Would you like to use Learning Objects in your online or hybrid class? CIT student staff can create learning objects based on your specific course needs.

What is a learning object?

A learning object is an instructional resource specifically designed to promote interactive learning.

Rachel Smith defines a digital learning object:

"A digital learning object consists of content and an interface. The content is made up of assets, which are the materials or "blocks" that make up the learning object: images, text passages, videos, etc. The interface is the part of the learning object with which the user interacts. It includes the graphic design, navigational elements, and other controls that the user sees. An interface may be as simple as a single web page that presents text and images, or as complicated as a screenful of controls to set the parameters of a simulated chemistry experiment." (Rachel Smith, Guidelines for Authors of Learning Objects, NMC: The New Media Consortium, 2004, pp. 1-2)

Types of Learning Objects

- **Presentation object –** Direct instruction and presentation resources designed with the intention to transmit specific subject matter. E.g. simple e-learning presentations as defined in the IMS Content Package framework.
- **Practice object –** Drill and practice with feedback, educational game or representation that allows practice and learning of certain procedures
- **Simulation object**
  Representation of some real-life system or process
- **Conceptual model**
  Representation of a key concept or related concepts of subject matter
- **Information object**
  Display of information organized and represented with modalities
- **Contextual representation**
  Data displayed as it emerges from represented authentic scenario
  Churchill (2007:484)

Learning Object Examples

Long Bone Identification Exercise:
https://cit.westfield.ma.edu/edge/GordonEdgeObject/longBone/longBone.html

Applying Theory Culture:
https://cit.westfield.ma.edu/edge/lynnSocClass/applyingTheoryCulture/applyingTheoryCulture.html

Cultural Values of Selected Countries:
https://cit.westfield.ma.edu/edge/lynnSocClass/globalSnapshot/globalSnapshot.html

How is it used in a course?
A digital learning object is meant to be used in an online course to present visual and or audio information in an interactive manner. They are incorporated into PLATO as link to an html page, and are primarily meant as a resource available on PLATO, although they could be used in class as well. The learning objects are made using the Adobe Edge Animate, a drag and drop editor. The objects themselves are web pages made of html5, css and javascript.

A few of our CIT student interns have been trained on developing learning objects, and he or she can meet with faculty individually to develop objects. The hope is as interest among faculty increases and more examples are developed, these interns will assist you with your learning objects.

For faculty interested in creating their own objects using the Adobe Edge Software, pre-made Edge templates with code are available to use.

As a professor, what do I need to provide if I want one made?
You will need to have an idea for an object and how it will be used in your course. One of our interns will meet with you to discuss your idea for design. He or she will then create the learning object and send you a link which you can place inside of your Plato course shell or on your webpage, and or blog.

To find out more, email Valerie at vdepina@westfield.ma.edu to schedule an appointment.