WHAT IS A UNIT IN TEACHING?
(H. Weller – EDW 471/SMS 491 – Spring 2007)

A UNIT
• A unit is a cluster of several lessons that fit together closely.

• The lessons of the unit will address the same essential questions and will help the students learn the same enduring understandings.

HOW MANY LESSONS IN A UNIT?
There is no set number of lessons in a unit. There could be, say 3, 7, or 10 lessons.

TIME SPAN OF A UNIT
• Several days consecutively, or spread out throughout several other units.

• Example: A weather unit that involves student collection of weather data over several months.

• Example: A unit where the students visit the same portion of land (say, a forest) once or twice each season.

WHAT IS A “BACKWARDS-PLANNING” UNIT?
• Initially: In backwards-planning, the learning objectives for the unit are decided upon initially. The essential questions and enduring understandings are also decided upon initially. Also, the means by which the instructor will assess the students’ achievement of these objectives are designed initially.

• Then: After these decisions are made, the actual lesson activities are designed.

• Example: A template for a McTighe-Wiggins Backwards-planning unit will be handed out.