

Decision Maker Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Vivian May Pitter

Decision Maker: Stephanie Rooks – Dean of Adult Education, Gwinnett Technical College

Interviewer: We have here Dean Rooks with our Adult Education Department. Thank you for agreeing to interview with me. Could you introduce yourself for the record?

Decision Maker: Yes, my name is Stephanie Rooks and I am the Dean of Adult Education at Gwinnett Technical College.

Interviewer: I sent Dean Rooks a list of questions for the decision maker here at Gwinnett Technical College Adult Education Department. The first question is what process do you apply when deciding to purchase new technology for this department?

Decision Maker: Generally I talk to our managers who are also known as our lead instructors to try to determine what needs they have at their individual sites. I also look at some of the very basics that I would like to see for each site – mainly computer labs and if we have sites that do not come with computer labs I try to make those sites have an adequate amount of laptop computers for the students to use.

Interviewer: Now why were the Promethean boards purchased in the first place or can you remember what reasons led to the department deciding to purchase the Promethean boards?

Decision Maker: As I recall my predecessor received a grant and I am not sure what type of grant it was – I think it was a grant somewhere in the thirty thousand dollar range and so at that time the decision was made to purchase the Promethean boards. I just know that he told us one day that we were getting them. I don't know why he decided that that was the purchase he was going to make.

Interviewer: To what extent are the Promethean boards being used in our classrooms?

Decision Maker: I think they are under-utilized quite honestly. I think that we do have a certain amount of teachers that have taken it upon themselves to learn it, to utilize them- to fully utilize them. However I think that's an area I would like to see us improve in as far as taking full advantage of the technology in our classrooms

Interviewer: A follow up question to that, do you have any plans for professional development for those teachers?

Decision Maker: Yes, I do. As a matter of fact we are in the process of working on our strategic planning for fiscal year sixteen which started two days ago yesterday [July 1]. I think I am going to solicit the advice of our team to determine what is the best way to do the training. Should it be something that someone like yourself should put together or if we look at our needs

as an overall department would it be best to have someone from the outside come and customize the training for us to use them.

Interviewer: What technology, to your knowledge, was used before the Promethean boards were installed?

Decision Maker: Overhead projectors, some still use those. Of course on the main campus we always had computers in the classroom. We have always had internet in the classrooms. I cannot think of any other technology that we really utilized beyond that.

Interviewer: Overhead projectors seem to have been the ...

Decision Maker: Yeah that was the “it thing”.

Interviewer: How often are overhead projectors used now in the Adult Education classroom and can you account for the current level of use or lack of use?

Decision Maker: I would say in our ESL program our English as a second language program I think overhead projectors are used pretty often. I don't have an exact percentage at all. On the ABE side I really do not know. You would a better judge of that quite honestly. But I do know that if I had a wish list I would certainly like to give us more technology especially with the new projectors like the Elmo projectors. I think that any time that something is purchased, in the back of my head, as far as technology is concerned I always think ok we have it but how are we going to make sure that they are using this properly and to the maximum. That comes with planning training which is why we are in the same position with the Promethean boards.

Interviewer: What is our department doing to completely take advantage of the technologies available to the teachers in the classroom?

Decision Maker: Well, we, couple of things. When we have our various staff developments we try to have some of our lessons that involve the use of technology in the classrooms. Also, we are lucky enough to have several of our staff members, yourself included, are savvy technologically and so there is assistance given to instructors who want assistance. I think that again it goes more towards whenever we have staff developments or any kind of training that are outside of what we do here we try to make sure that teachers bring that back and make sure that all teachers will know about new technologies. I would like to be able to utilize more [technologies] sometimes it is just a challenge especially with our off sites because the technology is not always there. We do not have the same thing as we have on the main campus.

Interviewer: In what ways has the Promethean board enhance teaching in the classrooms?

Decision Maker: For the few people that use it, I am sure it has been a great tool. Unfortunately many of our teachers use it as really expensive glorified whiteboard. I don't think we have gotten our money's worth.

Interviewer: Ok, final question. What technology do you hope to purchase for this department in the near future? Your wish list and why?

Decision Maker: As I mentioned earlier I would like to get more of the Elmo projectors

Interviewer: Why the Elmos?

Decision Maker: Because of what they can do as far as more of a sort of hands on 3D. You can use it for an object. I just think it will be really a good tool especially for our hands on activity for science. Then speaking of science, I would like for us to have a dedicated room just for our students who are studying science in order to pass their GED® science section. I would love to have that kind of thing. That is on my wish list that I have talked to my boss about – Dr. Seals. In addition, I'd also like, we have a meeting that is here I would like to get that, for lack of a better word, revamped so that it can be a true planning for teacher or for staff. I would like to have one of those large monitors. Then I would like to have a whiteboard that is sort of painted on the wall so that we no longer need a projector and I think that as we grow and because we are growing that would be very good for our department also. I would also like to be sure that every one of our off sites the one that do not have access to a full computer lab that they can really make their own mini lab and be able to do their testing. And also, I love this question, I would also like to have each of our sites wired for internet. A lot of our sites are wired for internet but because of our location it is very poor and so I am working on making sure and finding out if those site will let us wire so we can have full capability of the internet.

Interviewer: Well that was the last question. Thank you very much Dean Rooks for agreeing to interview with me.

Decision Maker: You are welcome.