

Nebraska eLearning Pilot Project

ESEA Title II Part D

Through the combined efforts of higher education, community colleges, ESU's, and K-12 teachers, the Nebraska eLearning Pilot Project will create an innovative eEducation environment in which to explore the use of course management software in an effort to enhance education for students in the state of Nebraska.

The primary objective of the research initiative will be to measure in a formal manner the effectiveness of the use of various course management features and functionality for a variety of student populations and to use a number of presentation modes and formats.

Student populations that will be impacted by the eLearning initiative include students in grades 6 - 12, students from throughout Nebraska, students from all sizes of school districts, students who participate over a synchronous distance education network, and students who participate in a regular classroom setting. Estimated number of students that will be impacted by the eLearning project in 2003-04 will be 1,700.

The fifty teachers that are involved in the project will realize many benefits. The primary benefit will be the opportunity to design and implement digital support for their classes. Being on the leading edge, these teachers will be developing a digital curriculum base which will be essential as students accessibility to technology increases.

Additional benefits will include

- access to expanded course communication tools.
- mentoring/collaborating with higher education faculty who actively utilize course management software.
- access to course management and instructional design training and support.
- integrate technology into course development.
- expanded access to other eLearning resources.
- flexibility to enhance classroom instruction by creating on-line components□ (assessment, lesson planning, or rubric development).

As the intent of the project is to measure eLearning and not a particular software program, both Blackboard and WebCT programs which are supported by higher education will be included in the project. The entire project will be centered around professional development.

Support for the project which includes administrative hosting of the eLearning programs, training on the technical aspects of the software, and instructing in the strategies of course development for participating schools and their students will be provided by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska-Omaha, University of Nebraska-Kearney, Wayne State College, and Peru State College. Educational Service Units 1, 3, 5, 10, and 18 will provide additional technical and staff development support.

Schools participating in the Nebraska eLearning Project include Bertrand Public Schools, Elwood Public Schools, Franklin Public Schools, Kearney Public Schools, Palmer Public Schools, Wilcox-Hildreth Public Schools, Lincoln Public Schools, Westside Community Schools, Wakefield Public Schools, Creighton Public Schools, Laurel-Concord Public Schools, Wayne Public Schools, Wausa Public Schools, Auburn Public Schools, Sterling Public Schools, Pawnee Public Schools, Nebraska City Public Schools, and selected Omaha area partner schools.