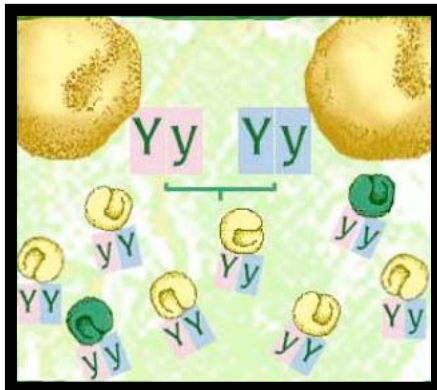


What on Earth is a Learning Object?

Have you been hearing about Learning Objects lately? Are you confused about what it means? Does it involve having to create material yourself?

MERLOT defines a Learning Object as anything that helps your students accomplish a Learning Objective in your course. A Learning Object can take many forms: a chapter of a textbook, a PowerPoint presentation, an online simulation, a guest expert delivering a presentation over the internet. These resources are made accessible online by other teachers so that they can be exchanged, re-used and adapted to meet the needs of your students and the objectives of your curriculum. Learning Objects are course content broken into “chunks” which can be reused by other teachers. You use these units of instructional materials to compose a high quality course curriculum without you having to create the materials yourself. Using Learning Objects of proven quality can save you time in designing your course and teaching materials and facilitates learning. In MERLOT, many Learning Objects are augmented with teaching expertise from other faculty who reuse them. These high quality Learning Objects enable you to be more effective as a teacher, and also to share your own expertise with a wider community.

Here are some examples of Learning Objects available through MERLOT, to illustrate how creative faculty members have incorporated reusable online resources into their own designs for student learning:



Classic Genetics from DNA from the Beginning

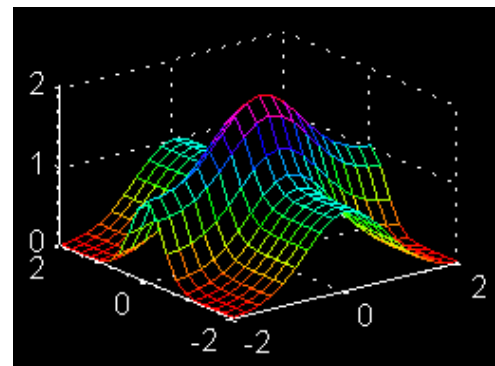
In Biology, a Learning Objective may be to *understand how crosses of plants and animals can be used to investigate the principles of inheritance.*

This Flash animation shows an experiment in which genetic crosses are done, helping students learn that genes come in pairs, alleles can be dominant or recessive, and that Punnet squares can predict ratios of phenotypes in offspring. This activity can be done in class, in small groups or as homework.

Partial Derivatives (Geometrically) Gallery

In Calculus, a Learning Objective may be to *develop an understanding of the geometric nature of partial derivatives.*

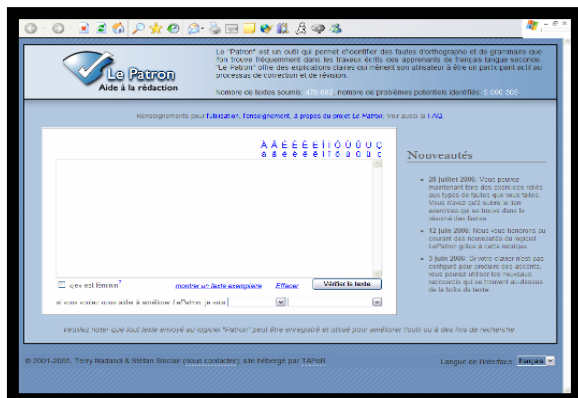
In class, students are directed to find specific partial derivatives for functions in a worksheet. After a review of the correct answers, animations of each function and a geometric view of its indicated partial derivate can be displayed with this Gallery. This enables students to easily see the geometric nature of a partial derivative.



Le Patron

In a beginning French class, a Learning Objective may be to learn to *proofread and correct compositions in French*.

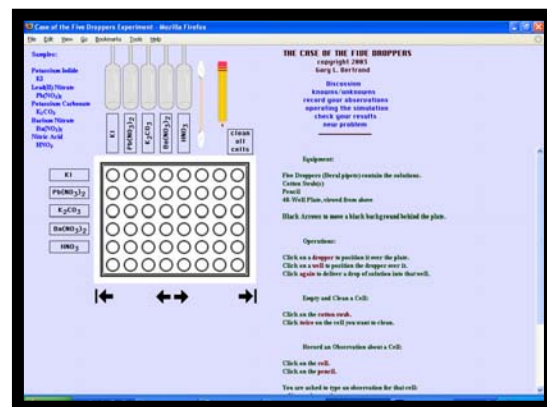
This is a useful proofreading tool that will find spelling and grammar errors in French. Students can instantly find their mistakes in order to correct them. The instructor shows this tool early in the term to make them responsible for their own proofreading.



The Case of the Five Droppers

In a Chemistry class, a Learning Objective is to help students learn types of chemical reactions, logical thinking and lab techniques.

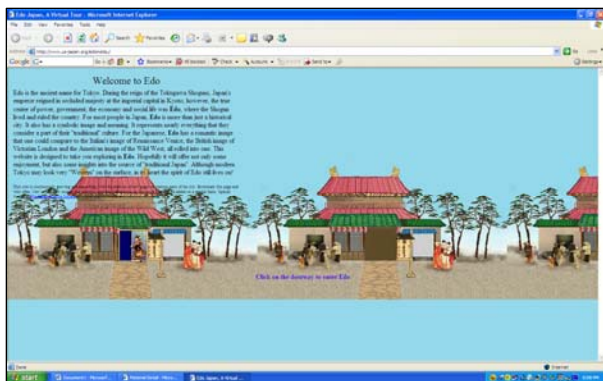
Here, students are able to simulate precipitation, gas formation and acid-base reactions, take notes like they would in a lab, and check their results, all from their computer. This is an easy way for students to visualize and practice the reactions without being in a lab.



Edo Japan, A Virtual Tour

For a History of the World Civilization Class, a Learning Objective could be to understand Japanese culture and history during the Tokugawa Period from 1600-1868 when Japan isolated itself from the rest of the world.

Here, Japanese wood block paintings illustrate Japan's history and culture during the Tokugawa Era. Entering the site, a map of Edo (Tokyo), the Shogun capital appears. As students click on each of over two dozen stars on the map, they learn about Japanese history, culture and social class.



Learning Objects are little “pieces” of learning material that can be inserted into your course to help your students learn something. You can find Learning Objects for many topics and courses by doing a Search in MERLOT, or Browse the Collection. These Learning Objects can be used in online courses as well as traditional, face-to-face courses and can be used within the context of a Learning Management System. So, go to MERLOT right now and start building your course with these little chunks of Learning Objects.