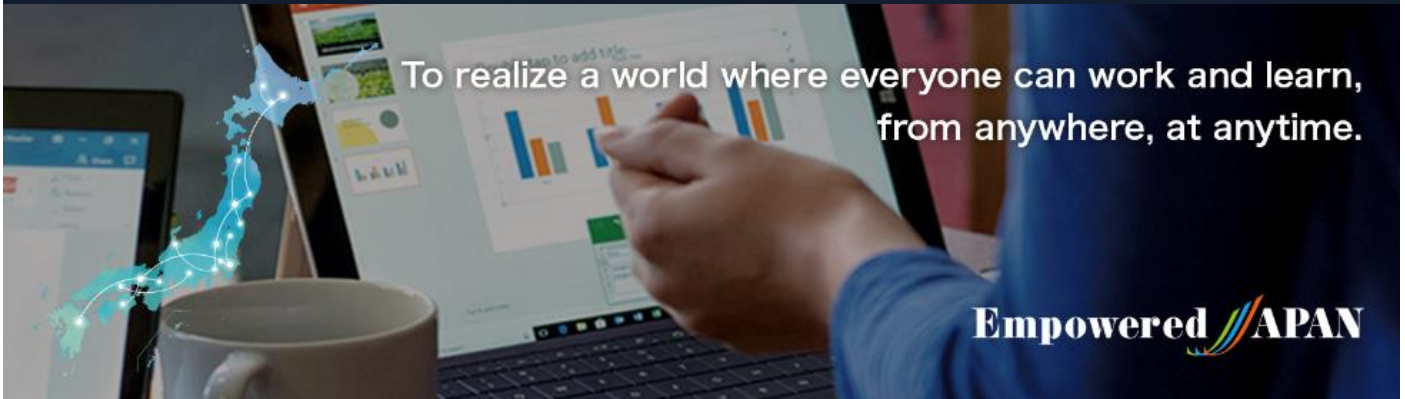


# Empowered JAPAN Webinar Report



Empowered JAPAN Executive Steering Committee was established in 2018, "To realize a world where everyone can work and learn, from anywhere, at anytime." To promote the true value of workstyle innovation including telework, the committee has been coordinating symposiums in both Tokyo and regional cities. And in collaboration with various local governments, Microsoft, and partners, the committee has been serving as an advisor to provide telework training for both corporate and individuals. In response to the spread of infection of corona virus (COVID-19) and the government announcement on February 25, 2020, which included the request to citizens to telework, the steering committee made the decision to launch a series of free webinars starting from March 17, 2020, to provide practical information for individuals and organizations across the nation, to telework and/or practice online education.

**Category :** Contents for government, healthcare, and educational institutions.

**Date :** April, 1, 2020

**Speaker :** Akira Inoue

Osaka Institute of Technology  
Professor, Department of System Design,  
Faculty of Robotics & Design  
Holds a PhD in policy studies



In 1992, graduated from the Department of Management Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, Osaka Institute of Technology. In 2002, left the Doctoral Program at the Graduate School of Policy Studies, Doshisha University. Worked as a Professor at the Hira School of Management, Konan University, and as Director of the Learning Utility Center for Konan University Students. In 2017, assumed his current position as Professor at the Department of System Design, Faculty of Robotics & Design, Osaka Institute of Technology. Holds a PhD in policy studies. Specializes in education engineering. Member of the Japan Society for Educational Technology, the Information Processing Society of Japan, and the Japanese Society for Information and Systems in Education.

## Introduction of Remote Classes Started Using Teams

Teachers suddenly need to start distance learning in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Such teachers are extremely worried whether they will be able to accomplish goals, and are unsure what material should be covered to what extent in web lessons. Teachers do not have time to read instruction manuals for equipment and apps, and have no choice but to proceed with great anxiety. In response, Akira Inoue will share his know-how for distance learning using the functions of Teams. Since 2017, Inoue has used Teams to hold classes at the Osaka Institute of Technology.

Students can use Teams on their smartphones and can easily connect from outside the university (no VPN connection required). Teachers can post class materials and assignments, can collect assignments that have been completed by students, and can give out grades. Inoue views Teams as the most appropriate LMS (Learning Management System).

"Needs for distance learning can be narrowed down to four patterns," says Inoue. (1) In terms of streaming videos and audio, the meeting function of Teams supports interaction by up to 250 people, and also supports chat. (2) In terms of assignments, a function for giving assignments and mini-tests is including as standard in the meeting function. Up to 5,000 members can be registered in one team. (3) For independent study, the streaming function enables students to watch video content at any time. (4) In terms of collaboration, using Teams makes it possible to try new things.



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Inoue introduced a class where 300 students brought notebook computers and gathered in a hall at the Osaka Institute of Technology. Six TAs (teaching assistants) assist students with problems such as connection trouble. The devices brought by students (BYOD) are specified by the university as a Windows computer or Mac computer; however, students using Android tablets were also connected.

This academic year, Inoue plans to hold web classes for 300 students. Since the meeting function supports a maximum of 250 people, the classes can be streamed as live events which can be viewed by up to 10,000 people. The live event function can be used with the A3 and A5 subscriptions for Office 365 packages that educational institutions have contracted with Microsoft. For corporate contracts, the function is available for contracts at the E1 level or higher.

To start a class, click "Meet now" at the bottom of the Teams meeting screen. A class will be set immediately. There are two ways to register students: (1) teachers themselves can register students, (2) teachers can issue the code and have students input it themselves. However, Inoue points out that using the latter method may result in omissions by students.

By uploading materials to be used in class prior to the class, students can access the materials simply by clicking the upper-left menu bar at the top of the screen. Also, it is possible to specify settings so that students can view materials but cannot edit. When receiving numerous questions from students who have viewed the class materials, Inoue will respond by using the Chat function on Teams. "I received more questions than I expected, and most of the questions came late at night." The handling of similar questions can be streamlined by summarizing and uploading them together as shared questions. In the case of topics which are not important enough to write in class materials, Inoue recommends listing the topics as posts. "When I post such information, I get 'likes' from students. Such responses make me happy."

In terms of submitting and grading assignments, teachers can write comments directly in the file uploaded by the student and return the graded assignment. A list of grades for each assignment is implemented, so all stages are handled up to overall grading.

Although the need for on-demand classes remains high, videos can be embedded in Teams by using the Microsoft Stream tab. This makes it possible to unify lesson resources. If you want to stream lesson recordings, the meeting calendar has a function to display content in chronological order.



In addition, Teams will fulfill an important role in the operation of seminars and laboratories. Inoue's seminar uses Teams for various phases of seminar operation, including communication, research guidance, submission of research results, academic conference reports, and even graduate theses. His class uses the rule that past research results must be individually written on Wiki and submitted. This makes checking easy and facilitates the succession of research by younger students. Also, for example, by incorporating the third-party app StormBoard, you can collaborate in brainstorming activities by affixing sticky notes on the whiteboard. Apps that enhance the functionality are displayed in the menu bar at the top of

the screen. In addition to seminars, you can also use Teams for sharing information among faculty members, contacting faculty members, and contacting TAs.

"Distance learning platforms are tools for students," emphasizes Inoue. Teams has many great merits. It is easy to use on smartphones. Moreover, it is not a highly-functional, high-priced LMS; instead, it is simple and easy to use. Yet another major merit of Teams is the ability to use push notifications on smartphones. "Push notifications are widely used by students today," notes Inoue. In their daily life, students view information on smartphones and do work on computers, so it's good to use a style which matches this pattern."

Inoue expressed his conviction to continue accumulating learning contents and designing classes which use platforms that can be easily accessed by students.