

# Online Faculty Update

From the Center for Instructional Technology

September 2014  
Newsletter

## Welcome Back!



### Welcome back to campus!

I hope you had a wonderful summer! This fall we hope you will join us for a Faculty Showcase series where WSU's exemplary courses will be presented by the award winning faculty members who have created them. The schedule for these fantastic presentations will be available soon!



I am happy to tell you about some **new additions** that are built right into Plato! **Atomic Learning** is a great resource that provides video tutorials on hundreds of software applications and topics for you and your students. **VoiceThread** allows students to add voice, video or text comments to a narrated presentation that you create. **NBC Learn Videos** are now available under the Mashups! You can search many topics and find great videos to post directly in your class. In addition to these great new tools, you can include **learning objects** in your courses which the CIT student staff can produce for you!

**Concerned about academic honesty and identity?** We have turned on the **SafeAssign** plagiarism tool and the **Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor** in your classes.

**Interested in Student Achievement and Retention?** Smarthinking free online tutoring and **WSU 360 Retention Center** are also now located right inside Plato.

**Interested in teaching online?** Web Camp trainings are coming soon for instructors who would like to convert their face to face courses to the online format. **Web Camp** training has a heavy emphasis on pedagogy and student/content interaction.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to learn more about CIT's services and training for faculty teaching online. Be sure to check out the CIT Calendar at [www.westfield.ma.edu/cit](http://www.westfield.ma.edu/cit) for upcoming showcases and trainings!  
Have a great semester!

~ Lynn Zayac, Director, Center for Instructional Technology ~ [lzayac@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:lzayac@westfield.ma.edu)

## Great Start to the Fall Semester!

All students have been successfully loaded into the Plato system and new students are loaded as they register. It can take up to 24 hours for a new student to be added into their Plato class if they are registering late. Once logged in, all students have access to the Student Overview course on their Plato Dashboard. This overview course will help them get familiar with Plato and provides video tutorials and visuals to assist them during the semester!

~ Joe Axenroth, Plato Administrator - [jaxenroth@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:jaxenroth@westfield.ma.edu)



## Professors Hanselman & Gendron selected for 2014 COD Award

MCO's 10th Annual Conference on eLearning & Best Practices was held on June 4, 2014 at Bridgewater State U.

The 2014 Mass Colleges Online Course of Distinction "COD" was awarded in both an "Online" category and a "Blended" category this year. WSU had two of our best and brightest in the mix. Professor Jennifer Hanselman's Climate Change course recieved the online award. Her mastery of discussions and work with virtual labs demonstrates Jen's understanding of the importance of making connections and communication with her students.



Professor Cassondra Gendron's Elementary Statistics course recieved the blended course award and her dedication to students is shown through her use of video tutorials which take the student step by step through problems and solutions. Check out all of the COD winning courses at: <https://codawards.wordpress.com/>

*~Congratulations to both of these amazing instructors! ~*

## What's happening in CIT? - Web Camp!

The Center for Instructional Technology was very busy this summer. We held a Web Camp and trained 15 faculty members, and worked with faculty throughout the summer. Web Camp is a workshop series that trains Day and DGCE faculty to migrate their traditional face-to-face classes to the online learning environment and design their classes within the PLATO course management system. As always, we offer continued support and training throughout the year.

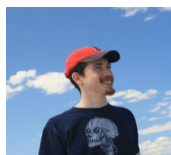


### Web Camp with Honors!

Westfield State University was ranked as one of four Honor Roll schools named to U.S. News & World Report's first-ever edition of Top Online Education Program rankings. Westfield State's online bachelor's degree completion programs were ranked #3 in faculty credentials and training. CIT's Web Camp was also awarded the Program of Distinction by the Board of Higher Education.



## Learning Objects



Learning objects are instructional resources specifically designed to promote interactive learning. CIT has a learning object specialist, Gordon Hall, a student that can create learning objects for faculty based on course needs.

A gallery of completed learning objects can be viewed in PLATO. For access to the CIT Interactive Learning Objects Repository, if you would like to have an object created for your PLATO course, or would like to learn more about Adobe Edge and Learning Objects, please email Gordon Hall at [ghall6690@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:ghall6690@westfield.ma.edu). ~ Gordon Hall, CIT Student Staff Member



## Schedule a Plato Quick Start Session with Lisa Clark

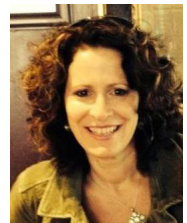
**Haven't used Plato? Schedule a Plato Quick Start session with Lisa!** Plato (Blackboard Learn 9) is a Learning Management System (LMS) that allows you to post announcements to your class, upload your syllabus, and readings, hold threaded discussions, create assignment dropboxes, and much more. If you would like to learn how to supplement your face to face courses with these great tools call 413-572-8249 or send an email to [lclark@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:lclark@westfield.ma.edu) to set up a time for training!

