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Technology and Deaf Education
Exploring Instructional and Access Technologies

PEN-INTERNATIONAL: FOSTERING INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS WITH INSTRUCTIONAL AND ACCESS TECHNOLOGIES

Presenters: Minoru Yoshida

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>> MINORU YOSHIDA: Hello, everyone. Before I begin my presentation I would like to introduce myself, as well as my fellow co-worker. My name is Minoru Yoshida, and I'm the Tech specialist for PEN-International here at RIT, and Denise, if you would stand, please. This is Denise Kavin, the senior project administrator for PEN-International.

We've been working together for quite a long time, and I will be presenting today, but Denise, I will ask to join me occasionally throughout the presentation.

In this presentation, I will be focusing on four points of interest. First, the plan and background for PEN-International and what it is. The accomplishments we've enjoyed in the last 7 years. Some of the challenges that we've had in the development and implementation of our plan, and then our future plan and area of interest.

I'd like to briefly talk about RIT and NTID for those of you who aren't familiar with the program here. RIT is our home campus for the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. And it's PEN-International's home, as well. RIT is made up of 8 colleges, and there are close to 15,000 students including both hearing and deaf students. We have about 1,250 deaf students on campus, and close to 500 faculty and staff who are deaf within NTID. We have two different models of education that we offer here. First is direct service, and second is a mainstream environment.

I'd like to also acknowledge our wonderful sponsor for our program. This is the Nippon Foundation of Japan, which is based in Tokyo, Japan. This foundation's primary work is in health care, agriculture, and education. They also focus on a variety of disability service provision issues, not only with deaf people, but also those who are blind, in wheelchairs, et cetera. The Nippon Foundation has supported PEN-International for the past 8 years, with more than \$8 million in contribution thus far.

Their goal is to enhance deaf education throughout the world.

PEN-International was established in June of 2001, where 5 leaders of the deaf came to NTID, led by Dr. Jim DeCaro, and also the leader and President of the deaf university in Japan, and we have that President here now. We also had the leader of Tianjin University of Technology, Bauman Moscow State Technical University in Russia, and finally a representative of the Nippon

Foundation, all came here to sign the historic document that founded PEN-International.

Now I'd like to define some of the goals that PEN-International has had over the years. We've had three major goals.

First was to improve teaching and learning and the development of curriculum. Second was to increase the application of technology in teaching and learning. And third was to expand and improve career and educational opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing people throughout the world. In the past, deaf people have been able to achieve success in post-secondary educations occasionally, but they have not worked together throughout the world in order to achieve success. NTID was working with those in Japan to try to figure out how to implement a better program by working together. Let me talk about PEN-International's vision now, and how they have accomplished establishing this network. First, there are periodic faculty forums in various countries, and I will be talking about the partners that have developed as time has gone on in our work with PEN-International. The various countries have worked as importers of the technology and approaches to teaching that have been well established and tested in NTID, and they have learned how to best use the technologies that have developed.

NTID has offered a variety of workshops both here in the United States, as well as traveling abroad. Once the faculty have learned how to use the technology, they develop a self-sufficient program within their own countries. And then those partners become models to other institutions within their own countries.

So then they take on the role of the exporters of this new knowledge and technology. So first they've imported the knowledge, and once they become proficient in running the program, then they then become the teachers and exporters of this information to their colleagues in their home countries. NTID has served as the facilitator in this process by also hosting exchange students, and sending American students to visit these countries. NTID's goal is not to indoctrinate or preach to these countries about their use of technology or their educational philosophies. We certainly have philosophies of education and theories that we feel might be beneficial, but each country needs to adopt their own solutions based on what they've learned from us, as well as our recommendations, making sure that they blend our ideas in a way that will work within their own cultures. PEN-International's goal is to follow this model in spreading helpful information throughout the world.

