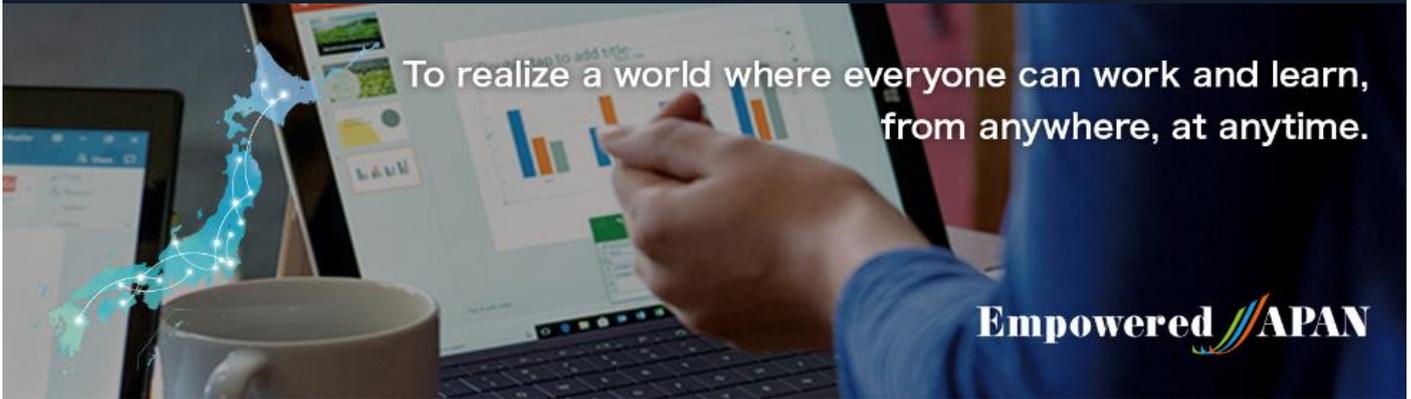


# Empowered JAPAN Webinar Report



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, 18, 2020

**Speaker :** Masaaki Maeta

Tsugaru city Ikusei elementary school  
Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert  
Level 3 Flipgrid certified Educator  
Director of Learning designer organization



Graduated from Tokyo Gakugei university.  
Works as a teacher of Tsugaru city Ikusei elementary school in Aomori.  
From the beginning, became interested in the utilization of ICT in education and advanced research. Been away from ICT for a while and made research object a thinking tool, but resumed it as a result of compulsory programming education.  
Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert.  
Level 3 Flipgrid certified Educator.  
Founder and executive director of Aomori programming education research society.  
Embot certified teacher.  
Director of Learning designer organization and developer of learning design sheet.  
Head of Japan Partial photo association

## Online classes can be conducted even if not in real time

At elementary schools in Japan, learning programming became a required subject and the use of ICT in educational fields is advancing. While many schools are closed due to the emergency declaration, online learning is being explored for home schooling.

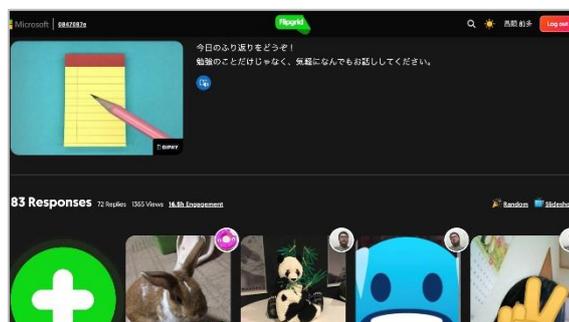
Ikusei Elementary School located in the center of Tsugaru Heiya (plain) has 32 students. Multiple grades are combined into one class throughout the school. Mr. Maeta is a teacher and in charge of 10 students in 5th and 6th grades. He has been studying the use of ICT in education since the beginning of his career, and introduced Flipgrid in 2018 ahead of the rest of schools nationwide.

"Flipgrid is a revolutionary tool. Questions are given in a video format, students answer in a video format, and a response is given in a video format. It was the first time in many years that I was excited so much with technology. I knew intuitively that the tool would be adopted by the students. I remember smirking when I found out that my expectation was right." (Mr. Maeta)

Ikusei Elementary School does not necessarily have an advance ICT environment. Their desktop PCs are old, the specs of the tablets are low and there are only 10 of them. Nevertheless, Flipgrid works with no problems, and Mr. Maeta asserted that even the first graders could use it.

"At first, we used Flipgrid for P.E. and arts & crafts with second graders. Now, we use it daily for all the subjects with fifth and sixth graders. The tool has become essential for both students and me."

According to Mr. Maeta, Flipgrid requires an ID or QR code for login, and students' privacy and safety can easily be protected by hiding their faces using a mosaic or a sticker.



# Empowered JAPAN Webinar Report

Specifically, how can Flipgrid be used in elementary school classes? Mr. Maeta gave us four examples.

The first was "review learning" which is emphasized in the guidelines for teaching. Mr. Maeta pointed out that Flipgrid is highly effective. "Japanese literacy and math, which use paper notes, are easy to review, but I admit music, P.E., arts & crafts cannot be reviewed thoroughly. However, I learned that using Flipgrid with videos helped the students review effectively. Even for the programming and English subject which do not involve dictation, reviewing by using a computer is more effective compared to paper."

The second was "presentation learning." Using Flipgrid makes it easy to create a presentation video just by adding comments while recording the material, compared to creating a slide which takes a long time.

The third was presenting in handwriting using "Whiteboard Mode." For example, you can explain the fraction and area calculation methods by recording handwriting on whiteboard and vocal instruction. However, Mr. Maeta asserted that you do not need to keep streaming a real-time video during the class hours.

"I do not know if elementary students can concentrate on a video for 45 minutes. Depending on the family, long use of the Internet may incur an extra expense. Students need to go online only when they need to."

For a foreign language learning activity, the non-real-time option can be surprisingly useful. "Flipgrid is often used in educational fields overseas. If teachers connect around the world, students will have an opportunity to communicate internationally. Japanese students are usually too shy to speak English face to face. However, a face-to-face video meeting is not doable because of a time difference between countries, which leaves the option to communicate with a pre-recorded video. With this option, students can understand the video message by reading subtitles, which are automatically generated, or using an app that automatically translates subtitles. Even a simple interaction puts a smile on a student's face." (Mr. Maeta)



Mr. Maeta felt that the education using Flipgrid since the closure of the school on March 2 was successful. Although he handed out a week's worth of homework, it was less than the amount usually handled, because he felt the urgent need to communicate with the students.

Mr. Maeta wrote a letter to each family and asked them to install the free app, Flipgrid. The students posted a video of themselves reviewing the day's study on Flipgrid, which they are already familiar with. He commented on all videos and continued posting videos to all students.

"It seems the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to last longer. If that is the case, we must develop an education style that is not limited to in-class. However,

preparing online materials for all subjects alone is hard work. One of my ideas is that multiple schools can work together, share the subjects, and I can teach one subject through an online class for students including other schools." (Mr. Maeta)



Mr. Maeta advised teachers who were considering online education to try experimenting outside the school and doing a rehearsal in the classroom.

"Teachers can gain experience by joining an online drinking party, which has become popular since self-quarantine, or even hosting one. Practice at an occasion where you can make mistakes. Students also need practice. Tell them to 'use Flipgrid as if you were at home' and let them practice in the classroom.

Ikusei Elementary School where Mr. Maeta teaches will be closed permanently next March due to the decreased number of students. He hopes to teach the fun facts about ICT as much as he can before the students are transferred to three nearby elementary schools.

"When the students are departing to a new school, I wish they will be proud of being a former student of Ikusei Elementary School where cutting-edge ICT is taught." (Mr. Maeta)