

Framing Understandings

Part 1: Examine the following essential questions (1-5) and nonexamples (6-10) to determine the common characteristics of an effectively framed understanding. List these below.

Enduring Understandings	Not Enduring Understandings
<p><i>The student will understand that...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a free-market economy, price is a function of supply and demand. 2. True friendship is revealed during difficult times, not happy times. 3. Statistical analysis and data display often reveal patterns that may not be obvious. 4. The most efficient and effective stroke mechanics in swimming involve pushing the maximum amount of water directly backward. 5. Heating of the Earth's surface and atmosphere by the sun drives convection within the atmosphere and oceans, producing winds and ocean currents. 	<p><i>The student will understand...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. That the price of long-distance phone calls has declined during the past decade. 7. True friendship. 8. Mean, median, and mode are measures of central tendency. 9. That they should not cup their hands when swimming the freestyle. 10. Wind is a force of nature.
<p>Common characteristics of enduring understandings:</p> 	

Part 2: Use your list of characteristics as criteria to determine which of the following examples are effectively framed as enduring understandings. Mark yes if it is an enduring understanding or no if it's not.

	YES	NO
11. The concept of estivation.	_____	_____
12. The USDA Food Pyramid presents relative, not absolute guidelines for a balanced diet.	_____	_____
13. Mathematical models simplify reality to enable useful solutions.	_____	_____
14. How to tell time.	_____	_____
15. The causes and effects of the Civil War.	_____	_____
16. That the Magna Carta was signed on June 15, 1215.	_____	_____

Part 3: Review the answer key and explanations; revise your description of enduring understandings.

Answers:

11. No—States the concept to be learned, not the understanding about the concept that should be learned.
12. Yes—The word 'relative' in this statement signals that there is not a single prescribed or pat formula for healthy eating, given individual and cultural differences.
13. Yes—This is a transferable idea, applicable throughout school and life. And it is not obvious that insightful models greatly simplify reality at some potential cost, despite their power.
14. No—Skill objective does not state understandings about telling time that need to be grasped.
15. No—States the topic, not the unobvious understandings about the causes and effects to be achieved.
16. No—States a fact, not an idea.

Refined common characteristics of enduring understandings: