The international distance learning activities of HSARUC

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Information education is one of the important trends of thought concerning today's education reform as well as the requirement of the age. The revolution of science and technology not only calls for an adaptation and innovation of what to learn, but also directly affects the means and way of how to teach and learn. Modern education technology is exerting a more and more profound influence on the way of teaching. Such up-to-date means as computer-aided instruction, distance learning and the learning and research on-line are booming.

Distance learning is a way of education aiming at the development of high-quality education by drawing on modern information technology. Compared with other forms of non-classroom education, the remarkable interactivity of distance learning between teaching and learning brings the education quality to the equivalent of classroom teaching.

Modern distance learning fortifies the traditional teaching with flexibility in time, openness of education, and optimization in content and resource pool. Unbinding the restriction of time, space and capacity, it makes teaching and learning more equalized, humanized and individualized. On the other hand, it lays a foundation for multiform and multilevel education and prepares updated resorts for the structure and perfection of life-long learning systems as well.

The High School Affiliated to RENMIN University of China remains the leader of Chinese high schools in the field of distance learning.

In April of 1998, HSARUC conducted a pilot project of multiple media online distance learning with Reed High School of Canada. Both Chinese and Canadian students enjoyed a lively atmosphere communicating in
English via net meetings. As the first in China, this activity claimed the attention of the educational organizations and media of both countries.

HSARUC conducted another multimedia distance course of Conversational English with Canton College of Technology of SUNY Canton and Canton Central Schools of the United States in April of 2000. Via the visual conference system and ISDN, the students of both countries had the lessons by an American instructor. Discussions and question-and-answer could be performed between the two sides with the help of camera lens and all-directional microphone. After class, the students from both sides would be regularly involved in on-line assignments, including virtual discussion, paper writing, quiz and e-mail communications. So far, HSARUC has experienced three sessions of distance learning.

December of 2000 witnessed a realization of the Schools Connection Project sponsored by the Ministry of Education of China, which was firstly undertaken by HSARUC. As the central station, HSARUC launched a one-to-ten interactive distance course with ten schools of Beijing’s remote counties on the basis of television, sound and IP data radio technology.

In 2001 a modern interactive distance-learning network with the digital satellite broad band of 54m was successfully installed in HSARUC. Based on positive conditions HSARUC was the first to undertake the Schools Connection Project of the Ministry of Education—a Construction for the Channel of the Secondary Education on the Basis of Multimedia Broadband Transmission.

The information reception system of sky net occurred in a distance teaching room where the instructor could present his lecture by the aid of multimedia and electronic white board. The communication went as smoothly as in classroom teaching but comparatively this was much more flexible, timesaving, and visual.

The advantage of distance learning will show itself far more evidently as the distance between the instructor and the students becomes greater. It can cope with individual interactive learning with a particular instructional design as well as large-scale teaching to form a resource pool. In so doing, students scattered in different areas of Beijing will be able to gain high-quality education as their counterparts will in the centre of the city.

In October of 2001, a distance course of mathematics between 20 students from HSARUC and 15 students from the Tennoji High School Affiliated to Osaka Education University started.

This distance course is a big breakthrough in the history of our distance learning as well as an unprecedented co-operation. The breakthrough is embodied by the change of instructor role and the content of the course. Specifically, instead of teachers, students of both sides are playing the role of instructors through the whole activity. On the other hand, rather than