In the Classroom 93

I am Changing Jobs, What I am Thinking and Doing

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Stan Skrabut: Well, thanks for taking the time to listen to this podcast. It certainly means a lot. I know you could be doing other things, but you're hanging out with me and I really do appreciate it. Well, I have some big news. I'm leaving my position as Director of Technology-Enhanced Instruction for Jamestown Community College in Lakewood, New York. I am now heading to Franklin, Massachusetts to assume the role as Director of Instructional Technology and Design for Dean College.

I have to tell you I'm pretty stoked. I'm pretty happy. I wanted to take you on my learning journey as I hand over operations in Jamestown and start to work at Dean College. I want to let you know what I'm thinking about as I settle into my new role for instructional technology. First, I'm going to talk about some of the things I did to help with the transition from JCC. Then I'll talk about what I'm doing to prepare to go to Massachusetts.

I'm currently in that in-between state and matter of fact, I will start my first day of work when this episode is released. Yes, a lot of things to do, and it's going quickly. Oh man, it's going quickly so COVID is not helping then. As I start to do this transition, COVID has played a factor in all of it. I'm just going to tell you what's going on and what's happening. It first starts with the search for a new job. Some of the things that I'm going to talk about, hopefully, for new instructional technologists that are looking to get a new job or you're changing jobs and you're settling in, hopefully, some of these things they'll help. They have helped me in the past and I'm trying to replicate them again.

I thought I would just share, that's what we're doing today. Like I said, COVID has been a player in this whole thing. First of all, searching for a new job. About a year ago, I started to actively start searching for a job again. I preferred to have stayed where I was, but circumstances as they were, it was best if I went and started working somewhere else. I started putting the wheels in motion. One of the things that I had done in previous searches and it has worked for me again, this search, was a couple of strategies that I put into play.

The first one was setting up a folder on my web browser where I saved search queries. I was going out and looking at Indeed, I was looking at LinkedIn. I was looking at all these different job boards. What I would do is I would do a search on those job boards based on the type of position I was looking at in different areas of the country. Basically, I would try to narrow it down as much as I could. I wasn't going to be looking through a lot of junk and I tried to really narrow it down.

Certainly, instructional technology was part of my searches. Online learning, that was another part of the search. Being a director, that was important to me. I

packaged those up into search and I had 19 different search queries created, and I saved them to this folder. With just a couple clicks of a button, I would open up all those searches at one time once a week. I would go in and I would look at different jobs that were being offered. I had certain criteria, certain places I'd work, certain places I wouldn't work. When I found a search that I liked or a place that was offering a job that I liked, I would then send it to Evernote.

Evernote was the place where I would collect these different job applications. From there, I would start the process of applying for it depending on what job it was and I started applying. Once a week, I would open up that folder and it'd have a lot of new job queries in there. I would cherry-pick the ones that I like and I would start tracking those applications. I enter them into Evernote, but I also entered, once I submitted an application, filled out my resume, put a cover letter together, filled out the online application for many of these different places, I would also track in another tool called Airtable. Airtable, that would let me know-- I use it to track the status of the search. Are they still open? What was the status that I get selected for an interview and those types?

I certainly had a folder with cover letters and CVs and resumes that I was constantly tweaking. I would have my master one, and then I would make adjustments based on what they were looking for in each of the different jobs. That was pretty successful. I learned a lot of that when I was coming out of the air force. They had a transition assist program that was just top notch. You can look for the transition assistance manual out there. I will put it into the show notes. That transition assistance manual, like I said, really helped me get a lot of jobs. I've used those strategies for getting jobs and so, yes, I was successful. I managed to do a lot of interviews.

This is the kind of exhausting part is, trying to do interviews and then you get the rejection letters and all those things happened but, in this case, I was successful. I managed to get a new job. I'm excited about it. Can't wait to start on Monday and start making Dean College great. They're already great but I think I can add something to it. Looking forward to doing that.

Now, it comes time to leave your old job. One of the things that I certainly try to do right away is getting a new email address. Get an email address from the place that is hiring me because I want to start transitioning my mail. With my email, one of the strategies that I've always used is I set up archive folders for six months at a time from January to June, from July to December, every year.

