

The standard account of understanding is (mostly) compatible with the thesis that how-possibly explanations can provide understanding. 🤖

Understanding and How-Possibly Explanations: Why Can't They Be Friends?

Standard Account of Understanding (SA-U)

- SA-U1:** Only correct explanations can provide understanding
- SA-U2:** HPEs are not correct explanations
- SA-U3:** ∴ HPEs cannot provide understanding

HPE thesis (HPE-U)

- **Denies** SA-U1
- **Accepts** SA-U2
- Having a correct explanation isn't necessary; an HPE is sufficient

Correct explanations?

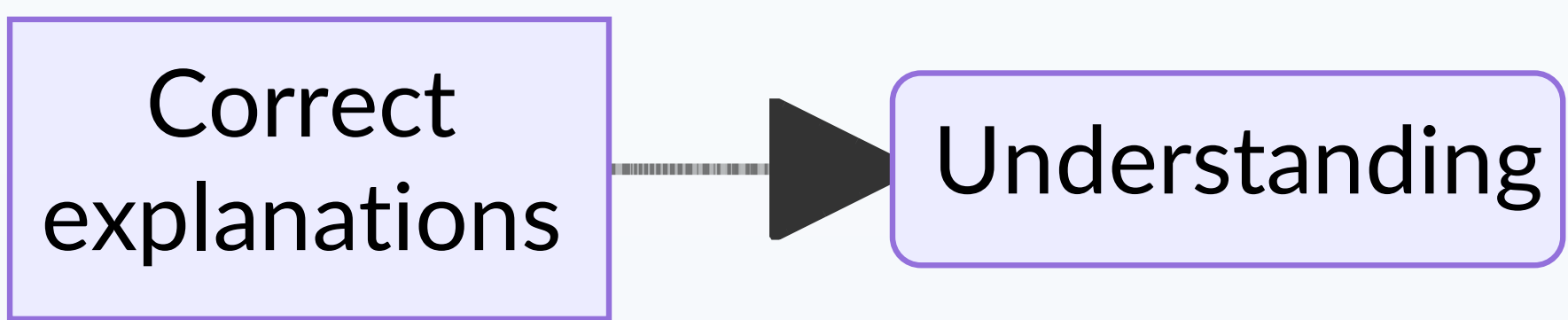
- Explanations have **internal** and **external** conditions of correctness
- HPEs **can satisfy** both conditions
- HPEs **can** be correct explanations

Provide understanding?

- Need to disambiguate between **downstream** and **upstream** contributions
- SA-U is **compatible** with downstream contribution

