

**Interviewee: Tom Oberhue, Century Network Administrator**

**Interviewer: Vincent Cao**

**VC:** The following interview was conducted on behalf of the oral history program of the Century High School. The interviewee is Tom Oberhue. The interviewer is Vincent Cao. The interview took place at Century on ( Monday, May 20, 1:25 ).

**VC:** So Mr. Oberhue, how did you get involve here at Century?

**TO:** I actually came on the second year of Century opens, so Century had already been in existence and I was a young teacher looking for a job and so they posted an opening for social studies particularly economics. And so I came in and fill out the paper work. I had an application already with the Hillsboro District and then I was interview for the economics position because for that second there wasn't a senior class. There were freshmen, sophomores and juniors but no seniors, and the second year would be the first year we have seniors, and economics in a senior course. And so they were looking to hire their senior teachers for them, I mean teachers to teach seniors, and I was one of those.

**VC:** Okay, I understand that you don't teach economics anymore, is that right?

**TO:** No, they don't let me do that. No I love economics, it a passion and it's a great, great subject and very relevant and meaningful stuff. I came in to teach all the econ that first year. I taught, I think, 11 units of it. So it was pretty special because I had the seniors for all intended purposes. In that year, because of that, I think it was a very unique situation and I was very honored. I spoke at the graduation that year as the teacher speaking to the graduating class because I virtually had 90, actually more than 90 percent, of the students in my class. And so that was very special.

Dave Parker who was, who is, an assistance principle now, was the technology coordinator/system administrator for our network. He was promoted to vice principle, and there was a kind of hole and so I was asked. It was kind of mutual, but yeah, I was keenly interested in technology and so fourth, and its being a real sacrifice. In economics, you talk about (how much) things cost. Not only what you pay for, but also what you give up, and that's an economic term. I feel like I had to give up a lot to be the technology guy because I have up gives a class that I really love teaching and that's economics.

**VC:** How many years have you been teaching, and how did the block schedule affect your teaching?

**TO:** Total? I have taught about 7 years, but only 4 here at Century High. When I came, there was already block and so that second year we had block. I think it was the first year, as a matter of fact. I though they had block even the first year, I thought. I did all of my student teaching with the block schedule so I enjoyed the block. I always teach on the block schedule and today with the 15 min class period because of the assembly it made me bonkers. With a 50 min class there is not enough time to really get into the subject matter in a meaningful way, and so I really enjoy the 80 minutes block quite a bit.

**VC:** So, what are some of the achievements here at Century over the past 5 years, especially in the Technology department?

**TO:** Well, it's an interesting progression. I mean we have become our own department. The digital technology department is only really about 2 years old. The school is 5 years and the digital technology department is 2 years. There were technologically class that was apart of business and technology is industrial engineering. Well, we try to create our own identity and there are numbers of reasons for that, but we're pretty committed to creating a special program that allows students to get training in hardware and software, or maybe get training in network and devices and bottom line is we want to grow. Right now we are very, very small and our goal is just to create a really cool program that student who are interested in technology can really learn some cool stuff.

**VC:** So when the school began the technology department was non-existent?

TO: It existed all right but I mean Mr. Parker taught a class called Network Management but there was probably 15 maybe 20 student that was in it and now with Network Technologies and we're add a software and hardware class and also a Operating class. What was called the Lab 2000 we now call it Engaging Technology and with all of those class together we now have around 500 kids. That's a big number of students and we're trying to create an interesting area for students to take. All of those classes are electives and so because of that we have to be interesting and fight to those needs of the students and build our Network Technologies programs in these area.

VC: I understand that teach Network Technologies 3&4 and this is the first year where the student are getting their Cisco Certify Network Associate?

TO: Yeah, wow, your timing is uncanny because they actually took their on Thursday and Friday of last week and none of them pass. This is an industry standard and it is a tough task and I (Tom) actually took mine over again and pass it. I really expected about 7 of the 11 that took it to pass and we had a heart-to-heart talk in our last meeting and we're going to regroup and calling it "phase 2". They are going to re-study and re-take their test before the end of June and this it is not going to be \$62.50 but \$125.00 but I this money is the easy part because studying and passing is the hard part. Yeah, it a challenging and kids need to know it because this is a college level curriculum being taught for Intel engineers in Health College, ITT-Tech, etc and they don't pass their CCNA on the first try either. This are Sophomore, Junior and Senior saying they want to get down and dirty with this and it is a lot of work. So this has been an eye opening and I have to say that it was a tough and sad weekend for me cause like I said I thought we would do better than that so we had to go back to the drawing board. I want to create a tradition here and nothing is going to make me happier than filling the wall with people's picture with their CCNA certify, A+ certify and MCSC certify. That would so cool but they don't just give to you, it has to be earn.

VC: So do you think that the Network Technologies class will become an AP or Honors class?

TO: kinda, sorta, and maybe. Right now NT4 is consider an Honors course but I don't think that NT4 being the way it is should be consider an Honors course because the subject matter is challenging, taking your CCNA is challenging but to me an honors course would be even more dramatic creating a cool project that is making it your own and making it special. So yes it has to be rigorous but it also have to be something that I think has to be a student product, which we can easily make and will make for NT4.

VC: What are some of the future goals for the Network Technologies Dept?

TO: Oh, wow, that's a great question and the answer is that we believe CHS wasn't an accident that its currently stand for Century High School but we believe that CHS should stand for Cyber High School. So our goal pretty much just school domination that we run the entire school and then everyone takes a full day of Network Technologies. So it's a small goal and it's a humble goal and just complete dominate of Century High.

VC: What is your view on Century as a whole compare to maybe other school in the District?

TO: Ooh, I don't know if I can compare to other school in the district because Century is the only school I been in the district. As suppose to other school I've been in, I think Century is a nice school, I like it a lot but I think it has some issues of being so big. It a big school, I mean it's crowded and I think that is challenging sometime. I think there are some very strong thing about Century and some bad things about it also. What I mean is that there are a lot of student, and I feel sad about this, who don't feeling super-connected to Century. They go here but they don't feel a sense of pride or this is special and that is seen in low participation in sport or no participation in leadership. Lots of people just kind of come and go to class and then leave as suppose to being more like a community. That to me is something that is uhm, I mean it's tough. It been fun watching Century grow and starting to create traditions and when you go to a school that had traditions you always take it for grant. Well Century had only been four yrs old, actually five, and so it is still trying to figure out those traditions wise.

VC: Do you think you would go back to teaching Economics here at Century?

TO: Yeah, I would if I was offered. It depends because I am very committed to the Digital Technology program to build something special because one there are students interested two I think it is relevant to our world just like I believe the same for Economics.

VC: Is there anything else that you would like to tell us that we left out?

TO: humm, I it is great that you guys are doing a school project, a school history program. I actually graduated studies in American History, in which I conducted about 30 interviews with people because I was doing a neighborhood history and it is a lot of work. I mean you have to sit there and audiotape and transcribe and all of those kind of stuff. A lot of work and I don't know if you guy have to transcribe them words for words but that what I had to do and it takes a long time. But yeah, you have a great teacher Mrs. Duyckinck, is awesome. I mean she is really a phenomenal teacher and I think the whole idea of making history personal and relevant is important and powerful. Sometime people get so caught up in history being old famous people who are dead. History is really the story of life in which challenge, conflict, and struggle and solutions and I think it is cool how you guys are doing this.