academic success centre.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Worksheet: Understanding Concepts vs. Facts for Studying Life Sciences

When encountering new material do you prefer to learn the small details and facts first and then have the simplifying generalizations emerge as you go along? Or do you prefer by starting with an overarching concept on which you can hang the specific facts as they are encountered?

Either way, you can start by dividing everything you learn into two categories: **facts and concepts**

- **Concepts** are the glue that hold entire big picture together, making them the most important part to study. Concepts are why you're studying something to begin with and, once you learn them, they stick with you. Stop wasting hours studying at only a third of the pace you could be going and study smart

- **Facts** are things that can fall out of your brain and you may need to come up with a mnemonic device in order to study them.

Concepts *Can this idea be applied in multiple contexts to explain and/or predict outcomes? If so, how?*	**Facts** *What are the details or specifics of this idea?*
1.	1.
2.	2.

Wood, W. (2008). Teaching Concepts Versus Facts in Developmental Biology. *Cell Biology Education,* 10-11. Retrieved February 10, 2015, from http://worms.zoology.wisc.edu/reprints/4d_thinking.pdf

3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.

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