Atomic Learning Partners with Rappahannock Community College:
An Interview with Associate Professor Ruth Greene

We spoke with Ruth Greene, Associate Professor of Business Management and Information Systems Technology for Rappahannock Community College, about how her college uses Atomic Learning.

Atomic Learning: What are your job responsibilities at Rappahannock Community College?

Greene: Introduction to Computer Concepts and Applications, Professional Development Opportunities throughout the college environment, Introduction to the Internet, Center for Workforce Development training events and I facilitate a variety of instructional technology training sessions.

Atomic Learning: Why did Rappahannock Community College choose to purchase Atomic Learning? What challenges were you facing that Atomic Learning helped to solve?

Greene: While searching the web for free tutorials, I discovered Atomic Learning. I was immediately fascinated with the offerings and began a search for obtaining a subscription. Our initial subscription was funded through a VCCS grant. Initially, we collaborated with Germanna Community College for funding and shared the resource across our campuses. The tool became a favored resource at both our schools.

One of our main challenges was the impossibility of keeping up with software version changes. Also, our VCCS Blackboard implementation and upgrades required just-in-time training for faculty and students.

Atomic Learning: What do your students use Atomic Learning for?

Greene: Our users include a variety of groups. We have students on campus and off, faculty (including many adjuncts) and staff, and dual enrollment faculty and students at offsite locations.

These different groups use the tutorials and tools in various ways: Blackboard training for faculty, staff and students, MS-Office tutorials for staff and faculty, and various software tutorials of interest to students and faculty, including anything from TI-84 calculator to Kidspiration to PhotoShop.

Atomic Learning: How do your students access online courses and Atomic Learning?

Greene: Our users access the system from an auto logon via the campus network structure or the rcc login from off campus.

Atomic Learning: What benefits have you seen your students experience since implementing Atomic Learning?

Greene: Faculty have offered the following quotes:

"I am very excited about Atomic Learning (AL). I want to build more technology-based projects into my composition courses, but my students have varying computer skills. Some students are computer experts, while others are very uncomfortable with technology. For example, my English 112 students in spring 2004 wanted to learn to build a FrontPage Website, but many of them could not access the tutorial on the Microsoft Web site. Giving students access to tutorials they can access at their convenience will allow all of the students to develop their computer skills and consider a variety of methods for developing class projects. Students can also become familiar with various software programs and add that knowledge to their resumes, which will help them find jobs or apply for promotions. I plan regularly to develop class assignments that provide students with an opportunity to use software based on the tutorials available at the AL site. I am very excited about AL and know that I will come to depend on it for personal development and to develop class assignments," states English professor Leslie Norris.

Dr. Haillie Ray, a biology professor at Rappahannock says, "Thank you! I've just used Atomic Learning to find out how to copy my Faculty Information from one course to another. I was really bummed out because there's nowhere on the page that I could find that would allow you to do it.

I was going to send a whining Email to one or both of you asking for help, but used AL instead. Woo-hoo! It works!"

"Atomic Learning: a great resource; one of the most important resources so far! Thanks for your efforts," says Scott Mabe, psychology professor.

Leslie Smith, Dean for Technology and Distance Education says, "For me as an administrator and distance instructor, I recognize the importance of time and making time count. These tutorials provide one to three minutes of instruction that is targeted to what it is that you want to learn. In addition, not having to start from scratch each time you need some instruction is so valuable. In fact, many people have given up on online training for that very reason. These tutorials provide just the right instruction, at the right time, for the right amount of time."

And I can see a great benefit to my IT students. They are directed to Atomic Learning tutorials as part of their Blackboard learning assignments. They never leave their course. I have seen their application skills increase by having the Atomic Learning tutorials there to reinforce their text and my lectures.

Atomic Learning: If you were to recommend Atomic Learning to another institution, what would you say?

Greene: Atomic Learning has offered us a quality product with excellent customer service. The tutorials meet our needs on a variety of levels and the service and support have been phenomenal. Luba Lewytzkyj [Atomic Learning's southeast regional sales manager] has been a major reason we have used AL so effectively. She is an awesome representative for the company, always proactively seeking a solution to any need and resolving to improve the effectiveness of product usage. Her proactive solutions include examples as follows:

- Providing the option of automatic on-campus logon
- Tracking services that are easy to understand and helpful in decision making
- User accounts for each employee/student if requested
- Service that allowed us to collaborate with another college to fund our initial subscription via a grant
- One challenge our faculty and students have confronted is finding just the right tutorial for the immediate learning experience. AL customer service heard us. In fact while we were at an off-campus conference we explained this to our representative. She took off on that, made arrangements for an audio conference, and we were off and running, developing direct links to tutorials in no time at all. This is one example of their fine customer service.

Atomic Learning has asked for our input and responded with quality results.