

BORDERLESS VIDEO CONFERENCE ON THE NET CONNECTED THE WORLD

Professor Wang Ai-ling, her TA, Chen Shih-hui and two first year students, Peng Wei-wen and You chih-wei of the English Department participated in the Megaconference organized by the Regent University in Virginia, US on December 10. The digital conference involved 372 sites worldwide and TKU is one of three participants from Taiwan. This conference is mainly to promote global communications, innovation and participatory videoconferencing.

Professor Wang' s class has been videoconferencing with a group of students at Regent University regularly every Tuesday evening practicing their conversation skills and cross-cultural awareness. The two students that joined the Mega-conference were chosen due to their outstanding performance in the class.

Due to the sheer number of sites involved, each site was given merely 15 minutes to present their talk. Professor Wang and her team spoke about "Bringing the world to their fingertips: The benefits of university-guided, student-to-student videoconferencing" in which they evaluated their experiences accumulated in their conversation class. Through the technology and platform provided by the university, they feel the world has shrunk and everything is within reach. Chen Shih-hui, the TA explained her 'within reach' sensation when she saw snow in Virginia when they were linked each time. "A bit unreal" , she also said. For You Chih-wei, the biggest benefit is of course the improvement of his English. He appreciates the fact that they are given a topic in advance so they can prepare well which in turn helps his English. Peng Wei-wen, similarly, appreciates this format of communication, though for a different reason. As he had spoken English already due to his background (he spent 7 to 8 years in the UK) prior to TKU, he sees the videoconferencing as a way of

maintaining his level. Learning aside, it provides a neat way of meeting new people.

Professor Wang is upbeat about her project, which she believes has been a success. She wishes to extend the project to something long-term if they could work with another university abroad next year. (~Ying-hsueh Hu)

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