**Current Plato Users! Schedule a Course Tune-Up with Lisa.** Now that you have been using Plato for a while, make an appointment with Lisa to help enhance your course even further. Learn how to use great new tools like NBC Learn, VoiceThreads, Safe Assignment and Atomic Learning! Discuss a powerpoint, or show how to do a problem in Excel with Jing, an easy to use screen capture software from TechSmith. Learn how to set up a virtual office using Blackboard Collaborate to meet with students in real time, on-line from just about anywhere. Get more familiar with the Grade Center and learn how to use the new "Croc Doc" tools when grading assignments.

Whether you want to add an image to your course, upload your readings or meet with your students in real time online, Lisa can get you up to speed in no time.

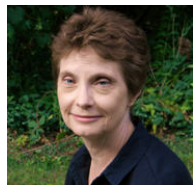
For more information or to set up an appointment contact:

Lisa Clark, Online Faculty Support Specialist  
413-572-8249      [lclark@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:lclark@westfield.ma.edu)  
[www.westfield.ma.edu/plato](http://www.westfield.ma.edu/plato)



## Smarthinking - Free Online Tutoring

CIT has once again partnered with Smarthinking to provide FREE Online Tutoring for WSU students. Basic subjects (Math, Liberal Arts) are available 24/7 and scheduled times are posted for many subjects, including (but not limited to) Writing, Accounting, Chemistry, Biology, and Nursing. To use this service, students log into Plato and click 'Launch Smarthinking' on the 'Smarthinking' module on the Plato Dashboard. They can also get to Smarthinking via the Help Desk content area on the left sidebar in all Plato classes. Students can choose from the Writing Center, Drop-In Tutoring, Scheduled Tutoring or Offline Questions. Smarthinking's Writing Center will help generate ideas for writing assignments, as well as critiquing drafts of papers. Tutoring sessions are archived and may be reviewed at a later time. Click the 'Free Tutoring Online' link on the Plato login page, and select Faculty Handbook for more ideas on using this great resource! For questions or help with this tool please contact Valerie at [vdepina@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:vdepina@westfield.ma.edu).



## CIT Calendar

The new CIT Calendar is hot off the presses! Feel free to stop by and see us here the CIT in Wilson 114 to pick up a copy. You can also call 413-572-8130 or email Valerie at [vdepina@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:vdepina@westfield.ma.edu) and she will drop one in the campus mail for you.



## CIT Streaming Services

The CIT offers streaming services for videos that you would like your students to view in your Plato Online courses. Stop into the CIT, call x 8130, or email [vdepina@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:vdepina@westfield.ma.edu) to ask Valerie about our CIT Video Streaming Services!  
~ I would be happy to answer your questions about video streaming possibilities! ~Valerie



**A few of our favorite tools!**



Jing is a simple program that enables faculty to quickly record and easily post short lectures and tutorials. Recordings can be used online to supplement your classes. Contact Lisa at ext. 8249 or lclark@westfield.ma.edu to schedule a training.

**Blackboard collaborate**

Blackboard Collaborate is an easy to use program that enables faculty to hold virtual classes, video conferences and virtual office hours and capture for later viewing. Contact Lisa at ext. 8249 or lclark@westfield.ma.edu to schedule a training.



Atomic Learning is now built right into Plato and allows you to search for video tutorials that help students, faculty, and staff successfully utilize various technologies.



Providing training on more than 250 commonly used software applications, such as Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite, and Google Docs, Atomic Learning has a library of more than 60,000 how-to tutorials. Students can learn how to effectively participate in online discussions in their Plato classes (Blackboard Learn 9 training), how to avoid plagiarism, how to write research papers in APA, MLA, or Chicago Style formats, and much much more. For further information or assistance, contact the CIT at ext. 8130.



VoiceThread allows users to post or upload different types of media (documents, slide presentations, videos or photos) either from a website or from the user's computer. Comments can be added and the author can share by sending the link or by embedding into an existing website. Viewers then add their own comments. These group conversations are collected in one place and do not require users to install any software.

**Are you concerned about academic honesty and Identity verification?**



SafeAssign compares submitted assignments against a set of academic papers to identify areas of overlap between the submitted assignment and existing works. SafeAssign is used to prevent plagiarism and to create opportunities to help students identify how to properly attribute sources.



**Respondus LockDown Browser™** is a custom browser that locks down the testing environment within PLATO. When students use Respondus LockDown Browser they are unable to print, copy, go to another URL, or access other applications. When an assessment is started, students are locked into it until they submit it for grading.

**Respondus Monitor** is a companion application that integrates webcam technology with LockDown Browser. Together they address the issues of student identity and cheating, creating security for non-proctored assessments.

~ For more information or training contact Lisa at ext. 8249 or lclark@westfield.ma.edu.

