



### Content and Skills: Getting the Balance Right

**Exercise: Establishing Priorities**

Since there is always more content than can be addressed, teachers have to make hard choices. What is it we want students to know, value, do, and understand?

**Assessment Types**

Traditional quizzes and tests

- paper/pencil
- selected-response
- constructed-response

Performance tasks and projects

- open-ended
- complex
- authentic

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**Familiarity:** What knowledge (i.e., topics, facts, concepts, principles) will students encounter in readings, films, lectures, and research but will not be expected to have more than a superficial familiarity with?

**Knowledge and Skills:** What knowledge will students be expected to think critically about? What skills (processes, strategies, methods) will they be expected to perform?

**Deep Understanding:** What big ideas will students internalize and apply in other contexts? Something is worth deep understanding if it:

- 1) has enduring value beyond the classroom
- 2) resides at the heart of historical mindedness
- 3) requires uncoverage because it isn't obvious and misconceptions are the norm
- 4) offers potential for engaging students and arousing interest.

Adapted from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (1998)