



Case Study

By working closely with Zoom's Customer Success Manager (CSM) team, Nihon University, one of the largest universities in Japan, has quickly implemented online classes and is exploring the "Shape of the Future" in university education.

Founded in 1889 as the Nihon Law School, Nihon University is a comprehensive university with 16 faculties and the largest number of students in Japan, based on the educational philosophy of "cultivating the spirit of independent creativity."

In 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 epidemic, the first semester at Nihon University began in April, and many classes were hurriedly started online after the Golden Week holidays in May. In June and July, there were calls for introducing a unified online platform for the entire university to improve the learning environment for students and educational effectiveness. The decision was made to fully implement Zoom, including 96,000 licenses for students and 10,000 licenses for faculty and staff, in preparation for the start of classes in September.

By July, the faculty had gained experience in the advantages and challenges of online teaching. In this context, we wanted to prepare concrete measures to improve the quality and effectiveness of online education as an organization in time for the introduction of Zoom, and to prepare for the second semester (September and October)," said Tetsuya Usui, Professor, Nihon University / Leader of the Education Information Management Working Group, University-wide FD Committee.

Challenge

The first challenge for implementing a university-wide platform for online classes was the introduction's scale and speed. Nihon University has 16 faculties, each located on different campuses, with a wide range of academic fields, from medicine, dentistry, and pharmacology to law, economics, commerce, and the arts. The university needed to introduce the system to all the teachers and students with different conditions



Nihon University

Founded: 1889

Location: 19 campuses in Tokyo and other prefectures in Japan

Industry: Education

Challenges: Scale and speed of implementation, the disparity in IT skill level on the part of teachers, the unification of platforms

Solutions: Zoom Meetings, Zoom Video Webinars, Zoom Rooms

Business benefits: Successful and speedy large-scale implementation and avoidance of confusion through close collaboration and training between Nihon University and the Customer Success Manager (CSM) team of Zoom, maintenance, and improvement of educational effectiveness and quality unique to online, use as a university-wide platform, and conversion of large-scale offline events to online.

"Thanks to the close collaboration and teamwork between Nihon University and Zoom's Customer Success Manager (CSM) team, we were able to speed up the process and start using Zoom accounts across the university. We have also succeeded in bringing large-scale events online. We are exploring ways to maintain and improve the effectiveness and quality of education unique to online while sharing knowledge with other faculty members."

**- Tetsuya Usui
Professor, Nihon University /
Leader of the Education Information
Management Working Group,
University-wide FD Committee.**

simultaneously and with a sense of speed to be ready for classes in September.

The IT skills of teachers are also not consistent. Knowledge and skills on PC and Internet varied among the faculty members. Of the approximately 10,000 faculty members, about 1/3 are full-time, and 2/3 are external, including part-time. "A careful support system for teachers with diverse skill levels and work schedules was essential. We knew it would be difficult to achieve a high level of educational effectiveness without a support system in place.

Besides, there was the challenge of implementing a unified platform for the entire university. "As of April 2020, 16 departments had to move independently and quickly to start online classes in time. For this reason, some departments had already built their own platforms, while others left it up to each faculty member's discretion. It wasn't easy to unify a system that had once started running separately. On the other hand, the use of Zoom for academic conferences and other events increased, so many people welcomed the full introduction of Zoom."

To solve these complex issues in a short period of time, Nihon University asked Zoom for help. "Even though we requested at the end of August, they agreed to participate in our symposium right away in September. In a sense, we were able to create a special team here, and I remember feeling that we could make good progress."

On the other hand, even before the request to Zoom, Nihon University had been holding monthly symposia on online classes for faculty members across the university. "From the very first symposium, there was a great deal of interest, with four to five hundred faculty members participating. We have not had such a large response to our internal symposiums in the past. We could attract such a large number of participants because the symposium was held online, and many faculty members were dealing with various issues in the design

and operation of online classes. We had Zoom's Customer Success Manager (CSM) speak on stage for the second session in September. After that, we had Zoom conduct a total of seven training sessions exclusively for our university. We were very grateful."

