Re-Focusing Instruction on Understanding

From a Traditional Unit	Горіс	Questions for Refocusing	to Generative Topics
The Rainforest (RF)	>	What is worth understanding about this topic?	Symbiotic Relationships
	>	Why is this topic important?	Interdependency in Nature
	>	Where can this topic take you as a learner (connections, richness)?	A Living System
	>	This topic can be studied as a good example of	Ecosystems
		?	Habitats and Homes
	>	What's an interesting slant or angle on this topic?	Is Conservation a Luxury?
	>	How can students readily engage with this topic?	The Weakest Link

From Behavioral Objective	es _	Questions For Refocusing	to Understanding Goals
List 5 animals in the RF	>	These skills and knowledge are partial indicators of understanding?	Students will develop an understanding of how the survival of mammals is
Identify 3 reasons why the RF is endangered	>	Acquiring these skills and knowledge will help students to better understand?	connected to that of other species. Students will develop an understanding
Name the parts of the RF	>	The larger purpose behind these objectives is to develop an understanding of?	of the importance of balance in a system and the threats to that balance.
Write a report on a RF animals or people	>	What do I want students to take away from this experience?	Students will understand the impact of conservation policies and practices on
Create a diorama showing a section of the RF			local peoples.

From Activities/Lessons	Questions For Refocusing	to Performances of Understanding
Read books about RF	Can students do this activity/lesson without really understanding?	List everything you can that your life, livelihood and enjoyment depend on over the course of a
Write a report about the RF Draw pictures of the RF Write poems about the RF	What kinds of thinking are required to do these activities?	given day. + Research and create a diagram showing a
	Do these activities help students to confront and work through issues that are particularly challeng-ing with regard to understanding this topic?	of the things one RF animal comes into contact with and depends on in a day.
Build a RF in the classroom	What foundational knowledge and understanding need to be built in order for students to do these activities with understanding?	+ Compare & contrast what you depend on with what a RF animal does. Write an essay comparing the RF to a Calder
	How do these activities relate to what it is I want my students to understand?	mobile, a mathematical equation, and a tightrope walker. Explain which of these makes the best analogy.
	Does this activity allow students to both develop and	
	demonstrate their understanding?	
From Evaluation		to Formative, Ongoing Assessments
From Evaluation Create a RF diorama Write a report on a favorite		Identify the problems and difficulties of understanding exhibited by students in their work and offer responsive lessons or individual
Create a RF diorama	Questions For Refocusing What can each understanding performance tell me about what students do and do not	Identify the problems and difficulties of understanding exhibited by students in their
Create a RF diorama Write a report on a favorite	Questions For Refocusing What can each understanding performance tell me about what students do and do not understand? How can I find out if students' misconceptions	Identify the problems and difficulties of understanding exhibited by students in their work and offer responsive lessons or individua coaching.
Create a RF diorama Write a report on a favorite RF animal	Questions For Refocusing 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 provide opportunities for students to	Identify the problems and difficulties of understanding exhibited by students in their work and offer responsive lessons or individua coaching. Provide feedback for students on where their essays indicate clear understanding, partial or
Create a RF diorama Write a report on a favorite RF animal	 Questions For Refocusing 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 provide opportunities for students to show me and others what they understand? What is student work telling me about what 	Identify the problems and difficulties of understanding exhibited by students in their work and offer responsive lessons or individual coaching. Provide feedback for students on where their essays indicate clear understanding, partial or possible understanding, and possible confusion. Have students reflect on their progress in reaching the unit goals. Collect & present