We've implemented 6 main strategies for providing this knowledge. First of all, we've provided faculty training and development. We've provided online and web resources. We've helped establish multimedia computer centers. Fourth, we've helped with evaluation and research. Fifth, we've disseminated information. And, sixth, we have contributed to student empowerment and development of leadership skills.

Currently, PEN-International has 19 partner institutes throughout the world. The leadership of NTID and the National Tsukuba University of Technology were the first partners. China now boasts 5 partners. China was also one of the first partners, along with Bauman State University in order to establish the PEN-International core group.

We also have a partner in the Philippines. The college of St. Benilde in Manila. We also have affiliate partners with the Czech Republic, Ratchasuda College in Thailand. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and in Korea, we have two partners now. KEPAD and the Korean Nazarene University. And that totals 19 partners altogether. We started with 4 partners working with NTID, and as you can see, the international partners have grown through our association, which is wonderful to see. Here we have a visual representation of all of our international partners. Now again, I'd like to go through a more elaborate description of our implementation strategy.

The faculty training consists of several components, as you see here. First we go through a needs assessment. We try to determine what each country needs. So the Director, Jim DeCaro, and the Associate Director, Bill Clymer, have visited each partner country and site to open up a dialogue about what each location needs.

Then they set up a list of mutually agreed-upon goals and objectives to work on both from the points of view of NTID, as well as the partner location. Teachers have come to the United States or we have sent teachers to the various countries and locations to learn various technologies and teaching styles.

NTID has worked for many years, 40 years thus far, to become experts in the field of education for the deaf on the postsecondary level. We have expertise in support services, the instruction of English, the instruction of math, and NTID faculty have been trained in various fields, which we have been sharing with our partners in the last 8 years.

When the training is completed, it's very important that we've had to evaluate the training to find out if it's been successful, and listen to feedback from our partners to see if there's any way that we can implement more strategies or help them to establish their system more completely. We also provide online and web resources. We have the PEN-International website. And in addition to that, when the workshops are completed, we have exported the, and uploaded the, information that the teachers have gained onto the web so that they have constant access to that.

It's also then available to any other teachers of the deaf throughout the world.

The multimedia computer centers are high-Tech labs, and PEN-International has helped to establish computer centers in each partner institution. We make sure that we attain the best technology available for each country so that we can stay connected.

Those who work in the lab encourage the students to make use of the technology to aid their instruction, and the Professors use the equipment to teach the students. We also have videoconferencing equipment set up so that facilitates our exchange of information.

The next part of our plan included evaluation and research. I'd like to emphasize that PEN-International always evaluates our progress each step along the way. And when we're completed with the evaluation, we publish a report based on our findings. Each evaluation and all of the research that we have done is always uploaded to our website.

On to dissemination of information. We create frequently brochures about a variety of topics, and annually, we publish a year-end report on what we've accomplished thus far in our year. So that's a nice summary of all of our work on a yearly basis.

On to student leadership and empowerment. I'd like to talk about the summer institute briefly. This was held in Suffolk -- Sussex, England, where 50 people -- and this occurred in 2006 in the summertime. And it will be held again this year in the summer of 2008 with an expanded group, where there will be 50 more people joining us from a variety of countries for a week in southern England.

The students there learned team work, cooperation, and leadership skills, and they get to do it all in this lovely castle, as you can see in the background of this photograph.

I know that time is running short for me, but this is an example of some of the training components that I've mentioned. In 2007, we hosted faculty training where they learned how to develop their interpreting abilities in the Philippines, and that was held in the Philippines.

There were 10 from China, and 2 from the Philippines who came together actually in NTID, where they met with a variety of people who provide

training and education for interpreters, as well as people who coordinate interpreting services for NTID. And so we put together a comprehensive program for -- comprehensive program for our visitors based on what they learn here. We also provided workshops through videoconferencing and we used ISDN as the hosting software. And this is with the college of St. Benilde in the Philippines so we hosted three workshops of this type and I would say about 20 faculty attended these workshops in total.