Upshots

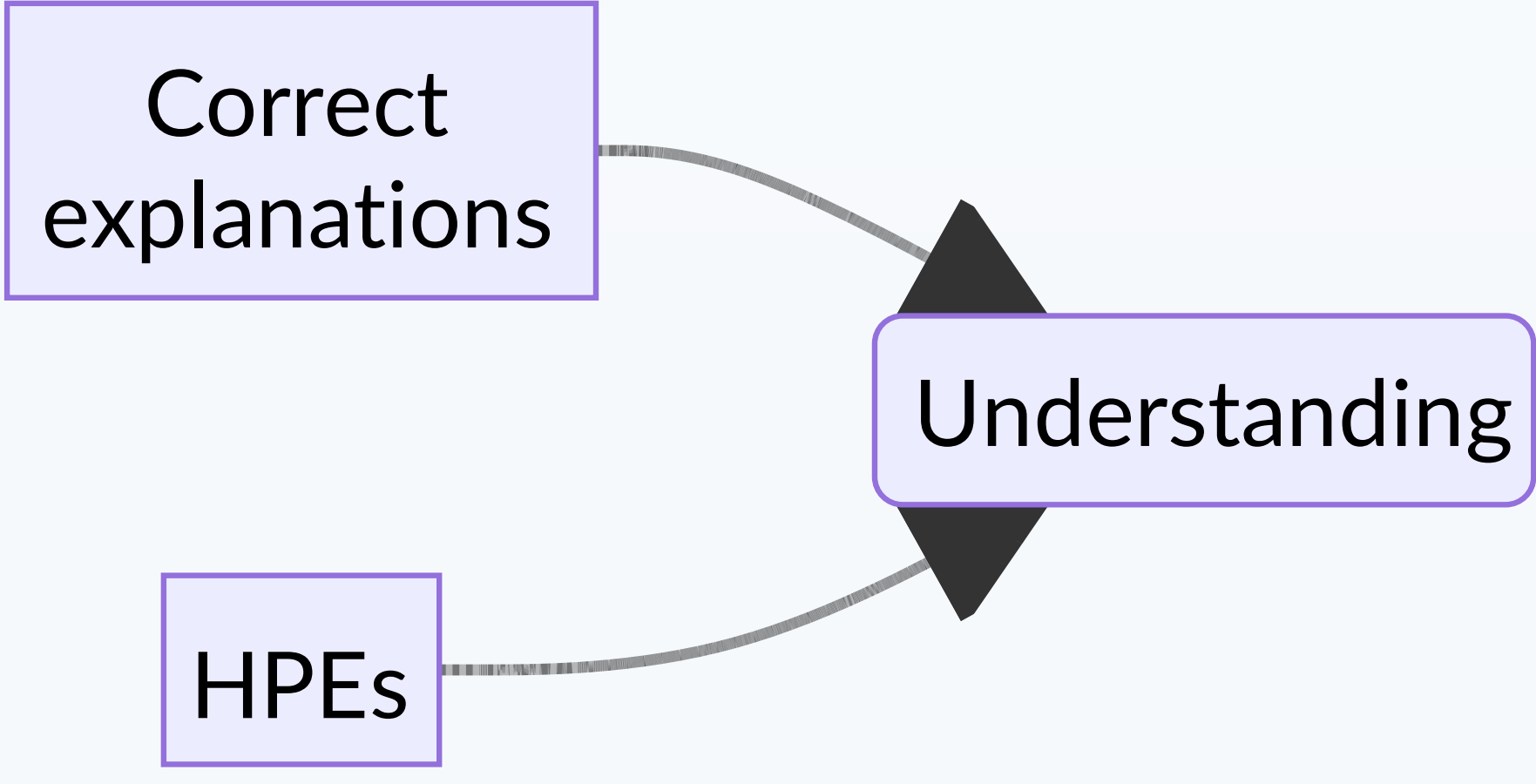
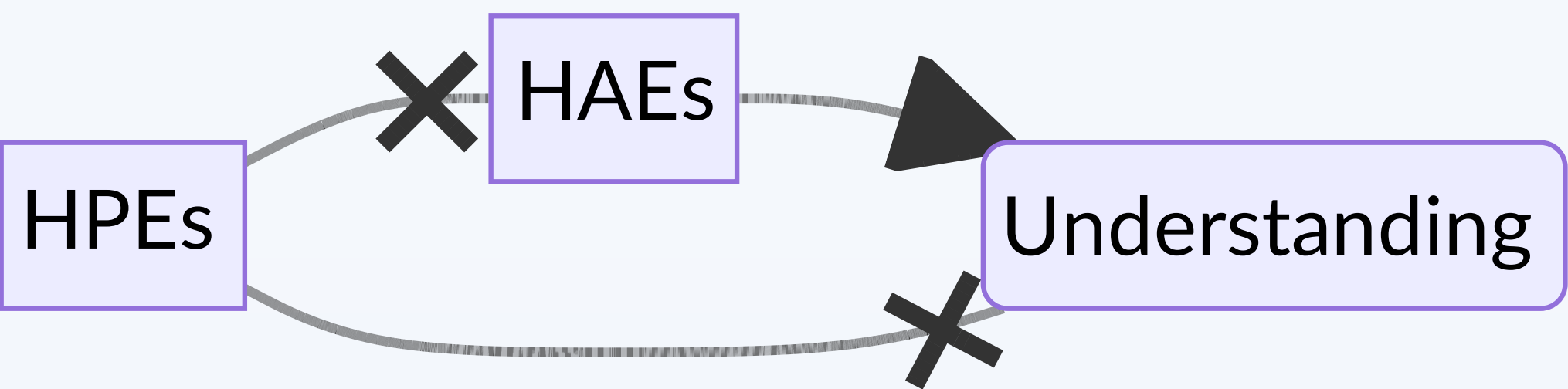
- Substantial **room for reconciliation** between SA-U and HPE-U
- The **real disputes** concern:
 - Whether having an HAE is necessary for minimal understanding
 - Whether having only an HPE is sufficient for minimal understanding



