Hiring Three Technology Coordinators

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**Introduction**

This paper explores the job responsibilities of technology coordinators, and presents three model job descriptions. A literature review is conducted to examine technology coordinator duties in Texas, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, and Alabama. Drawing upon the literature review and sample technology coordinator job descriptions found online, three technology coordinator job descriptions for elementary, middle, and high school are presented (See Appendix A) and compared in the final section of this study.

**Literature Review**

**Technology Coordinators in Alabama**

Collum (2015) conducted an exploratory study on Alabama’s technology coordinators’ duties and career pathways using the self-efficacy perspective of social cognitive theory. The qualitative research examined how tech coordinators’ career pathways determined their job responsibilities. Survey and interview data was collected and analyzed. The data revealed three main findings: (Collum, 2015)

1. Technology coordinators with a technology-related background tend to have different pedagogical responsibilities than those who are trained in pedagogy.
2. Individual’s initial area of training effected their skill preferences when hiring.
3. Participants with a technology background who later earned education administration degrees valued pedagogy more than those who did not.

Collum (2015) highlights four points that led her to pursue the study:

1. Eighty percent of district coordinators’ job responsibilities were technical in 1992; whereas, only twenty percent of tech coordinators’ duties were technical in 2013.
2. Tech coordinators tend to arrive to the job with primary training and experience in one of three areas; technology, pedagogy, or administration.
3. Technology leadership is vital for innovation and pedagogical change (Voogt & Pegrum, 2005).
4. There is a lack of studies on how these differing backgrounds impact technology integration in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms.

Collum’s (2015) research question sought to explore how these technology, pedagogy, and administrative backgrounds impact the career path of tech coordinators, and how their career path guides their roles and duties as tech coordinators. The study reviews literature pertaining to the following areas; technology integration, technology standards, Technology Scholarship Program for Alabama Teachers (TSPAT), Alabama Technology Coordinator Salary Survey, pedagogical and administrative verses technical career backgrounds, technology leadership, technology coordinator job description, and social cognitive theory.

A section of Collum’s (2015) literature review examines the general tech coordinator job description developed by the Alabama State Department of Education to satisfy requirements by legislature. The sole standard put forth in this job description is that “each local board of education will have a technology coordinator” (Collum, 2015). The description does not include any standards for education or experience. The job responsibilities are broad in this description, and indicate that the tech coordinator is responsible for technology funds, managing technology professional development, filing required reports and plans, coordinating technology across all programs, implementing and monitoring proper security measures to protect the network and data, assisting with implementing technology standards for students and faculty, and performing all duties assigned by the superintendent and board of education (Collum, 2015).

The participants in Collum’s (2015) study are Alabama public schools’ district technology coordinators. The sample is comprised of 7 individuals who had a mix of technological, pedagogy, and administrative backgrounds. Qualitative data is collected from a pre-interview survey and interviews, five of which are held in-person, and two that are conduct over the telephone. Semi-structured interviews are used to give the researcher flexibility to explore unanticipated topics and responses. Collum (2015) seeks to answer the following research question: “How do individual’s backgrounds shape the pathways they take to become District Technology Coordinators and how do these pathways influence their role or responsibilities?” (Collum, 2015).

The research indicates that Alabama does not require district technology coordinators to hold administrator certificates; therefore, they can be classified as administrators or support personnel. The study sample included four tech coordinators classified as administrators and three as support personnel in their school systems. The author asserts the disparity in titles is for salary purposes, and allows districts to pay less to tech coordinators with a support personnel title.

The researcher gathered information on each participant’s job responsibilities, and categorized them in to three broad areas: pedagogical duties, technical duties, and administrative duties. The study included a table listing each participant’s duties in the three categories. The bulk of responsibilities for each participant fell under technical duties and administrative duties. Two of the seven subjects had no pedagogy related job responsibilities.

**Technology Coordinators in Texas**

Egeolu (2013) conducted a quantitative survey study to explore several aspects of technology coordinators employed in K-12 public schools in south-central Texas. The research study focused on the two hypotheses; “…characteristics, professional developments, and duties; and whether job responsibilities and level of technical, administrative and education experience affects training needs of district technology coordinators.” (Egeolu, 2013) Based on the findings, Egeolu noted considerable variations in some of the data and in other results, there was no significant correlations found.

