

Community College Creates Satellite Campus Using HD Video

Hiroshima Bunka College in Japan offers students a unique distance learning experience with LifeSize

Organization

Hiroshima Bunka College, Gakuen, Hiroshima, Japan

Across the globe, more colleges and universities are offering students distance learning options in lieu of traditional, in-class courses. With easy access to the internet, the high cost of fuel and more awareness around environmental impact due to travel, the desire for remote education has risen in recent years, especially in more rural areas where daily commutes to main campuses can be time-consuming and costly for students.



In its 50 year history, Hiroshima Bunka College has strived to face the changing times. The university emphasizes the education of specialized areas and skills to enhance student’s lives with real world applications. The Department of Community Life Sciences for example, offers courses in liberal arts, business practices, clothing design and culinary arts. Hiroshima Bunka also has a prominent Department of Music and a Department of Childcare Education.

The belief that education is the development of useful skills for the region is a key initiative for Hiroshima Bunka. Also, one-on-one student teacher interaction is an indispensable part of the learning process. The school promotes this by encouraging open minds, helping people feel at ease and enhancing support for a learning environment where students want to be challenged.



CHALLENGE

To create a satellite campus enabling students to be present at the main campus location through distance learning.



SOLUTION

LifeSize HD video deployed in key locations within the main campus and satellite site.



RESULTS

Effective education through LifeSize HD video, reduction in travel time and cost for students in rural areas.



Challenge

Hiroshima Bunka is a community college which has five campuses including the Nagatsuka campus in Hiroshima. Many of their students, especially those in rural areas, often have to spend a significant amount of time commuting in between campuses. The idea of a satellite campus for Hiroshima Bunka in the Gakuen region would eliminate the need for students to travel while also creating a full university experience at an off-site location.

As planning for the satellite campus began, University President, Koshi Morimoto, had several issues that needed to be addressed before implementing a new technology. "The characters on the blackboard must be seen clearly," Morimoto said. "Also, the voice needs to be clearly understood and it should not interfere with the network on another campus."

A key element for university decision-makers was to be sure that the satellite campus felt truly connected to the main location. In other words, an authentic experience for both students and professors needed to be achieved.



Solution

Hitachi High-Technologies, an authorized LifeSize reseller, demonstrated the LifeSize HD video solution and the team at Hiroshima Bunka was very impressed.

"The presentation was like watching television and certainly something that we could use in the classroom," Morimoto said. "We were truly surprised by the quality of the high definition video."

The complete system was set up on campus and the team at Hiroshima Bunka examined whether the LifeSize system would work in a remote learning environment. Because the crisp HD resolution, fluid motion handling and high quality, real-time audio of the LifeSize unit created such a life-like experience, Hiroshima Bunka was convinced that a distance learning application could be achieved with ease.



Results

Because the LifeSize demonstration at the university received a high evaluation from both President Morimoto and the professors at Hiroshima Bunka, the technology and accompanying infrastructure was soon introduced to the satellite campus. The first remote lecture proved to be a huge success and Morimoto was surprised because the student's reactions exceeded his expectations.

"There were positive questions about the technology from the students and the system was very easy to operate," he said. "No one felt there was any lag time and the characters and the shade on the blackboard were very clear and easy to read. Also, using the internet is much more cost effective than using our ISDN line which is important to us. We will certainly use it effectively."

As for the future, Hiroshima Bunka College is expanding the use of HD video communications for use in multiple campuses within their university network. Because the technology has been so widely accepted, professors and administrators agree that developing more satellite campuses will give even more students the opportunity to receive a college education, even if they live in rural areas.



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