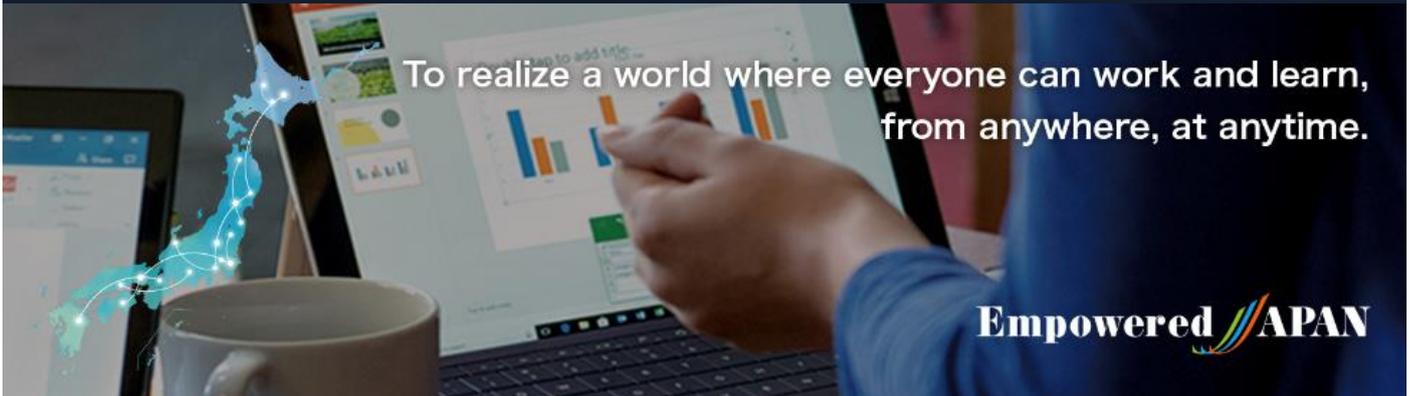


Empowered JAPAN Webinar Report



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, 20, 2020

Speaker :



Hideki Suzuki
Teacher and Information Manager,
Tokyo Gakugei University Koganei
Elementary School



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Rebooting school:

Teams accelerates learning and communication

While students and teachers in every region of the country are enduring the emptiness of being unable to learn in a physical classroom due to the closure of schools since March, some schools are trying to adopt new forms of learning using the Microsoft Teams app (hereinafter referred to as Teams). From one of the schools, Tokyo Gakugei University Koganei Elementary School, Mr. Hideki Suzuki who is a faculty member as well as the Director of the Information Department, and Ms. Makiko Sato who is the school health professional shared their experience of using Teams at their school.

Since the school is affiliated with a national university, it may give you the impression that the students are taught in an advanced environment, however, before the school closure, there were only 45 shared PCs connected by wired LAN, and basic utilization of ICT.

At the beginning of the school closure in March, their emergency measure was just to downsize the scale of the graduation ceremony, and not even homework was issued. However, by mid-March, management and Mr. Suzuki agreed that the school should prepare an environment where the students and school can connect online in case the school closure continues after April. After they consulted Tokyo Gakugei University to issue an account to the students and found that there was not enough time, they consulted Microsoft. With the help of Microsoft, they were able to issue Teams accounts for all teachers and students just four days before the new semester was to start. Mr. Suzuki proposed the utilization of Teams at a staff meeting the next day, distributed the user manual for Teams sign-in to the students on the first day of school, and held workshops for teachers. "I was so anxious, but the desperation to restart the school pushed me forward." (Mr. Suzuki)

The school used to use a communication system called "FairCast" before the school closure. However, it was a one-way communication tool from the school to the families via email. Whereas Teams is an interactive learning support with a completely new challenge. As of April, the school shared the learning contents using FairCast with the families on the assumption that some of them might not be able to access Teams. "We made sure all the students received the same learning contents. However, it is natural to have differences in the students' learning progress and results. Otherwise there is no point in using Teams. Not using Teams because you do not know how to use, or you cannot do what you want to do, is not acceptable. I asked all faculty members to prepare themselves and commit to use Teams. They all agreed to use Teams because we all wanted the students to keep learning." (Mr. Suzuki)

