**2020 ATDKC Excellence in Practice Awards**

**Category: Small/Medium Organization**

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| **Training Umbrella’s KS Connections Academy Testing Labs** |
| **Challenge:**  |
| Kansas Connections Academy (KCA), is a fully accredited online school for grades K-12. Their students take the same state assessment and final exams as public schools. <https://www.connectionsacademy.com/kansas-online-school/about> At the start of our partnership with KCA, we set up and hosted testing labs in rooms at the Training Umbrella facility located in Overland Park, KS. Many students would drive from miles around to take their exams. Although successful, it became clear that there was a need for a testing lab environment in other nearby regions to accommodate other locations in the state of Kansas. Training Umbrella was asked to provide a solution. Our desired outcome was to help the classroom teachers and administrators in making the best possible testing environment for their students.  |
| **Action:**  |
| **Analysis**: We were approached by Kansas Connections Academy (KCA) to bring our on-site academic testing labs to multiple offsite locations. The challenge was to develop an environment that would duplicate the onsite experience in an offsite location. **Design:** Our team discussed two main objectives. 1. Prepare the technology and 2. Prepare the testing environment. **Development:** 1. Prepare the Technology. We focused on a 7-day timeline leading up to testing day. This allowed for us to prepare individual laptops with the needed testing software and web links. Laptops were then packaged in portable heavy plastic containers for transportation. Power cords, mice, mouse pads, extension cords were other hardware that was included with each laptop package. 2. Prepare the testing environment. We would source and reserve meeting space 3-5 months in advance of testing day. Once reserved, we would communicate with a contact at the off-site location to discuss room structure set up that allowed for an optimal testing environment. We would train (if needed) an onsite contact person to streamline communications. A reliable Wi-Fi connection was crucial for deployment. Teamup calendar was used to track notes and other logistics for each testing site. This allowed for simultaneous collaboration amongst the Training Umbrella staff. Implementation: Set up began the day before testing. Either or both a KCA and Training Umbrella employee would set up each individual station in the preconfigured classroom. All laptops would be powered on and tested to make sure all links and hardware connections were working properly. The use of Team Viewer allowed us to troubleshoot from afar. For example, if the off-site contact needed IT support, we used Team Viewer, a remote desktop solution, to login to any of our laptops from our Overland Park location and worked to resolve the issue. On the day of testing, either or both a KCA and Training Umbrella employee would monitor students as they arrived and logged in to their station. The employee would provide assistance when needed to help the student log in and feel comfortable with the testing process. In the Spring of 2019, at the Topeka location, we prepared labs to accommodate 62 students for grades 3-7 and 84 students for grades 8-11. We also accommodated 7 students in a small group and 1 individual tester with special needs. At the Wichita location, labs were prepared for 60 students. useful links:[www.teamviewer.com](http://www.teamviewer.com)[www.teamup.com](http://www.teamup.com)  |
| **Result:**  |
| Success of the mobile labs have allowed us to continue offering testing at our Overland Park location and implement our model in larger off-site testing locations scheduled for Spring of 2020. These include the areas of Topeka, Pratt, and Parsons Kansas. We estimate we will help 320 students take their exams. Pros: Students and families were able to save time and money on travel. Risk Management: There are seasonal time restrictions during when the testing can occur. Weather can cause cancellations and delays. Training Umbrella worked within these constraints by offering an alternative testing day.  |