Learning objects can enhance the educational environment for both learners and instructors. The Nursing Education And Technology (NEAT) project, funded by the US Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), is a collaborative effort involving 10 schools of nursing across the country to create reusable learning objects for teaching health disparities and patient safety. Three teams were created for this purpose. To ensure institutional support and commitment for the project, as well as to deal with administrative issues involved in sharing resources, the Collaborative Administrators Team was created, consisting of deans or/and associate deans from each of the 10 partner schools. We also had two Design Teams, one for each of the topic areas chosen by the deans, made up of faculty representatives from each of the schools. The Design Teams were responsible for identification of the learning objectives to be addressed with learning objects, participation in peer reviews of the products developed, and piloting of learning objects within courses at their respective institutions. For development of the learning objects, a technology support staff worked closely with faculty from within the partner schools as well as without. Many strategies were tried to facilitate and streamline this process. We will share lessons learned about effective (and not effective) strategies to work with content experts to produce learning objects.

However, learning objects are only useful if they are easily accessible to faculty and students and if faculty know how to incorporate learning objects into their teaching. With this in mind, the project also developed the NEAT Learning Objects Repository as well as a Virtual Teaching Guide. The Guide provides faculty with information about learning objects in general, including pedagogical rationale, copyright issues, examples, and links to other repositories and resources, as well as a learning object on how to effectively incorporate learning objects into their courses. It also has a section where faculty share their tips and tricks they have discovered in using learning objects.

The NEAT Project is evaluating not only the products of the project but also the process involved in creating and disseminating those products. Evaluation data from participants, faculty, and students Various strategies for sustaining the products of the project are currently being explored and will be shared in the final paper/presentation.