The driving force behind the research stems from a lack of data that explores the people who hold the positions as technology coordinators. Given the nature of the position and the variations in the characteristics, job title, and duties, within a state, and when compared to other states, the author felt compelled to study this area that is lacking in research. The literature review revealed that in some states, the difference between titles was two to one; for every role employed only two had the same or similar job title. The lack of available research on the types of people hired as technology coordinators set the goals for Egeolu’s research. The researcher posed four research questions. The first two questions focused on the relationships, if any, between types of training versus technical, educational, and leadership skills and work responsibilities and training within specific school districts. The third and fourth research questions sought to find any correlation between characteristics and duties, and needs within the same districts within Bexar County.

Since Egeolu’s goal in her research was to understand the characteristics of the people and the multitudes of jobs for which technology coordinators are responsible, there was no job description within the research, however, the researcher painstakingly identified the traits and skills needed to perform the job such as individual/person analysis, which leads to understanding specific characteristics and traits, to include educational background. Additionally, experience and certification levels were identified as important background for identifying all that is needed in a qualified candidate. Once the researcher established commonalities, the results from the literature provided guidance towards developing the research questions and the hypothesis.

Egeoulu’s study instruments consisted of selection-set and Likert scale questions instead of qualitative data because the researcher focused on linear research to obtain inferential statistical data. The population of this study included district level technology coordinators and based on consent, nine of the 15 contacted accepted and agreed to become a part of the study. Using a purposive sampling, there were 14 district technology coordinators from nine school districts.

**Technology Coordinators in Pennsylvania**

In Pennsylvania, there are many responsibilities that fall under the category of technology coordinators. The state requires individuals serving in these positions to be certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Lesisko, 2004). Some of the responsibilities for technology coordinators in Pennsylvania include implementing instructional technology, providing leadership in digital systems, and working with staff to integrate technology (Lesisko, 2004).

The position of technology coordinator is not clearly defined in the state of Pennsylvania. The closest certification to this title is call Instructional Technology Specialist. This position requires a certification and is specifically aimed at the use of instructional technology for staff and administration in a K-12 environment (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2004). The definition provided from the Pennsylvania Department of Education states that a person holding the certificate can “provide curricular advisement on the application of instructional technology into curricular planning and instructional design to the curriculum supervisor and other school administrative staff (2004).” It also states that if the individual is not working directly with curricular planning and instructional design, that a certification is not required (PA Dept. of Ed., 2004). This is to say that an individual hired to run computer updates and maintenance on district computers is not required to hold this supervisory certification, since their work is not related curriculum or instructional design. A restriction on this positions states specifically that the instructional technology specialist is not to serve as a classroom or student instructor (PA Dept. of Ed., 2004). The services provided under this certification involve working exclusively with staff and administrators. There is an administrative certification as Instructional Technology Specialist Supervisor, which serves as the direct supervisor of district Instructional Technology Specialists.

Lee Lesisko seeks to clarify the position of technology coordinator in Pennsylvania schools. His dissertation seeks to look at different job titles and descriptions for similar/related positions and see if it would make sense to combine most of them under a single title. The study sought to answer questions on what skills are important for instructional technology, professional backgrounds of technology directors, and whether they serve mainly for the purpose of education or technology (Lesisko, 2004).

Lesisko identifies the title of Director of Instructional Technology as a different certification in the state of Pennsylvania which involves planning at the district level when compared to the responsibilities of the Instructional Technology Specialist. The responsibilities include developing a district technology plan, integrating technology efficiently with the curriculum, revising the technology plan annually based on the continuing needs of the district, directing the technology committee, preparing district budgets for technology, review hardware and software for potential district implementation, and developing district instructional materials for staff (Lesisko, 2004). There are just some of the many responsibilities this position is required to address.

The state of Pennsylvania has a position identified as Coordinator of Computer Services. This is a role that has a different certification requirement than the other certifications. For this position, the coordinator is only required to meet certification requirements as a paraprofessional. They serve mostly as a technician for maintenance and repair of hardware and software (Lesisko, 2004).

The results of Lesisko’s study made several suggestions for the Pennsylvania Department of Education and school officials about the position of technology coordinator. The first and most important aspect to note is that there is currently no title of technology coordinator. Through the course of this study, Lesisko identified over 40 different job titles for individuals doing essentially the same work as a technology coordinator (Lesisko, 2004). As a result, Lesisko recommends that since these positions are all similar in responsibilities, job scope, and duties, that they be combined into the single (preexisting) position of Director of Instructional Technology.