HPEs

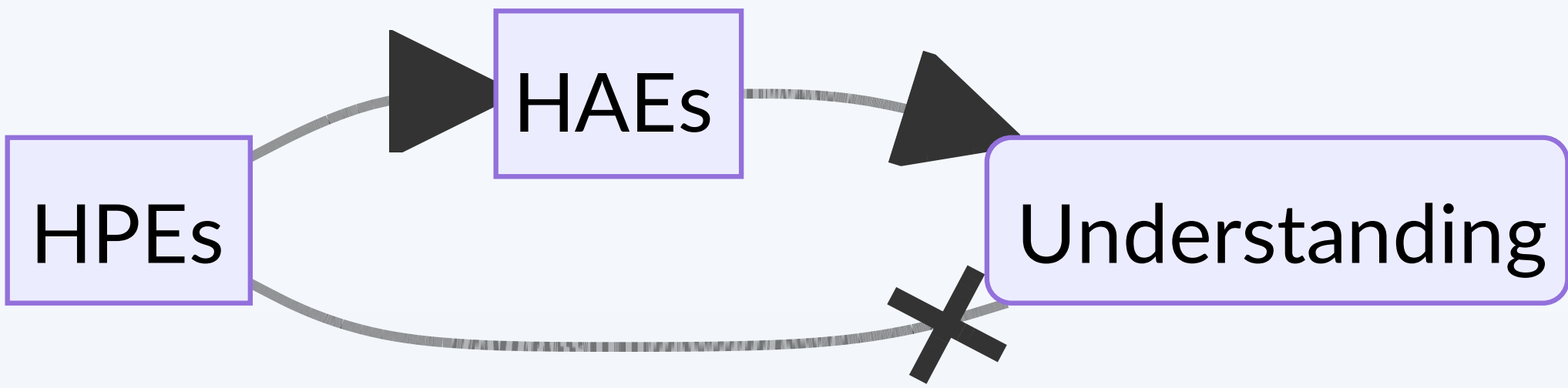
SA-U: Downstream

SA-U3-Downstream: HPEs cannot contribute to understanding even if we have an HAE



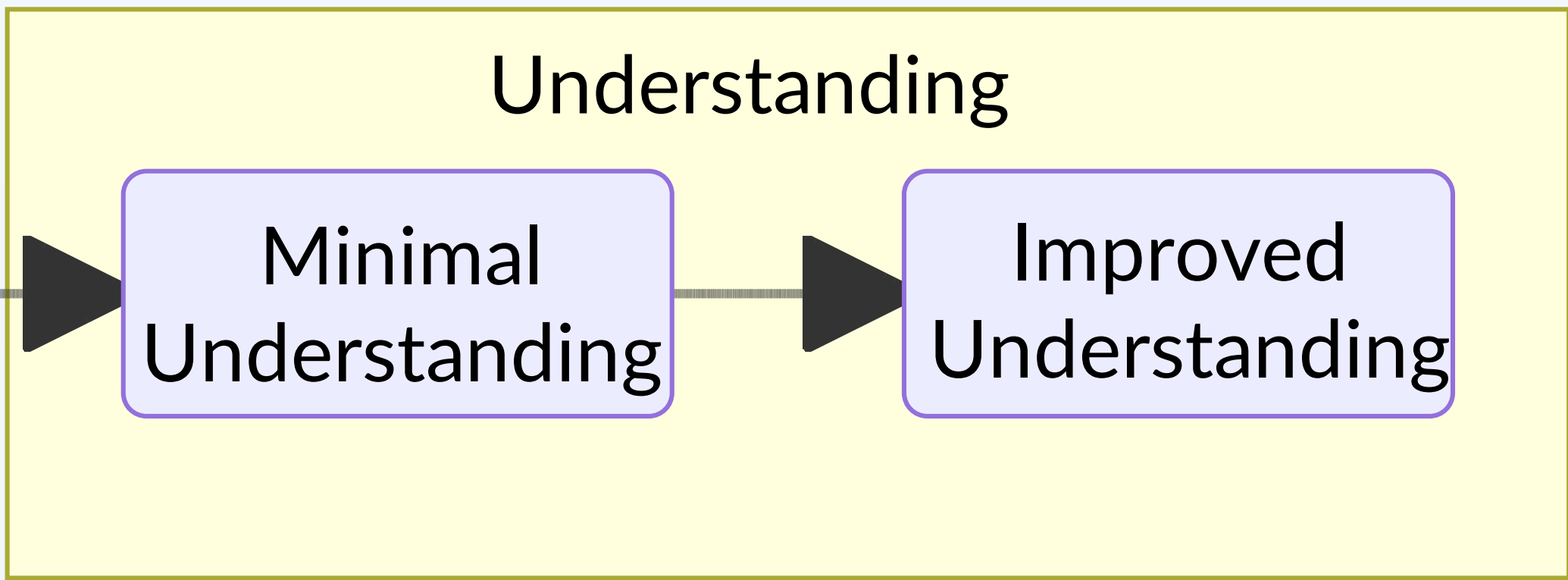
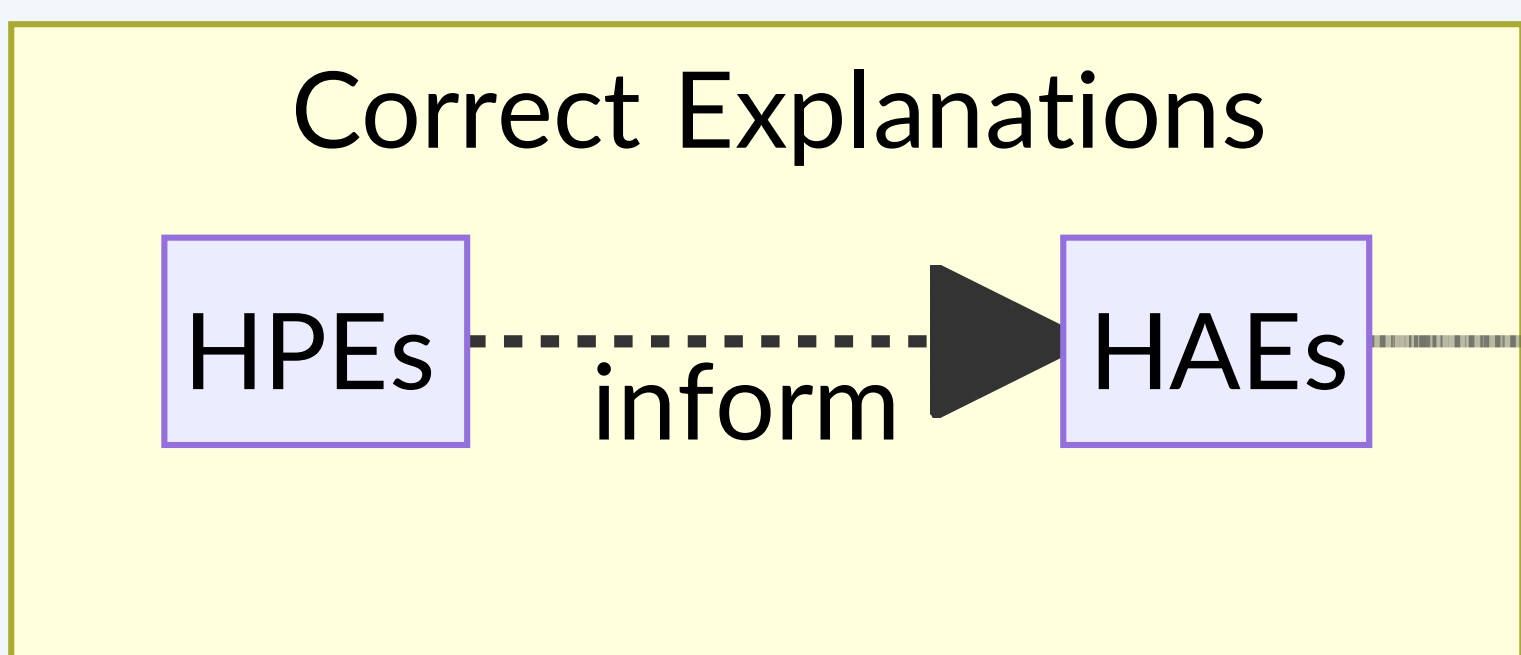
SA-U: Upstream

SA-U3-Upstream: HPEs cannot, in the absence of an HAE, contribute to understanding



Revised SA-U

- SA-U1':** Only correct explanations can provide understanding
- SA-U1a:** Minimal understanding requires an HAE
- SA-U1b:** Improved understanding requires minimal understanding
- SA-U2':** HPEs are correct explanations, but distinct from HAEs
- SA-U3-Upstream:** ∴ HPEs cannot, in the absence of an HAE, contribute to understanding



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Glossary

- HAEs:** how-actually explanations
- HPEs:** how-possibly explanations
- HPE-U:** thesis that HPEs can provide understanding
- SA-U:** standard account of understanding