It is the aim of this paper to discuss some didactic constraints on the use and reuse of digital modular learning objects. Engineering education is used as the specific context of use with examples from courses in introductory electronics and mathematics. Digital multimedia and modular learning objects have been proclaimed as important elements in e-learning for a long time, and there are good reasons to believe in the benefits of interactive multimedia as well as flexible and modular learning objects. Nevertheless the use and reuse of learning objects on a large scale seems to be a slow success. Constraints on reuse arise from the nature of conceptual understanding in higher education and the functionality of learning objects within present technologies. We will need didactic as well as technical perspectives on learning objects in designing for understanding.