

Iowa Learning Online Enters Third Phase of Development

By Melanie Rippin, Heartland AEA

Iowa Learning Online, a two-year-old initiative of the Iowa Department of Education, has moved into its third phase of development. Since the main mission of ILO is to expand course offerings for Iowa high school students, movement into Phase III, which allows for many additional courses, is vital for sustainability. Schools faced with gaps in their course offerings or too few students enrolled in a particular class can utilize the program to access additional courses or increase current course numbers within existing classes.

Roll out of ILO Phase I and II activities took place in 2004. During Phase I, master teachers were hired to develop and offer quality, at-a-distance, high school classes. As a result of these efforts, Anatomy/Physiology, Chemistry, Physics, and Calculus classes are now offered FREE to Iowa schools. Phase II incorporated additional FREE classes to the list of ILO high school credit classes through the purchase of existing online courses or through partnerships with Iowa schools and teachers. The classes in these first two phases were offered free to promote use of the program and demonstrate its effectiveness.

During the important shift to Phase III, the ILO program is collaborating with school districts and community colleges to expand curriculum choice and offer classes for a fee. Some of the high school credit classes currently being offered for a minimal tuition fee include AP Music Theory, French, German, Spanish, and Visual Arts. Additional courses of this type are being developed for the 2006-2007 school year.

Within this phase, ILO will support schools' efforts to share their own high quality, rigorous courses with each other. These new school-owned classes charge minimal tuition fees paid by the receiving schools. ILO supports this course sharing process by paying ICN video reservation costs, providing needed WebCT online seats, offering an online student registration system, and posting class descriptions on the ILO web page to increase statewide awareness of offered courses.

If your school is interested in offering or sharing a class, please visit the ILO website at <http://www.iowalearningonline.org/> You may also contact Arlan Thorson at athorson@iowalearningonline.org or 515 238-4765.

Originally published in the May *ICN News*