

# Six Facets of Understanding: Learning Objectives

Understanding by Design by Wiggins and McTighe:

A Summary

In “Understanding by Design,” Wiggins and McTighe (1998) lay out a conceptual framework for instructional designers. Unlike many instructional design models that come from a training background, the Wiggins and McTighe model is well suited for the academic community. Two of their biggest contributions are:

The “backwards design” instructional design model

The “Six Facets of Understanding”

## **Six Facets of Understanding**

1. explain:  
Provide thorough and justifiable accounts of phenomena, facts, and data.
2. interpret:  
Tell meaningful stories, offer apt translations, provide a revealing historical or personal dimension to ideas and events; make subjects personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and models.
3. apply:  
Effectively use and adapt what they know in diverse contexts.
4. have perspective:  
See and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture.
5. empathize:  
Find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible; perceive sensitively on the basis of prior

indirect experience.

6. have self-knowledge:

Perceive the personal style, prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that both shape and impede our own understanding; they are aware of what they do not understand and why understanding is so hard.