine information in ways useful for learning</li> <li>• apply information acquired in one context to new context.</li> </ul>	

# Uncovering Essential Understandings

How will you determine what's essential?



## How to Write Essential Understandings

Simply stating a topic does not tell us what we want students to understand and do nor does it help us to answer the assessment question: how will we know what our students know and can do?

Essential understandings also clarify for the teacher. Essential Understandings written in teacher language are not necessarily directly presented to students. Essential Understandings, however, can be turned into thought provoking questions and presented to students.

### Examples

Topic: the Civil War

Typical unit goal: causes and effects of the Civil War

Unit Essential Understanding: The Civil War was fought primarily over states' rights issues linked to differences in regional economies.

Assessment Question: What will students need to do to demonstrate they understood the essential understanding?

Topic: nutrition

Typical unit goal: the elements of good nutrition

Unit Essential Understanding: The USDA food pyramid presents relative guidelines for a balanced diet because dietary requirements differ for individuals, depending on variables such as age, activity, height, and overall health.

Assessment Question: So if this is what's most essential in this unit, what do students do to demonstrate this essential understanding?

Topic: (skill) swimming: freestyle stroke mechanics

Typical unit goal: efficiency, maximum power, backward push, surface area

Unit Essential Understanding: The most efficient and effective stroke mechanics involve pushing the maximum amount of water directly backward.

Assessment Question: How well must the swimmer demonstrate this stroke? What's good enough?

Topic: (skill) persuasive writing techniques

Typical unit goal: persuasion, goals, audience, persuasive techniques

Unit Essential Understanding: A variety of specific techniques (such as bandwagon, personality appeal, and use of data and reasons) are used to influence an audience's thoughts and feelings.

Assessment Question: What persuasive strategies has the writer used? This understanding also requires direct performance.

Topic: weather

Typical unit goal: causes of different types of severe weather

Unit Essential Understanding: Weather and climate conditions occur as a result of the transfer of energy into and out of the earth's atmosphere. Another Understanding might be: Energy from the sun heats the earth unevenly, causing air movements that produce changing weather patterns.

Assessment Question: How will the student demonstrate an essential understanding of the causes of changing weather patterns?

# The Mystery of Mrs. Calhoun

## Seventh Grade Unit: Contributions of Native Americans

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Mrs. Calhoun teaches seventh grade social studies and language arts. She has taught seventh grade social studies and language arts for twelve years. For the past seven years she has taught a unit on Native Americans. Chapter three in the seventh grade social studies textbook is “Contributions of Native Americans.” Mrs. Calhoun says this has been a successful unit and that her students always enjoy it. The unit lasts six weeks.

The following description is an overview of the six weeks.

**UNIT OVERVIEW:** During the first and second week, students work in small groups to create a model of a Native American village. Each group receives a project grade that represents 10% of a student’s unit grade. At the end of the second week students go to the Black Hawk State Park museum. During weeks three and four students select one tribe they’ve read about in chapter three, do some research while at the school library, and write a three page report which they will read to the class at the end of the fourth week. The written and oral reports account for 50% of a student’s unit grade. Week five is a very busy week as students prepare to host a Native American meal for invited guests, other seventh graders and parents who can attend. Students are to select one Native American food to share for this final activity. Invited parents and the principal greatly enjoy this activity.

During the unit, students are also assigned sections of chapter three and then during the sixth week take the final unit test, which is multiple choice and accounts for 25% of a student’s unit grade.

Student behavior and “engagement” account for 15% of the unit grade.

### Unit outline

Goals:	To learn about Native Americans and their culture To create a replica of a Native American village To prepare a Native American dinner To do a written and an oral report
Skills:	Read to gain information Learn library research skills Do an oral report Create a map that outlines a Native American village Research and prepare some Native American food
Activities:	Create a model of a Native American village Do a research paper on a Native American tribe Prepare and share a Native American dinner
Grading:	Unit test – 25% Research paper - 50% Model village – 10% Participation and behavior – 15%

This unit is pretty typical of Mrs. C’s other units. Now here’s the mystery. Students enjoy this unit and most of the other units Mrs. C teaches. The principal evaluates Mrs. Calhoun as “somewhat above average.” Parents are happy with her. However, from several different assessment indicators (the state standards test and several district required tests), Mrs. Calhoun’s students over the years never quite achieve at grade level expectations. For a “somewhat above average” teacher, student achievement is lower than one would expect. Plus, the students don’t do as well on the final unit test as Mrs. C. anticipates. What’s going on here?

## Preparing for Session 3



1. In *Understanding by Design* read the introduction and chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
2. Use the response form *Text Reading: Understanding by Design* and bring your responses to session 3.
3. Complete the following unit design work.