For all the mail that I sent and all the mail that I receive, I packaged them into the folder. When I leave, I take those PST files with me. In that way, if anyone has a question on something, I can always research my email and see if I can answer those questions and I clean out my email. I work to get to zero emails and just close everything out. Also with leaving the job is, I set my out of office reply. Now, in this particular out of office reply, one strategy that I'm using is I'm using a tool called Vidyard GoVideo and I created a video and some instructions, just letting everybody know that I'm moving onto a new job, but also how they can continue to get assistance.

I point them in the direction of that. I've noticed that some folks have already looked at that but that's part of my out of office reply, just letting everybody know those last two weeks that I'm on the job that I'm in transition. Once I actually left, I put a, "I am not working there," out of office reply and that'll stay until they close up my email. Made sure that I was forwarding any subscription to my new address. It's important to get that new address from your gaining organization.

Another thing that I did is set up a continuity document. Just listing all the different things that I know that are coming up and how they can get instruction. That document is still open between me and my former employer and so they have an opportunity to ask me questions and I can go ahead and put answers in there and point them to other resources.

Now, naturally, you're going to want to pack out your office. I want to make sure I pack-- There are certain books I want to make sure that get to my next office, to my gaining organization. I set those in bins and matter of fact, I just finished packing my car and all those books are there. When I show up, I got to haul them to my office and put them in my bookcase and I'm just basically ready to go. I'm trying to do that.

As I said, as I'm leaving, I certainly want to communicate to my organization, certainly, touch base with human resources right away and my supervisor, but also the rest of the campus and let them know. They want to know. Don't ever just disappear. Let folks know. There's folks that you've developed relationships, it's just only polite and fair that you let them know that you're moving on.

Now, I'm turning my focus onto my new job. As I mentioned, certainly, get my new email address and I want to start the following traffic on that email address as soon as possible so I can understand a little bit more about the culture, the way they communicate, things that they find important, and, especially, in this particular case, I'm very fortunate because the gentleman that am replacing he's retiring. We have an overlap from the time he's going to retire, I'm overlapping a little bit so he can coach me up on different aspects of the job, which I think is wonderful.

As I'm also prepping for this particular job, I was also doing onboarding. The human resources at this new location has been wonderful and I've managed to get all my onboarding done before I actually take over or assume my role on Monday and so that has been great. Anytime that you can do that, try to get all those things knocked out before you start your job. I've found that it's been useful.

One of the other things that I'm curious about is what systems they're running. What software applications are they primarily using. In this particular case, I am learning a lot of new stuff. Where I came from, we were using Blackboard, Google, Zoom. In this case, they are using Moodle, Teams and a lot of Microsoft applications. I have to do a little bit of transitioning on how to-- Things that have worked with me in the past, I just have to modify them to get them to work in this new environment. Always a new challenge and I'm very confident that I will get that up and running.

I asked them, I wanted to know what systems that I had. I have tapped into LinkedIn Learning and LinkedIn Learning is a wonderful way to come up to speed on a lot of

different software. I've been spending some evening just focusing on LinkedIn Learning on different software applications so I could walk in there feeling a little more confident as I start my job. Now, it comes time to settle into your job and the first weeks are certainly important to the first few months, the first 90 days. There's a lot of things that you want to do in order to get settled in. Here's some of the things that I have on top of mind, as I am moving to this new job and going to get settled in.

The first thing that is been hammered home through all the different job is I need to make sure that I'm spending more time listening than talk. That also goes with having a notebook in hand, I use the bullet journaling. I've talked about that in the past, and I've just been taking all kinds of notes because in this case, the gentleman that I'm replacing, he has a lot of continuity and I want to try to capture that as much as possible.

Right now I have a paper notebook, but once I get settled into my job, I start creating process document and so I write out these processes on how they do it. It's important that I understand how they do it right now and hold off on making any changes until I understand what they're doing, how they're doing it, why they're doing it a certain way. The other day I was visiting and I had an opportunity to see where I was going to be working.

