

IDL Inspires Learning



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Lincoln USD 298
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Having Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) classes available has meant that “a tremendous amount of learning is taking place” says Brenda White, District Technology Coordinator for Lincoln USD 298. “We can offer courses to other schools that we couldn’t before, and we can bring courses in that we didn’t have available to our students.” White said that Lincoln sends foreign language “to other sites...smaller rural schools that don’t have foreign language teachers. We also offer Psychology and Sociology, Human Growth and Development, courses like that. Rural schools can’t afford a teacher [in all those different subjects], but they can afford to connect with us.”

Community members even come into the school in the evenings to participate in classes through Cloud County Community College. White says that she knows “a lot of adults wouldn’t drive to take a class”, but they will participate if the opportunity is available locally. White also described the availability of in-service participation, “Last year instead of driving all the way to Girard for an in-service, we were able to stay in Lincoln and just connect to them and not have to drive. So we can use it for in-service and it saves us money with transportation costs.”

Lincoln also uses videoconferencing for several other school projects. White described a specific example about the high school government class. “Last year my seniors were able to connect with Jerry Moran in Washington D.C. That was excellent for their government class...no way would they be able to fly out to Washington D.C. to see him. They had interview questions and he answered them ...they discussed different issues. It was really neat because some of the things they asked, Jerry Moran really didn’t know about, and he was really interested in them and followed up with emails later on with the students so it was on-going afterwards.”

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Another example involved Lincoln’s K-6 students. “Our grade school is able to connect with the rainforest at Greenbush, so they get to see all the different little creatures and things like that down there that they wouldn’t normally see because we wouldn’t have snakes, beetles, and all that stuff here in Lincoln. So that’s an opportunity...they love those IDL classes. The [teacher] from Greenbush, she gets on the IDL with them and takes them through different experiments and math lessons. My teachers love it - they are connecting all the time. It probably impacts about 200 students because all the teachers do it. The teachers just like the variety that they have...like the different experiments, math lessons, reading lessons, and connecting to the rainforest. The students are really motivated and excited about learning when we do it over IDL. It really gets their attention.”

Lincoln is also taking advantage of the opportunity for their high school students to earn college credit. White explained that they offer “Dual-credit for juniors and seniors...we receive college speech, our students have an opportunity to receive college credit that they normally wouldn’t. They [students] like it.”

“Videoconferencing is vital for rural schools...with the budget cuts and all that’s taking place we wouldn’t be able to offer or receive courses. **I just think it’s important that all Kansas schools have the same opportunities available or have access to it.**”