PEN-International, their worldwide web, in March 2008, we revamped our website, and unveiled it. And we've got -- we have better access, better workshop resources, so the changes we've made were based upon the feedback that we've received from our partners about the website.

We're trying to use more instructional technologies via the website, as well. RIT provides software or courseware that we're able to use, and it's very easy to teach courses to offer workshop materials via this course software. Now, multimedia computer centers, as you can see pictured here, we've really worked to expand the capabilities of the computer labs. PEN Russia, they've really expanded their resources. They want to be able to use more effectively videoconferencing, so they've got three or four different institutions that can be on a videoconference at the same time. Also, they have a language lab in Zhongzhou University, abbreviated ZZU. For a long time they didn't have anything set up there so this is the first time they've had a language lab and it's been a great success so far.

Let's go on to evaluation and research. PEN-International does self-ally as well as working with their partners to identify the needs and we want to make sure that we're matching the needs of our individual partners in their countries. Several topics have come up over the years that we've seen. You can see them listed here on the slide. In the self-study happened, and we based workshops based on the feedback we received from that. We had a self-study that happened last weekend as well and this will give us further ideas for how to improve in the future. Also Dr. DeCaro and his wife, Pat DeCaro have been working to improve postsecondary education in China.

I'm sorry, I'm getting a cue from my partner about our time limitation so this research is available online. The yearly reports that we do, you can see here, we've got six of them so far. And these focus on what happened during the year, what we were successful at. It also focuses on goals, how to set up various different workshops, and as well, the assessment and people's feedback is included in these reports, as well.

Now I'd like to talk about student empowerment. We have collected deaf students' artwork from all over China, and it was brought here. Also, we gathered works from students in Russia, and Japan, and there was an exhibit that happened in 2005 here at NTID. We also have established a calendar, we made a calendar, showing the students' artwork, and that has been disseminated.

I mentioned before about our student leadership and empowerment institute that happens in the summer. Here it is pictured again, and again we're hoping to expand that program. Now let's talk about the export of our information.

PEN-Russia and PEN-China recently expanded and added new institutions. We've added Chongqing Normal University in China and we've also added in Russia we added Chelyabinsk State Technical University. Also PEPNet Japan has expanded. They established the N-TUT, it's housed at N-TUT, and that was established in 2004 and that is supported by PEN-International in Russia. And we've had PEN-International has supported these groups. We have groups that come every year to study, do field studies, to see how systems work, and to see what they might be able to utilize in their own countries.

There's better networking, and better provision of support services in these countries based on what they've found in the field studies they've done.

Now, they want to model things after the PEPNet in the United States. So there are service providers at different universities here in the U.S., and then PEPNet-Japan will come, see what's done there, and take it back to their home country, where they will adapt it for their own culture.

There are 16 partners in Japan. And they are supported by the Japanese government, so the support is not financial through PEN-International or through the PEPNet U.S., but it is funded by their own government. And when these countries become self-sufficient, they export what they've learned and what works in their countries to others in their own country. And finally, I'd like to talk about the challenges and the benefits in using technology. I work here in the U.S. as a technology specialist. I've done this work for 8 years. And we've seen lots of changes. A lot of it has depended on IP technologies. When PEN was set up, we used ISDN, more traditional videoconferencing, and it worked for a long time. As more countries came online, and we started to need to expand our network, we needed to develop an IP system. For example, the U.S. and Japan can have a videoconference fairly smoothly. There's good communication, it's clear, and we're able to use sign language via this video connection, so it's been very beneficial.

We also use cell phones, pagers, that's becoming more and more common all over the world. Everybody has a pager or cell phone attached to their belt, and it's been very beneficial for myself as a deaf person. I often work with deaf faculty and staff in other colleges, and before, we'd have to try and use the telephone, but, of course, that didn't work. Now it's very easy. I can get an SMS text message or I can go online and chat online with them via sign language. There's also e-mail and paging and texting so these technologies have really helped and improved our communication.