We talked about a couple of processes and so this is important to take to heart. The other thing that you want to do is as part of this listening journey is to figure out their culture and their norm. How do they communicate? What are the strategies? Can you send an all campus email? Some places you can, some places you can't. You can't make assumptions on this, you need to figure it out, make sure that you are not violating any organizational norm.

The other thing that I want to do as soon as possible is sit down with my supervisor and set some immediate goal to first establish expectations, determine what success looks like, but also set out some goals that I could be worked towards. Then also part of communicating with my supervisor is finding out his particular communication style. Does he prefer to get information by telephone, face-to-face, by email, or in this case Team?

Right now, I've been communicating with Teams, but I haven't really asked them, how does he prefer to communicate? Along with my supervisor is also meeting with my teammates and getting to know them. In an article that Shireen Jaffer had written called Four Ways to Quickly Settle into a New Job and Get Comfortable With Coworkers, she talked about an internal document called How to Work With Me.

This is a document that everybody on the team fills out. It talks about working hours, best way to communicate, how they ask for help, what makes them happy, what makes them grumpy, how they like to get feedback? Just all those basic ways that you can really-- I think I could do a better job than I did in the past, by just simply asking some of those questions. I was very happy to find that particular article.

Also, getting settled in is getting your system set up and this includes your workspace. When I worked at the University of Wyoming, I worked with an individual,

her name was Athena Kennedy and she just made her workspace wonderful. Ever since I saw how she did that, I have taken that to heart and I've tried to make my places just as nice. I put art up on the wall, I get my books in my bookcase, I set up various things that I've collected over time. I just want to make it a personal space, especially since I'll be there for a while and so there's just different ways that you can do that.

The other systems that you need to do is get your computer system and access and how do you-- getting all that hooked up. If you don't have certain tools that you think are necessary, then it's important to list those out and see if you can work with your supervisor to get those types of things for your organization or for you in order for you to work better.

Getting your workspace, talked about goals as far as your supervisor, but you may have also other goals, goals that your team has set up that you need to tap into. I'm very much interested in getting a hold of strategic plan and department plan to see where I will fit in and try to set goals around them. Huge fan of OKRs, objectives, and key results. It's what helped Google do what they do. They've been using them. John Doerr, he's written a wonderful book called *Measure What Matters* and it's all about OKRs, how to put those into place. That's one of the things that I'm going to be looking at right away for both myself and my team is to set up some OKR so we can be moving forward.

With that is looking for these opportunities for improvement. What are some quick wins that we can-- that I can do to help establish my presence on the campus and so I suspect that we'll be working with faculty, working with some of the other directors and figuring out how my team can help their team and those are ways that we can start improving the organization.

Then it's a matter of getting the organizational chart in your hand and start finding the different players that you need to talk to and start setting up meetings so you can talk to these individuals and figure out how to do those things. Improve the organization, but where you can find synergy between each other. Then there's so many more things, but other basic things is getting my LinkedIn profile updated, letting people know where I can be now found.

Then after I get all settled in is reach out to past colleagues. I've already started doing that based on some of the projects I know that I'll be working on, I've started to reach out to old colleague because I know they are experts in those areas and seeing what I can glean from them. It's important to keep those relationships going when you leave from one organization to another. You've built relationships, so it's important.

Those are some of the things that I have on my mind as I'm making this transition to a new job. I'm been excited. I'm ready to go. My van is packed, I'm taking off tomorrow, I've got an eight hour drive and then spending a little time at a hotel, settling into an apartment, just all those different things. Then also trying to sell a house and do a major move and just-- there's so much stuff. Just mind boggling, but as far as is getting into my new job that is just some of the things that I'm thinking of.

I've taken care of doing the interview process and applying for jobs and also leaving my old job and clearing out my email and taking those things but now I've started prepping for my new job. The different systems that I need to look at and get my onboarding done and starting Monday, starting to fit into the culture and be a contributing member to the organization. That's what I'll be focusing on. Like always before I let you go, here is a quick plug for my book.