Unit Standards

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Essential Understandings (Write complete declarative sentences)	Essential Questions

Why are these understandings essential?  
Your Rationale:

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(Tentative Assessments)

Essential Questions	Formative Assessments	Summative Assessments

# To Cover or To Uncover? Herein Lies Your Question!

## A Christmas Carol

To Uncover	To Cover
<p>1. EU: A change of heart requires profound suffering.</p> <p>EQ: Is it true, “No pain, no gain?”</p> <p>2. EU: Compassion and empathy lead to understanding.</p> <p>EQ: Can I understand someone I dislike or hate?</p> <p>3. EU: Social classes create disparate realities.</p> <p>EQ: Do the rich understand my life? What’s it like to be poor?</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Right from the Web</u></p> <p>From Learn North Carolina Students will develop comprehension of plot development Students will examine flashbacks in the story in order to determine time. Students will work cooperatively in groups to determine story events. Students will arrange events in chronological order using time order words, context clues, and logical reasoning.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Students will read for details in the story. Students will use descriptive writing skills. Students will use the autobiopoem format to identify character traits and create a character autobiopoem for a main character of A Christmas Carol.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From Bruce’s Brain</p> <p>How does the author use reality and fantasy to tell his story?</p> <p>What techniques of foreshadowing are used?</p> <p>What role do the three spirits play in influencing Scrooge’s change of heart?</p> <p>What is Dickens saying about human nature?</p> <p>What techniques of character development does Dickens use?</p> <p>What elements of Victorian society are best illustrated in this story?</p>

# Understanding by Design Unit Planning Steps--Simplified

Before You Teach the Unit  
Steps 1, 2, and 3 need to be in sequence.

## Step 1

- A. Identify the unit essential understandings and/or skills. Two to four understandings are recommended.
- B. When you have a clear understanding of what's most essential, write these understandings as complete, declarative sentences.
- C. For each essential understanding, create one or more accompanying essential questions.  
The essential questions, when written in kid language, should be intriguing and provoke thought and discussion.
- D. Identify the appropriate content standards for this unit. These are the standards for math, or science or language arts, etc.

## Step 2

- A. List the unit's current formative and summative assessments.
- B. Align these assessments, but most especially the summative assessments, with the essential understandings. Suggestion: The essential questions can guide you in making this alignment.

## Step 3

- A. Identify which of the six facets of understanding are most appropriate for your unit. Not all six facets may be appropriate.
- B. After identifying which facets are appropriate, identify the (a) activities and (b) assessments which teach and test these facets.

### Next Steps

These do not need to be in sequence.

<p>Assessments <u>for</u> Learning Which assessments are you using to motivate and engage students?</p>	<p>Where are the principles of brain compatible learning and multiple intelligences integrated into the activities and assessments?</p>	<p>Identify 2 different assessments that are most likely to give you documentation of student achievement and motivation. Note: After teaching the unit, you may need to change your documentation.</p>

### **AFTER YOU TEACH THE UNIT**

#### Step 7

What two different assessments document students' achievement and motivation?

Assessment documentation #1

Assessment documentation #2

# What do you understand, really?



First, answer each question. Then determine the function of the question and which facet the question is assessing. Write the facet or facets under Purpose/Function.

## Purpose/Function of this question?

1. What is the key idea(s) in this article?

Answer:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the implications of this article about past and current fashions?

Answer:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How can you use this information?

Answer:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What might a fashion designer say about this information?

Answer:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why would a Chinese mother consent to have her daughter's feet bound?

Answer:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. How have your present views been shaped about tattooing, men wearing earrings, body piercing, and now tongue splicing?

Answer:

\_\_\_\_\_

## What is understanding?

We often throw around the word *understand* as if we understand what it means. Do we really? First discuss in small groups and then based on our discussion, write a brief response to these questions about understanding.

What does it mean to understand a personal problem shared by a close friend?

What does it mean to understand how American democracy works?

What does it mean to understand Spanish?

What does it mean to understand an Afro-American woman age 75?

What does it mean to understand long division?

What does it mean to understand what makes you angry?



# Uncovering Unit Essential Understandings

Unit Topic or Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

## Filters for Selecting Essential Understandings

1. What understandings will have value and application beyond this unit and classroom?
2. What understandings reside at the heart of this subject (science, social studies, health, etc)?
3. What understandings require spending more time, going deeper, providing details and elaboration, and will need reflection and review?
4. What understandings have the potential to most engage students, pique their curiosity and interest?

These will be the unit's essential understandings. Essential understandings need to be written in complete declarative sentences.