But at the same time, we've faced a lot of challenges. The technological infrastructure in each country tends to vary, and sometimes, we'll try to set up a videoconference and the system will fail. In the middle, all of a sudden, the call will drop. And that's because perhaps there was a power outage in another country, or perhaps the service provider had a crash somewhere, so there's a lot of different technology issues that happen that can really throw it off. And sometimes we're able to fix it, and sometimes not.

Also, some countries use different standards for their technology. For example, in Russia, before they would use satellite systems, and we use the ISDN system. So it was very challenging for us to set up systems that were compatible with one another. Things in the world are becoming more compatible now, so that's easing our communication a bit.

Now, last is the linguistic and cultural challenges that we have faced. I think we've worked with four or five different languages, sometimes more, in our various workshops and things. Also, the dissemination of information is difficult, because we use English, and if another country doesn't, it's difficult for them to, of course, learn from it. So if we've got four or five different countries, we need to get the information to, we have to think about the interpreting services, both spoken language and sign language, and as well, we have to translate any of our written materials into the language used by that country.

Now, in America, we have a deaf education model that we follow. The language that we use, whether it's spoken, oral kinds of communication, or sign language. Other countries mainly prefer oral methods, or sometimes they prefer only a sign education model. So we've had to -- it's been very challenging to find what fits best, and PEN-International again takes a neutral stance. We don't instruct a country on what we feel is best. We allow them to take the lead on what fits best for their people, and we provide support, and encouragement, based on that.

It's very important for PEN-International not to impose our beliefs on others, but to work with the countries to understand one another, and to learn from one another.

And I think that's all I've got. So I wonder if there's any questions that you might have for us.

>> Hi. I wonder if there's any examples of other countries who are in the PEN program bringing information or ideas back to NTID. Is it two-way exchange of ideas?

>> MINORU YOSHIDA: Let me think.

>> DENISE KAVIN: It's mutually beneficial to both countries. We don't impose our own belief. We ask the other countries what their wishes are, what they'd like to develop and we work to help them develop at their own pace and with their own culture and customs what they'd like to do. And again, we do base some of our, what we tell people, on what we've learned here at NTID but it is up to them to see what fits in their own country. We have a good example. One time the Japanese group came to visit, and Japan has different ways how to speak -- how they perform speech to text. There's a lot of different ways. Here in America, we tend to use CART as we're using here now so we have a person who's typing. In Japan they tend to use 4 to 6 people as a team doing CART all at the same time. In America, we may say how do you do that?

Well, we have a demonstration of what we're doing here now. But a lot of people ask questions. Maybe we provide different perspective how a task can be completed. In Japan, the language is much more complex than it is here. It's not based on, like America that's based on the Latin, and so a team of 4 to 6 people is really required in the Japanese language, because it is a much different language structure than here in America with English.

>> So, then, has NTID learned anything that they can apply from all of these partners? I think that was what was being drawn on by our colleague. You can bring ideas to others, but have you yourself learned ideas from them and have you applied them? Thanks.

>> MINORU YOSHIDA: We haven't set anything up formally but we have learned a lot. We've learned about the various technologies in Japan, and they're miles ahead of us in technology. And as well, our partners in the Philippines, they have wonderful -- has a wonderful student affairs component of the deaf program that they have there, and we've learned a lot from them. Their student services outside of the classroom are outstanding, and so we've seen that, observed that, and we've given it a lot of thought.

[question off microphone]

>> -- we understand from the ground up as to the building and the improving and the sharing of ideas and how we learn from one another. That we still need to continue to reach out to other countries for our improvement as well as others. So thank you very much.

I would like to remind, you if you haven't filled out the paper evaluation form, to please turn that in as you're leaving today, or to fill out the evaluation form online, as well as you will find the PowerPoint as well so you'll have that as a personal handout. Thank you again and enjoy the rest of your day.

[End of session]

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