

EIM 551 Tech Interview Questions

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Interview with Amy Hurst and Devon Berry. Hurst and Berry are the technology coaches at Calhoun County School System. The interview was conducted over the phone on a conference call.

Jana Hadley: Technology is such an integral part of how we teach our students but the transition hasn't been easy or welcome for everyone. How do you perceive the acceptance of technology in the classroom today?

Amy Hurst: Acceptance of technology in classrooms is growing, though it varies by teacher comfort level; younger educators often embrace it more readily, while others may struggle with the learning curve.

Jana Hadley: What do you think is the biggest learning curve for teachers?

Devon Berry: We find the new A.I. tools to be the biggest challenge for teachers of all ages and experience.

Jana Hadley: Specifically what part of A.I. is the most challenging for teachers?

Devon Berry: It's such a new field with so much to adjust to and learn.

Amy Hurst: Deciding what is an acceptable use and not plagiarism or copyright infringement, has been a hotly debated topic lately.

Amy Hurst: With the right support all teachers can find success in technology integration.

Jana Hadley: How do you see the role of technology changing over the next five years?

Amy Hurst: Technology will likely become even more integrated, with AI-driven personalized learning, increased use of VR and AR, and greater emphasis on digital literacy skills. Also, STEM or regional centers that focus on workplace development and a technology center aimed at preparing students for postsecondary careers.

Jana Hadley: I've seen training provided by our system on VR. Is it affordable to use in the classroom?

Devon Berry: It is still expensive but we have sets that we can bring around to work with a small group on specific lessons.

Jana Hadley: What is your biggest challenge as a technology coach who discovers and shares new technology with teachers and students?

Devon Berry: The biggest challenge is balancing the introduction of new tools with providing enough support and training to ensure teachers feel confident using them effectively in their classrooms. In Calhoun County we are blessed with a plethora of technology tools and software. We work hard to strike a balance between providing PD on new software and program integration, but also continue to support the tools and software we have maintained.

Amy Hurst: Teachers, just like students, are at different levels in their technology integration journey. We hope to continually meet students and teachers where they are most comfortable and work forward together.

Jana Hadley: How has Covid impacted the use of technology in classrooms?

Devon Berry: COVID-19 accelerated the adoption of digital tools, making online learning platforms and virtual collaboration essential components of education. It also seemed like schools had ESSR funds that had to be spent specifically on technology; so we ended up with a lot of cool tools, but being able to feasibly continue to pay for all of the resources we picked up was impossible.

Jana Hadley: What are ESSR funds?

Amy Hurst: ESSR stands for Elementary and Secondary School Relief. It's the money that was provided by the federal government during COVID.

Jana Hadley: What changes have you seen in technology integration since Covid? Do you think these changes were inevitable and merely expedited by Covid?

(Amy Hurst)There's been a significant increase in blended learning models and reliance on digital resources; these changes were likely inevitable but were rapidly accelerated by the pandemic. A baptism by fire if you will, but now there is no going backward. Teachers, students, as well as parents are expected to have some degree of knowledge of navigating online tools, an LMS, emails, etc.

Jana Hadley: What new technology are you excited to introduce to teachers and students?

Amy Hurst: I'm excited about introducing immersive tools like VR for experiential learning and AI-powered platforms that can personalize education for each student. We continue to be delighted in doing VEX robotics with students. It shows students that there is no certain gender, race, socioeconomic class that defines who should join or enjoy robotics. In fact, we often see teachers surprised at which students excel during our builds.

Devon Berry: Invariably, it won't be the students who are your traditional A+ students who do as well, but a lot of the time it's the students who struggle academically. We love opening up the door to this opportunity.

Jana Hadley: As teachers we use technology daily to collaborate. How do you think technology plays a role in student collaboration?

Amy Hurst: Technology facilitates collaboration through tools like shared documents, online discussion forums, and real-time communication apps, enabling students to work together from anywhere.

Jana Hadley: We teach internet safety to students, which we never previously considered, and we have built in firewalls for our school system's networks. As teachers we are warned about phishing schemes and trained on internet protocols. Do you see even more potential dangers that need to be watched for as technology use increases?

Devon Berry: Yes, as technology use increases, educators need to stay vigilant against data privacy issues, cyberbullying, and the potential for deep fake misinformation.

Jana Hadley: What is a good resource you recommend for teachers to use to look for new technology ideas?

Devon Berry: I recommend exploring Edutopia and ISTE for up-to-date technology ideas and best practices. Also, Google has a GEG Alabama for you, just Google and see who is local to you and get to collaborating.

Jana Hadley: What does ISTE stand for?

Devon Berry: ISTE stands for International Society for Technology in Education. There are lots of opportunities for PD on technology.

Jana Hadley: What use of technology do you see implemented in the classroom that has the greatest impact on students?

Devon Berry: The use of adaptive learning platforms, which tailor educational experiences to individual student needs and learning styles, has a profound impact on student engagement and achievement.

Amy Hurst: We love the use of microphoning the teacher. It is amazing how this impacts engagement from students. Also, we are hoping to try the new earpiece for EL students that lets both the teacher and student hear the discussion in their own language. Technology is truly changing daily.