It is recommended that the position remains a certified position, while the newly suggested title of Technology Coordinator would remain an uncertified position. The difference between these positions would be that the title of Technology Coordinator would specifically deal with technical aspects of technology whereas the Director of Instructional Technology would have responsibilities related to instructional design and curriculum implementation. This would result in the over 40 different job titles being reduced and combined to two, a certified director and a non-certified coordinator.

**Technology Coordinators in Mississippi**

In *An Examination of the Characteristics, Duties, and Training Needs of District Level Technology Coordinators in Mississippi School Districts,* (Webster, 2010) a doctoral dissertation at Mississippi State University Webster indicated that there was limited research on this subject prior to her research on technology coordinators.

The research design she used was descriptive. Her results from the study showed that district technology coordinators within the area of Mississippi are fluid in nature based on where they teach. A key takeaway was that the majority of the respondents said they needed additional training. However, Webster mentioned in the conclusion that “the research findings based on the technology coordinators in Mississippi seem to parallel those of many other states.” (p.65) Expectations were also inconsistent of the job responsibilities of these coordinators making Webster come to further conclusions that the position would be “vulnerable for high turnover rates and low workplace satisfaction.”

A survey instrument (30 questions in total) was emailed out to coordinators to collect the data. Out of the 138 coordinators only 55 responded. Among the other coordinators they either opted out, the emails bounced back or just didn’t respond. Demographic information was shared throughout.

The four research questions Webster had were…

* “What are the characteristics and duties of the state of Mississippi?” (p.35)
* “What are the training needs of technology coordinators in the state of Mississippi? (p.42)
* “Is there a relationship between the types of training technology coordinators find most necessary and whether or not coordinators have technical, administrative, or education experience?” (p.44)
* “Is there a relationship between job responsibilities and training needs of Mississippi technology coordinators? (p.47)

Webster found from her qualitative study that each of the coordinators shared a primary responsibility to purchase technology resources and complete administrative paperwork. The rest of the responsibilities varied between the schools. These responsibilities included directly educating staff on technology opportunities, professional development on the use of technology, and installation and troubleshooting of software. (p.41).

There is also an indication in the study about participants responsibilities that are outside their job descriptions. These responsibilities came with no additional pay for completing. The majority of these coordinators also had another job role at the school (p.40)

Qualifications of a technology coordinator varied as well. Participants were asked about their teaching experience in a K-12 setting vs. a post-secondary setting. They were also asked whether or not they had any prior technical experience and/or received any form of certificates in technology.

Their own educational experience was considered ranging from an associate degree to a doctoral degree. Further information included age, gender, & ethnicity.

Recommendations for the technology coordinators were included at the end of the results along with suggestions for further research that may be helpful. Suggestions included further studies on…

* How many Mississippi school districts are actually employing technology coordinators.
* What type of professional development training are these coordinators participating in.
* What additional training would be most beneficial to help coordinators excel in their roles at these schools.
* How much time it takes for technology coordinators to complete each individual responsibility they are tasked with

**Comparison of Technology Coordinator Job Descriptions**

Across the literature and job descriptions provided the Tech coordinator’s role encompasses two main elements: supporting an educational component of the school or the technology infrastructure. While there are varying degrees of complexities at each level of learning (Elementary, Middle, and High School) when it comes to teaching, the Technology Coordinator position has the opportunity to have a positive correlation between students and their future careers. Each coordinator will need to have past experience in the field whether through prior job experience, minimum of five years, or some form of degree from Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral in a related field. In many instances certification from the state also is required if the Tech Coordinators’ are delivering educational support, while certification is not required if the role is to maintain and support the educational technology infrastructure in the school district.

In Elementary, Middle and High School these full-time employees will be looked upon to review district technology requirements and integrate technology in the schools when it comes to areas by implementing technology in the curriculum. Troubleshooting and critical thinking are important aspects of each job.

At all levels they will be required to help students and faculty become more equipped to understand this technology. As these students get older, the responsibilities of the Middle and High School technology coordinators will look to prepare students for post-school and for some college readiness. Taking on a leadership role in that school district will be necessary to meet these requirements efficiently.

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Appendix A

Elementary, Middle, and High School Technology Coordinator Job Descriptions

JOB DESCRIPTION: MIDDLE SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR

**Title**: Middle School Technology Coordinator

**Location**: Ocean Spray Middle School

Ocean Spray School District

Ocean Spray, NJ

**Objectives**: To lead and assist in troubleshooting and maintaining instructional computer systems and software. To manage technology-related staff development, and conduct in-service training for staff.

