



# Making the Transition to Virtual Learning Work

John Delesandro

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John Delesandro supervises the licensing and training of New Jersey's code enforcement officials, a role he's held for over 20 years. The NJ system of licensing and certification requires college-level training and examination on the discipline-specific ICC codes, as well as a rigorous system of continuing education to maintain each license or certification. Over the past 20 years, John has overseen the creation of several new certification programs and the development of new curriculum to obtain a license in NJ, as well as spearhead the creation of online learning to maintain licenses/certifications. John is a certified public manager and trainer in addition to being a volunteer firefighter and actively involved in serving the fire service in the state in various roles. Additionally, John has been a member of the ICC's Professional Development Council (PDC) since 2014 and has served as the Chair of the Education Committee for ICC since 2017.

## So why are we here today?

- The pandemic was a transformative force for the working world.
- Millions of people that never communicated online now do and that's unlikely to change.
- Millions of people that never worked remotely now do or will.
  - Remote inspections
  - Remote plan submittals
  - Remote training sessions

## NJ licensing and training background information

- We have about 4500 licensed code officials in NJ
- The training program began in 1981
- We provide about 300-350 training classes each year

In 2009 we began using an online training platform

Provided a train-the-trainer program to all our instructors

Hope was to see hybrid programs for our lengthy pre-licensing educational programs

Continuing education programs seen as an opportunity to close geographical challenges for training programs

That brings us to March 2020...

At that point we had 3 or 4 “core” online instructors

Average class size was about 25

We had already scheduled 150+ face-to-face classes for the Spring 2020 semester and our annual conference, which was to include the ICC Code Council Leadership Week.

All face-to-face classes were cancelled

Offered all of our instructors the opportunity to change their classes to online versions

We had some surprises

Many of the instructors took the opportunity

Our team pulled together a mass train-the-trainer for our instructors, giving them basics of successful online training and how to use our training platform

We then scheduled individualized trainings or “dry runs” for each of the instructors to give an extra level of comfort for all concerned.



If you build it, will they come?

Many of our code officials were reluctant, initially, to join the switch to online classes

That was short-lived- within 2 weeks or so, our class sizes jumped from the normal 25 or so attendees to 75-100+

We filled about 2000 seats in the spring

For this fall semester, we scheduled 90+ classes

Instructors that were hesitant took the time to become familiar with the system as attendees or on their own, ultimately joining us for the fall semester



What we did and how we encouraged more collaboration and went from about 5% of our folks to embrace the new normal to 95% +

How did we accomplish this?

We kept in contact with all our instructors and encouraged them to take another look

We provided multi-layered support for attendees through having a facilitator in all classes to aid not only them, but the instructors as well

We also had staff monitor our office email mailbox for folks having major technical difficulties and worked through it with them.

## Platforms

All have pluses and minuses

GoToTraining has been ours since 2009

Primary reason is accountability and assessment features

Zoom- easy to join in, but little security and accountability

MS Teams- a bit quirky and also lacks assessment tools

Webex- same as Teams

What training platforms have you used?

Do you have a preference as a trainer?

Is that preference different as an attendee?

## Best Practices

Give instructors at least basic tools and exposure to the training platform

Follow up with them individually for a "test drive"

Encourage the use of Q&A or poll questions to ensure attendees are absorbing information and to encourage more interactivity

Take 5-minute mini-breaks each hour

Use hand raising feature for quick response questions

2021 and beyond- the unknown

All encourage creativity and innovation

Help with understanding and coping with new methods and ideas – that's why we're there anyway

How much of this will truly carry forward

all of it?

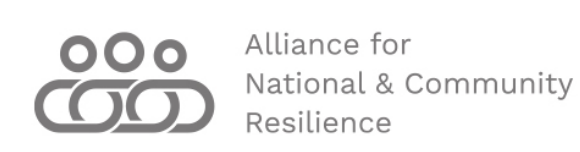
Some of it?

I've had enough already!

How can we be part of this new frontier?



Thank you for participating!





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