

Online Education Ratchets Up For Georgia Students: Georgia Virtual School Joins the NROC Network

MONTEREY, Calif., September 8, 2008 –Taking classes in cyberspace just got better for Georgia high school students. Since its inception in 2005, Georgia Virtual School (GAVS) has been improving its online offerings to serve a growing number of students each year. As part of this effort, GAVS has become a supporting member of the National Repository of Online Courses (NROC), making this library of top notch online courses available to students and educators across Georgia.

“It’s good, accurate and very rigorous,” said GAVS program coordinator Stephanie Dunbar about NROC’s course content.

Selected as the best of their kind, NROC courses utilize a vast array of digital media options to engage students in dozens of subjects, ranging from algebra to U.S. history. Interactive simulations, flash objects and iPod downloads are among the digital technologies forming the multimedia platform that bring online learning to a new level and gives educators flexibility in using all or part of the material as teaching tools.

“NROC content will allow us to expand the multimedia components of our online courses and provide alternative avenues for different learning styles. It will benefit both our students and the teachers who are using it,” said GAVS program coordinator for course development Jay Heap.

Through its NROC membership, GAVS can adapt NROC content to align with Georgia’s educational standards and meet the needs of individual schools throughout the state. Over 450,000 Georgia high school students can now surf over to the specially designed GAVS website at www.hippocampus.org/myHippo/?user=myGVS where they can access NROC course content tailored to work in conjunction with popular textbooks and the state’s curriculum.

“One of our goals is to support classroom teachers across Georgia, so we are very excited that we can offer the NROC materials as a resource for them,” said Dunbar.

Online classes serve a broad spectrum of students by providing increased access to core curriculum, elective and advanced placement coursework, as well as greater flexibility in scheduling.

Collaboration among NROC Network members adds a unique dimension to online course development. Educators, administrators, technologists and designers from around the globe use the NROC social authoring network to combine their skills and experience to develop and refine existing course materials and forge new content.

This collaboration method, within a non-profit structure, creates high quality courses for a very reasonable cost, according to Gary Lopez, executive director of the Monterey Institute for

Technology and Education (MITE), the organization that launched NROC. He said this is valuable “because it frees up resources for other infrastructural needs in educational systems, and because it’s supported by a community of educators – scholarship is back in the hands of scholars.”

NROC is an open educational resource (OER) project of MITE, supported by a grant from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The OER movement is fueled by the belief that everyone is entitled to an education no matter where they live or what their circumstances are. By joining NROC, educational institutions support OER and receive a variety of benefits including customizable content, specialized support and professional development resources. NROC’s content is also accessible to individual learners free of charge at www.hippocampus.org.

The Monterey Institute for Technology and Education is a non-profit educational organization committed to helping meet society’s need for access to effective, high-quality educational opportunities in an era of rapid economic, social and personal change. The Monterey Institute for Technology and Education was founded in 2003 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Learn more at www.montereyinstitute.org/nroc.

Georgia Virtual School is part of the Georgia Department of Education’s office of technology services. GAVS is fully accredited and offers middle and high school level classes including a full high school curriculum with Advanced Placement® and college preparatory courses taught by certified teachers. Additionally, GAVS offers students a chance to retake classes they were not previously successful in as part of Georgia DOE’s credit recovery program. Learn more at www.gavirtualschool.org/

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