**Position Details**:

Salary: Determined by Board of Education

Length of Contract: 12 months

Reports to: Director of Technology

Supervises: IT Assistant – Middle School, Students

**Qualifications**:

Required: Bachelor’s degree in related field with required state certification. Experience

with managing and maintaining instructional computer systems and software.

Desired: Five years of experience as follows:

* Managing and maintaining servers
* Instructional technology programming
* Developing new educational technology initiatives
* Network user administration
* Network system management
* Installation and support of a broad array of software packages
* Troubleshooting and resolving hardware and software related issues
* Web page design
* Graphic design
* User training
* Staff management

Required Skills:

* Independent work ability
* Strong communication and leadership skills
* Multitasking
* Problem solving
* Mentorship

JOB DESCRIPTION: MIDDLE SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR continued

* Training
* Public speaking

Responsibilities:

* Manage and maintain server
* Maintain records of technology performance
* Maintain network security
* Create and implement policies and procedures to maintain system security
* Mange new hardware and software installations
* Maintain and troubleshoot instructional computers, software, and related hardware
* Manage network user accounts
* Create and maintain school webpage
* Data governance
* Trains staff on new hardware and software
* Evaluates, recommends, and purchases new technologies
* Assess educational technology needs
* Assist staff with technical issues
* Maintain technology inventory
* Write grants
* Budget technology funds
* Submit and analyze bids
* Manage email accounts
* Manage virus software
* Technology plan and budget
* State data reporting
* Supervise IT staff
* Curriculum technology integration

JOB DESCRIPTION: ELEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR

**Title**: Elementary Educational Technology Coordinator

**Supervises**: Elementary-level technology implementation

**Assignment**: 12 Month Position

**Qualification**: Experience in implementing technology in curriculum efficiently. A strong background and knowledge in networking, curriculum development, and administration of technology is strongly desired. Troubleshooting experience a plus. This position requires a Master’s Degree in a related field and a Supervisor Certificate as minimum requirements.

**Job Goal**: The Elementary Education Technology Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing district technology requirements and applying them to specifically fit the needs of the elementary-level staff and students.

**Responsibilities**:

* Review curriculum for technology integration
* Conduct classroom observation to ensure technology integration
* Conduct training and professional development to introduce and develop technology skills to the elementary level staff and administration
* Keep track of technology equipment
* Assist the district Director of Technology

Description: This is a 12 month position for an Elementary Educational Technology Coordinator. The position is 12 months to allow for the coordinator to prepare, maintain, and deploy technology while students are on their summer break. During the school year, the coordinator will continue to ensure the effective and efficient use of technology in an elementary school setting.

JOB DESCRIPTION: HIGH SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR

**Title**: High School Technology Coordinator

**Location**: Ocean Spray High School

Ocean Spray School District

Ocean Spray, NJ

**Objectives**: To lead and assist in troubleshooting and maintaining instructional computer systems and software. To manage technology-related staff development, and conduct in-service training for staff.

**Position Details**:

Salary: Determined by Board of Education

Length of Contract: 10 months

Reports to: Director of Technology

Supervises: IT Assistant – High School, Students

**Qualifications**:

Required: Bachelor’s degree in related field with required state certification. Experience

with managing and maintaining instructional computer systems and software. Experience with supervising staff. NJDOE Supervisor’s Certificate.

Desired: Five years of experience as follows:

* Classroom teaching
* Managing and maintaining servers
* Instructional technology programming
* Developing new educational technology initiatives
* Network user administration
* Network system management
* Installation and support of a broad array of software packages
* Troubleshooting and resolving hardware and software related issues
* Web page design
* Graphic design
* User training
* Staff management

Required Skills:

* Independent work ability
* Strong communication and leadership skills
* Multitasking
* Problem solving
* Mentorship
* Training
* Public speaking

Responsibilities:

* Manage and maintain server
* Maintain records of technology performance
* Maintain network security
* Create and implement policies and procedures to maintain system security
* Mange new hardware and software installations
* Maintain and troubleshoot instructional computers, software, and related hardware
* Manage network user accounts
* Create and maintain school webpage
* Data governance
* Trains staff on new hardware and software
* Evaluates, recommends, and purchases new technologies
* Assess educational technology needs
* Assist staff with technical issues
* Maintain technology inventory
* Write grants
* Budget technology funds
* Submit and analyze bids
* Manage email accounts
* Manage virus software
* Technology plan and budget
* State data reporting
* Supervise IT staff
* Curriculum technology integration