Technology Facilitator’s Interview

Many people ask me what is involved in doing my job. The following is an excerpt taken from an interview given to a colleague for her assignment. This should provide an insight into what a Technology Facilitator's responsibilities and duties are. If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact me at parker9@tcnj.edu

“A technology facilitator has a myriad of responsibilities.

- Orders supplies for everything associated with a computer
- Orders supplies for all instructional technologies (overhead projectors, tape recorders, VCR, DVD, TV, PDAs, laminators, video cameras, digital cameras, etc.
- Trouble shoot and make minor repairs on computers, peripherals and accessories
- Preparation of professional development materials for staff
- Assist staff in implementation of technology in classroom and/or office
- Train teachers and students how to use a variety of computer equipment and software
- Write a technology plan
- Research a variety of software for implementation
- Visit schools, attend workshops, conferences, conventions to look for best practices and new trends and equipment
- Work with building administrators on school and technology budgets
- Maintain school web site
- Add teachers to network and e-mail accounts
- Track budget expenditures
- Write technology grants
- Run Xerox copy center equipment
- Oversee Cisco academy

Technology is used to support and enhance student achievement through authentic projects. It is utilized in the day-to-day operation of the school, i.e. attendance, grade reporting, parent notification. Video cameras are used to monitor hallways. It is used to make ID badges, which also identify students who receive free lunch. Technology is used to provide assistance to students and teachers with disabilities. It is used to monitor and notify when there is a fire in the building. It is used for renovation of the building and to develop floor plans.
In our district, a critical issue is the absence of a mandate to force the compliance of administrators and faculty to utilize computer technology effectively.

Technology planning is important because of the expensive associated with the purchase and maintenance of computers and peripherals. In our district, computers are to be replaced every 4 to 5 years. Computer technology must be paced by instructional needs not because it is simply the latest and the greatest.

The technology plan is developed according to state guidelines and standards. The primary stakeholders are surveyed for their suggestions and concerns. A skill assessment is given to determine the degree of professional development that will be needed and its cost. The school’s vision is a factor in the development of the tech plan and the school budget would determine the amount available for funding any initiatives. Also it is essential to review the previous plan to ascertain if any of the prior goals were met, if not then they may be included in the new plan. Teachers need a more comprehensive professional development plan to move them to a level of competency then they will be able to embrace technology to enhance student learning.
Computers are used to generate data, reports, presentations, communications with parents via e-mail and web pages, track student attendance and achievement, develop budgets, e-mail teachers, create state and district reports. Parents are notified of students’ absences via an auto dialer to the home telephone.

The technology allocation is over $400,000 for the high school. This is supplemented by grants, donations and partnerships.

The essential computer skills for technology facilitators, administrators, and faculty should align with the ISTE standards (http://www.iste.org/standards/). Everyone should be able to use word processing, spreadsheets, presentation and database software.

Additionally, they should be familiar with the student information system and e-mail.

To heighten the use of technology at the high school, on-site and off-site professional development workshops were offered. Incentives were earned at the completion of some of the workshops. There was a need assessment taken by LOTI survey. The tech facilitators are available to assist and instruct teachers on the implementation of technology. There are also on-line technology courses available.
What to purchase and when is based on your needs and level of experience; as a rule of thumb get a system that is compatible with the school platform. Employees are entitled to use the same software (utilized at school) at home on their personal computers. There are discounts offered to educators from Dell and employees may contact them directly. Unfortunately, the staff has been resistant in embracing technology. Currently, there is no mandate to force teachers to use technology for instructional purposes in the core content curriculum areas in classrooms. NJ core curriculum content does require technology to be utilized, however, it is not enforced in many classrooms.

Being a technology facilitator is an awesome job. It involves tremendous responsibilities. It is often met with insurmountable resistance from administration and staff. It is a challenging job, but an essential one. We must encourage our faculty to be more supportive of our tech facilitators. Without them, we will be in a quandary stranded on the information superhighway without a clue.”