

Figure 1

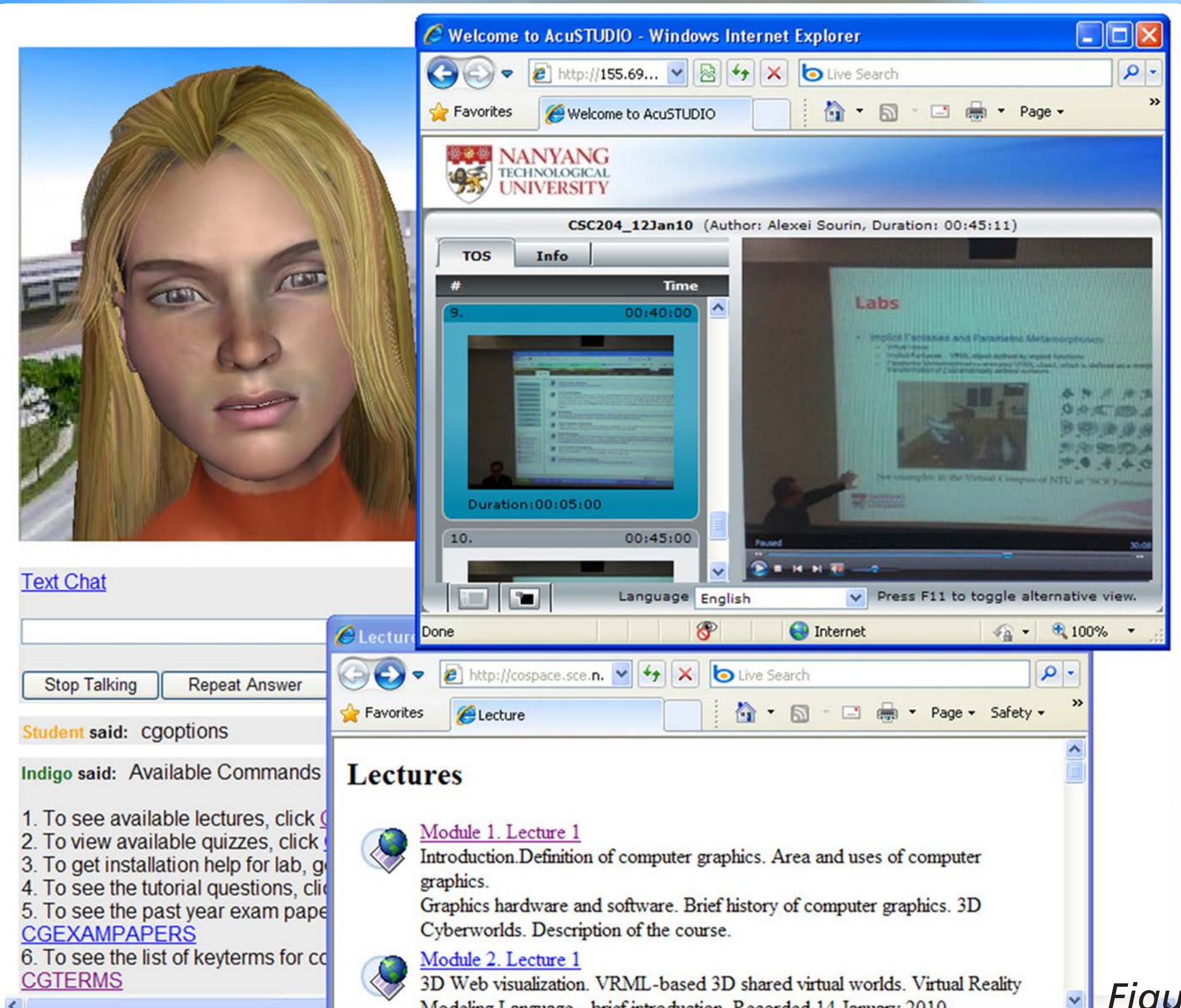


Figure 2

CYBER INSTRUCTOR

EDUCATIONAL TALKING AGENT IN CYBERSPACE

E-learning is increasingly being adopted and accepted as an important and vital part of university education. It has become common practice to use learning systems, like Blackboard, to upload and distribute course materials on the web. However, in a world where more and more information is being provided electronically, it often results in disorientation and exhaustion for the students. Also, e-learning is missing a humanized component. Creating cyber-instructors or virtual humans in cyberspace with a tunable look and feel who will be capable of maintaining conversation with learners as well as offering different educational services may become an excellent teaching tool implementing personal mentoring in electronic education. Our cyber-instructor can maintain a general conversation, display various emotions de-

pending on the chat content, and answer specific questions on course materials. The components of the implemented framework are replaceable and can be easily tuned to particular educational needs and technical implementations. Several implementations of the cyber-instructor with various looks and feels of the HCI have been studied and implemented such as 3D talking avatar, web chat with multimedia components and instant messaging communication.

Figure 1: Cyber-instructor implemented as a 3D talking head on the web

Figure 2: Integration of the cyber-instructor with the blackboard e-learning content

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