Solution

Thanks to the close collaboration and teamwork between Nihon University and Zoom's Customer Success Manager (CSM) team, they could speed up the process and start using Zoom accounts across the university in September. "Students might still feel uneasy if faculty couldn't use the tools smoothly in their online classes. We believe that by carefully training many of our faculty members, we were able to get them up and running with Zoom right from the start without any major problems in the classroom."

Once the online classes were running somewhat smoothly, the focus shifted to discussions about the unique educational benefits of online and how to maintain and further improve the classes' quality. As many as 500 faculty members attend the monthly online symposia, they cross departmental boundaries to introduce advanced practices and popular classes. "There are always new discoveries to be made when you cross departmental boundaries and hear about the innovations of teachers in other fields. There are also examples of senior teachers who say, 'I don't have good IT skills, but I tried it,' and I feel that this has been a good stimulus. In online classes for experiments and practical training, some teachers used a self-made device with a camera attached to a helmet to conduct experiments. In language classes, the other teacher taught pronunciation by showing mouth, and in some cases, we found that we could interact better than in a face-to-face classroom. In a geography class, since the students had returned to their parents' homes all over Japan due to the Corona disaster, we developed a practical participatory class where students could go outside within 30 minutes, take pictures of nearby mountains, and share them with each other to study the local topography. It's fun to spend time studying a wide variety of diverse approaches."



In terms of communication among faculty members, the frequency of meetings has increased, and information sharing has progressed more than ever before, not only in terms of class content but also in other meetings. Even though the campuses are far apart, they have been able to deepen ties within the organization and actively promote exchanges among faculty members that transcend physical distance.

They also took on the challenge of using Zoom to hold one of Nihon University's signature events, the World Café, one of the largest gatherings of first-year students from all 16 faculties, about 16,000 people. The World Café has been held for first-year students for the past five years as part of the "First-Year Introduction Course." It aims to bring together students from various backgrounds, regardless of faculty, to discuss issues facing Nihon University as a whole. In 2020, there were doubts about holding the event because of the Covid-19 pandemic. "However, after deciding to take on the challenge while ensuring the safety of the students, the atmosphere of cooperation among the faculty and staff grew, and as a result, the event became even more popular among the students than in previous years. In previous years, some departments were unable to participate due to geographical problems. Still, this year, students from all 16 faculties were able to participate in the online event without any geographical restrictions, which was also a great achievement."

In addition, the annual "Student FD CHAmMiT," an event organized by student volunteer staff to discuss class improvement with students and faculty, was successfully held in December with 225 participants.

Results

In the future, when we return to face-to-face classes, Nihon University wants to explore new ways of teaching that mix the use of IoT. "The direction will be to incorporate the quality and characteristics of online learning using digital tools into the design of face-to-face classes. For example, lectures on practical training and experiments can be delivered in advance via video, discussions can be held in the Breakout Rooms on Zoom, and hands-on work can be done in the face-to-face class. As Zoom becomes more established as a platform, I expect that new classes will be developed by using it effectively in this way."

At Nihon University, which has 16 faculties, a system allows students to take courses from one faculty to another. Still, it has been difficult for students from distant locations to take advantage of this system. Online courses can overcome these geographical limitations. "As long as the time difference is taken into account, it will be easy to invite students and guest speakers from overseas to the class. This is already common practice at academic conferences, but bringing it to the university classroom will be a DX (Digital Transformation) of university education, enabling us to expand and deepen the connection between knowledge and knowledge more than ever before. The practice on the shape of the future of university education has already begun."

Zoom helps businesses and organizations bring their teams together in a frictionless cloud environment to get more done. Our easy, reliable, video- first unified communications platform for video, voice, content sharing, and chat runs across mobile devices, desktops, telephones, and room systems. Founded in 2011, Zoom is a publicly traded company on Nasdaq (ticker: ZM) and headquartered in San Jose, California.

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