

Retrospect and Prospect for China Carrying out the Project of International Higher Education Network for the Deaf

China is the biggest developing country in the world, with 60 million disabled persons, of whom 20.57 million are deaf, covering 34% of the total number of the disabled. In the whole world, there are 70 million persons who are deaf, 80% of whom are in the developing countries, with China covering 29.4% of the total number of the deaf in the world. However, there are only 6 schools which can provide the higher education for the deaf, with less than 1500 students in them in China. With the help of the international PEN project organization and the outstanding work and efforts of both Professor J.DeCaro and Professor Bao Guodong, there are 4 colleges and universities in China, which have become the **PEN—International** members. The four colleges and universities are as follows:

Engineering College for the Deaf of Tianjin University of Technology

Special Education College of Beijing Union University

Special Education College of Changchun University

Special Education College of Zhongzhou University

Situation of the Four Colleges of China

Name of College	Established Specialties	Year of Establishing the College
Engineering College for the Deaf of Tianjin University of Technology	Machine Building, Computer Science and Technology, Art Design (Fashion Design)	1991
Special Education College of Beijing Union University	Art Design, Upholstery and Advertising Design, Computer Science and Technology, Computer Applied Technology, Gardens Design	2000
Special Education College of Changchun University	Art Design, Painting, Cartoon Design and Making	1987
Special Education College of Zhongzhou University	Upholstery and Advertising Design, Ancient Building Painting, Photograph	2002

The higher education for the deaf of China, which began in 1987, has a history of 18 years up to now. Under the direct care of the Chinese government and with the

help of the international community, the higher education for the deaf of China has acquired remarkable achievements. Especially, the recent years has witnessed the inspiring development and breakthrough not only in quantity but also in quality.

The **PEN—International** Project has promoted the development and substantive leap of the higher education for the deaf of China.

Firstly, the internationalization of the higher education for the deaf is promoted. The PEN-INTERNATIONAL Project helps the higher education for the deaf of China have the chance to keep in touch with the higher education for the deaf of the developed countries and keep some aspects of the educational concepts and the ideas as well as modes of establishing colleges, etc. in the international pace. In the exchanges, the mutual understanding is enhanced, with the commonalities for the further cooperation of various parties found, promoting the international cooperation of education.

In June, 2001, with the Engineering College of Tianjin University of Technology and other three universities from the US, Japan and Russia as the sponsors and under the leadership of US Professor J.DeCaro, the PEN project is carried out. And Professor Bao Guodong of China is the person in charge of the project in China. In August, 2001, with the help of the US, the long-distance education network center.

In August, 2002, Professor J.DeCaro and Professor Bao Guodong consult with the Special Education College of Beijing Union University for the cooperation of developing the PEN project, and subsequently the Special Education College of Beijing Union University becomes the second member of the PEN-INTERNATIONAL project in China. In March, 2003, the international videoconference system is established.

In August, 2003, the Special Education College of Changchun University becomes the third member of the PEN-INTERNATIONAL project in China, with the cooperating agreement of the PEN project signed in September. In January, 2004, the international videoconference system is established.

In October, 2003, Professor J.DeCaro, the CEO of the PEN project of the US State-owned Engineering College for the Deaf is awarded a prize by the Tianjin municipal government due to his contribution to the education for the deaf of China.

In March, 2005, the Special Education College of Zhongzhou University of Henan Province becomes the fourth member of the PEN-INTERNATIONAL project

in China.

Under the support of the PEN project organization, the international educational network for the deaf will continue developing in Northwest China.

Secondly, the progress of the higher educational technologies is promoted. The PEN-INTERNATIONAL project provides many times of training of educational technologies for the education of the deaf of China and introduces the international advanced theories and practical experiences of the aspects of network technologies, multimedia technologies, educational theories, listening theories and technologies as well as psychological theories and technologies, etc., making the change in quality happen in the software and hardware educational environment for the deaf of China.

From July, 2001 to October, 2004, the members of the project in China have taken part in the total 14 times of technological training and academic exchanges organized by the PEN.

Thirdly, the study of the higher educational theories for the deaf is promoted. On the basis of the application of the achievements and new technologies in the exchanges of the PEN project, the educators of China are carrying out deep research on the higher educational theories and practice for the deaf and making thorough discussion on the aspects of the educational system, the mode of establishing the college, construction of specialties and arrangement of subjects, teaching mode as well as the learning and psychological features of the deaf in the period of study in colleges and universities.

1. Through the function of video talks, the exchanges between the friendly colleges and universities at home and abroad are strengthened, for example, the friendly colleges and universities from the US, Japan, Norway and Hongkong have come to China for the academic exchanges.

2. By the use of the **Polycom** of the PEN project, the typical lectures of some teachers have been videoed and stored for the students to study at any time.

3. By the use of the **Polycom** of the PEN project, the students' working system videos and stores some personal documents such as some excellent graduates' resumes, excellent works in the subjects of some specialties and intentions of applying for a job, etc., published in the websites of special education colleges.

4. Some teachers have carried out research and practice in the aspects of the application of the PEN project in the educational technologies, the development of IT

subjects and the use of IT for training teachers as well as how to use the IT to help the deaf expand their opportunities for employment and study.

5. In line with the simultaneous teaching experiment on the basic computer subjects of the students with healthy speaking capability in the daytime and night classes, the system is also used to carry out some activities such as the teaching demonstration and broadcasting of the IBM information and no-barrier system, etc..

At present, there are only some universities in China, which have established the special education colleges, with several specialties such as art design, computer and machine building, etc. established mainly for the deaf and the blind, enlisting a very limited number of students each year. In addition, due to the limitations of various factors such as the physiological defects of the disabled, they are, to some extent, restricted in the pursuit for study, and their requirements cannot be met with the current special education. Therefore, based on the platform of the international higher education, it is richened to carry out the projects of the higher educational services for the deaf, the persons in difficulty of listening or other disabled persons. According to various disciplines, a wide range of educational and teaching resources are provided to make a great number of young disabled have the chance to use the IT for study, and at the same time the advanced teaching methods and content are provided for a lot of teachers engaged in the special education.

Fourthly, the union and wide exchanges of the higher education for the deaf are promoted. By the use of the achievements of the PEN project, not only a lot of video conferences are held and many times of network training is accepted, but also the topic research, cooperation and interview as well as the data collection become possible, with the students activities becoming richer and the domestic video exchanges becoming more convenient and faster.

The retrospect of the past aims at better prospect for the future. The modern educational technologies promote the educational development, which is of greater significance to the higher education for the deaf. The organization of the international higher educational network for the deaf convenes the international conference in time, which will necessarily promote the rapid development of the higher education for the deaf. According to their own different demands and features, the four colleges and universities of China have established their own working plans. The plans are aimed at further adjusting and integrating the resources, applying the advantages of the

campus network, carrying out the pilot work of network teaching activities, strengthening the further cooperation with the Disabled Federation of China and the local disabled federations, trying to win the supports of the local educational administrative institutions and adjusting and integrating the special educational resources as well as establishing the applied technological training base for the deaf and improving the opportunities of employment for the deaf.

The development of the special educational cause marks the important progress of the human civilization. The educational concepts will be renewed and the educational ideas will be expanded, with the special educational spirit of “philanthropy, enterprising, pioneering and devotion” as the motive power. Therefore, the advanced experiences of all the countries of the world will be learned to create the special blue sky for the disabled students with our true feelings and love.