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Televideo Conferencing for the "Everyday" Classroom: tapping the full potential for international communication

Howard Higa, Chubu Gakuin University

This presentation is the culmination of a year-long exploration into practical applications of cutting edge technology for "everyday" language teaching--televideo conferencing. Just the words "televideo conferencing" is enough to scare off the uninitiated or the technologically-"un"inclined. Furthermore, for most teachers the endeavor of establishing a televideo conferencing system would seem exorbitant and extremely costly. The exact objective of this research project was to quell both fears--technological and budgetary. Indeed, the success of the project demonstrates how a televideo conferencing system can be established with limited computer skills and within a very humble budget. In other words, it's high tech done cheap and easy.

As with other technological advances, the practical application to everyday teaching becomes the critical step. Certainly, the potential for practical usage is vast. Televideo conferencing is a very captivating tool for the classroom. Live face-to-face communication with like sites around the world is its forte. The communication is authentic, motivating, informative, and timely. The communication can serve various purposes: for English language practice, for content course lectures, for cultural exchanges, etc. Furthermore, the communication is accessible and affordable; the use and maintenance of the system virtually involves running the Internet. Best of all, for the students of this project, the communication through televideo conferencing answered the most basic question for their English language studies, "Why do I need to study English?" The answer lay before them: "To

communicate in English with all of these people around the world." Not somewhere and somehow in the future, but here and now.

The main focus of this presentation will be on the lesson plans that were developed to bring the students to this revelation. Like the Internet, technological advances only "hold" potential. Accessing and applying technology to the "everyday" classroom become key.