

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact Betty VanDeventer 402.471.4537 betty.vandeventer@nebraska.gov

Oct. 30, 2009

NEBRASKA ED DEPARTMENT, EDUCATORS CONNECTED THROUGH iTunes U

The Nebraska Department of Education unveiled today a new iTunes U tool that will deliver informational videos to educators and, in the future, homework help for students.

Nebraska educators now have mobile access to informational videos that can be downloaded to their computer, iPhone and iPod touch by connecting to iTunes U at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/TEHCEN/>.

“iTunes U is a mobile learning tool that will now allow Nebraska educators to access information developed for them here in Nebraska,” said Mike Kozak, education technology administrator at the Nebraska Department of Education. Kozak unveiled the project today at the Administrators’ Technology Conference in Kearney.

The Nebraska Department of Education has worked with Apple, Inc., to develop a K-12 educational component to iTunes U. Apple chose Nebraska as one of 10 states to initiate mobile learning at the K-12 school level.

At this time, the site offers informational videos developed by Nebraska Department of Education staff as part of their ongoing and expanded communications with educators statewide. For example, informational videos are available to Nebraska educators with the latest federal and state information about federal education requirements, federal programs and the new state reading and mathematics standards. Model world language lesson plans in Spanish as well videos featuring songs and dances in Spanish are available as well as model lesson plans in German and French. These lesson plans were developed in part by Vickie Scow, the Nebraska Department of Education’s world language curriculum consultant.

“This tool will allow Nebraska Department of Education staff to develop model reading and mathematics lesson plans for teachers to use to help students meet the new state standards,” Kozak said. The Nebraska Department of Education will also use iTunes U to provide professional development and school improvement information to schools statewide. And, iTunes U opens up the possibility of Nebraska educators providing homework help to students.

“We are pleased to have this strong, new resource to offer to educators,” Kozak said.

“The potential is unlimited and access is unlimited,” Kozak said, noting that people worldwide can now access video content developed by the Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska educators

statewide through iTunes U. The Nebraska Department of Education is working with other education partners to further develop iTunes U. For example, Educational Service Units are developing videos to help students with their homework and local school districts may now develop and display content through videos on iTunes U.

As one of 10 pilot states, Nebraska began work on the project about a year ago with the goal of featuring videos developed by department staff. States that had already produced video content for educators were selected by Apple to participate in the project.

Apple owns iTunes U and provides server space so states can display the video content they develop as part of the project at no cost.