Human Academy Case Story

As the next step in online classes, Human Academy has automated the management of hybrid classes by using Zoom Rooms to connect both students from the classroom and home with instructors in head-office.

Since its establishment in 1985, Human Academy has been promoting recurrent education to support learning and growth at every stage of life, from pre-school children to junior and senior high school students, university students, working adults, and senior citizens. The school offers more than 800 courses to meet the changing needs of the times and society.

After the declaration of the emergency in April 2020, the Academy's Education Division for Working Adults first deployed Zoom Meetings. It started online classes to continue classes under the Covid-19 pandemic. Later, as the situation of the Covid-19 epidemic changed, they began to study the possibility of realizing online live classes, a hybrid class in which students could not only participate in online classes from their homes but also classrooms at each school building at the same time.

"We were planning to set up large screens in classrooms at 23 schools across the country for the Online live classes, so the key point was how to reduce the workload required for students. Among several tools, we started to consider the possibility of using such a conference system with Zoom, which was already being used for online classes," said Yumiko Nishiyama, IT Planning and Promotion Office, Administration Division, Human Academy.

Challenge

For the Online live classes, instead of sending a teacher to each school building, they aimed to deliver the courses live from the city center so that students from classrooms in school buildings across the country and students attending from home could participate at the same time. "Since there are no teachers in the classrooms of each school building, the login will be left to the students. For this requirement, we looked for a tool that would reduce the workload required for students as much as possible. For example, a system allows them to enter with a single touch of the join button without having to enter a URL or password, or to start the class when the time comes automatically," said Shin Goto, IT Planning and Promotion Office, Administration Division.

Human Academy

Founded: 1985

Location: 23 schools nationwide including Tokyo

Industry: Education

Challenges: The smooth operation of hybrid classes, reduced workload for students, instructors, and administration, and stable communication

Solutions: Zoom Meetings, Zoom Rooms

Benefits: Automatically connect participating students from the classroom, maintain stable, trouble-free connectivity, expand classes taught by instructors in the city center nationwide, and track class attendance using a dashboard.

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- Yumiko Nishiyama
IT Planning and Promotion Office, Administration Division

It was also essential to have a stable communication system not to be interrupted in the middle of a class at one of the school buildings.

Moreover, it was a challenge to reduce the burden on the management side. "In the case of regular Zoom Meetings, a URL is required for each class. With classes being held morning, noon, and night at each school building, we were concerned about the tremendous amount of work required to share the URL and get people to click on it, so we searched for a tool. Also, if we had to connect from multiple classrooms at the same time, the biggest challenge would be how to make that connection", said Nishiyama.

As a result of the verification, it was decided to introduce Zoom Rooms because of its stable communication and ease of connection to each class automatically. 77 accounts of Zoom Rooms were introduced in April 2021, and the Online live classes started in 23 school buildings (as of the end of May 2021).

Solution
After the installation, they have set up Zoom Rooms to start automatically when the time is up, without any special operation by the students from each classroom. Expressly, a large screen is set up in the front of the classroom, and the system will start to count down 10 minutes before the class. When the class is set up, students can participate in the class by entering the necessary account for Zoom Rooms in the Google Calendar, and they can leave the screen automatically after the class.

Nishiyama says, "This has reduced the burden on the student, the teacher, and the administration. There are no connection errors, so there is no need to start a different class. It has become straightforward to set up the course at the beginning of the class and run the class without setting up the program listings each time. We had already used Zoom Meetings, so it was easy for us to get an idea of how to use it."

In addition, the ability to automatically count the number of students participating in Zoom Rooms and display that number on the dashboard after the class is over "makes it easy for us to check the utilization rate against the number of seats while we are at our headquarters."

Regarding the realization of live online classes, she said, "Human Academy has a slogan, 'Learning is fun Edutainment Company,' which is a fusion of Education and Entertainment.

Under this slogan, we are developing courses of all genres that create a fun learning to meet the changing times and society. Until now, people in remote islands of Okinawa, for example, could not easily participate in the courses, and they could only take classes in a one-way format using recordings as correspondence courses. The fact that we are now able to offer courses regardless of location and that we have more opportunities to provide classes by excellent instructors regardless of whether they are in rural or urban areas is of great significance to us."

Results
Since Human Academy started the Online live classes this April, they are currently still conducting the minimum number of classes. Still, they plan to increase further the number of courses in the same format in the future. On how to proceed with the Online live classes, Nishiyama says, "In the future, we would like to explore more ways of communication. For now, if a student participating in the classroom has a question, he or she can use the remote control on the tablet to raise hand and inform the teacher in the center. In the future, we will be able to use face recognition to divide the classroom into separate sections and display them on the screen, so we are looking forward to that."

"It is said that we are in the era of 100 years of life, and the importance of 'lifelong learning (recurrent education)' is attracting attention worldwide. Since the number of students from overseas taking online courses is gradually increasing, another key point is developing such opportunities. Online live classes allow students to participate with their peers in the classroom even from home, so we can now offer a variety of ways to take courses, using tools like Zoom to give us the freedom to think out of the box", said Nishiyama.