

Instructional Technology Interview

Name: Jeanetta Craft

Interviewer: Robin M. Jackson

Interview Type: Face-to-Face

Date of Interview: 9/20/13

Place of Interview: Wayne County School District (Classroom)

Jeanetta Craft is a Special Education Teacher at Wayne County School District. Through rigorous networking, I was forwarded her information from one of my former colleagues. As it was very surprising to me, I learned that although Jeanetta's primary field of education was Special Education, she ended up with a huge background in technology and training. She is a huge asset to her school district as she serves in many capacities, one of which is a Training Specialist. Jeanetta has spent most of her pre-adult to adult life learning and researching the field of technology on her own. She also has a wealth of experience in technology, as she has worked in several technology capacities in the private sector. When she entered postsecondary education, she was torn between pursuing Education or Technology as a career. As many of us, Jeanetta's main goal was to obtain job security upon graduating from college. Therefore she decided to pursue Special Education as her career. Upon being hired with the school district, her fellow colleagues quickly learned of her extensive knowledge and background in technology. After Jeanetta's first year of teaching, she was graced with many additional roles in training her fellow colleagues and a large number of students. Jeanetta is quite pleased with how her endeavors somehow worked out and has allowed her to work in both areas that are dear to heart, both at the same time.

On September 20, I drove to Waynesboro, MS to meet with Jeanetta. She was very eager and excited to assist me with my project. She also encouraged me to go above the requirements of my instructors, as they will pay off in the end. Her school had suffered major damage from the Pine Belt tornado in February 2013. Unfortunately her classroom, with many others, was relocated to the local storm shelter on campus. Jeanetta was still able to develop processes and alternatives in lieu of their abrupt changes. She and I still managed to have a very good interview. I can say that she's very proud of her accomplishments and she is a huge advocate for future learners!

Below is a list of questions/comments that I gathered from various resources and from my own personal inquiring mind. I developed these questions from different reading material in our class textbook and through online research. Given the extensive commute and of course I didn't take up too much of Jeanetta's time, at the last minute I decided to record the interview on my mobile phone so she would not have to talk slowly as I would have to write. I was able to use the voice recording to fill in the blanks for my questions. During the interview I was able to take short hand notes. The voice recording, coupled with the short hand notes, made the formation of the interview turn out very well. These questions/comments were specifically prepared for Ms. Jeanetta Craft.

Interview Questions/Comments and Answers:

1. **Overall, what problems have you encountered as a Training Specialist?** The hugest problem I've encountered would be funding. It's more than a challenge, in the school districts, to get the funding you need to give the required training and the expectations set forth by the school district.
2. **Typically, what are your responsibilities as a Training Specialist?** I sit in on most/all initial trainings at my district meetings/conferences. I gather the requirements and information and take it my fellow teachers and I walk them through the changes and or additions we've received to our processes and/or curriculum strategies. I also train most of the students on our computers and software as well. I'm not too limited to "responsibilities." I may have been hired on for one title but I end up carrying out several others. Some may complain, but I'm ok with it.
3. **How did you become qualified for this position?** I've always had an interest in technology. Technology was my primary love, but I just didn't see how I could pursue a career in technology with the economy being up and down the way it has been for years. Often times in my classroom, my assistant would need help on computer issues, as well as my students, and before I knew it the whole school knew that I was a "techy" person.
4. **What are some of your ideas for furthering your personal professional development?** My personal ideas...? I'd like to maybe someday open my own business in the field of technology when I'm retired. Maybe doing some consultant work is a possibility. Whatever I decide to do, at that point, I'm still not willing to take much more of a chance than I've already surpassed.
5. **What advice would you give those that are seeking employment in this field?** Weigh your options! Research the area you plan to live in. Research other companies and businesses in your area to see if it's what you think it is. Knowledge is power, especially when choosing a career. Take time and evaluate the entire field. Gather more ideas and suggestions from your instructors. Get involved on campus so you can learn by networking. If you have a hidden talent, let it be known because it can develop into an asset.
6. **What are some of your expectations for the future of Instructional Technology?** I'd like to see more of it. In my world, IT's are rare. I'd like to see more people having the courage that I didn't have to step out into that arena and become more developed in the area.
7. **Do you have a personal interest in training? If so, what is it?** Yes! I love teaching! Training and teaching are tied into each other. I love innovation just as much. Just so happen I get to do them both at the same time. I'm excited when my students learn new technology methods on and off the computers.
8. **How much knowledge and experience did you have as a training specialist before this current position?** Before this position, I have total of 10+ years in technology. I've worked with several tax professionals in developing and training for their software programs, different church and nonprofit organizations to develop their software programs as well. Once the foundation has been laid, it's easy to go in and train the staff or volunteers how to use it. Just remember to always be clear and make sure that everyone understands.

9. **Do you have a training philosophy? If so, do you mind sharing it with me?** Yes, I've always believed that in training/teaching, you treat your students or trainees just as if it was you on the other side trying to learn and grasp that same information. Don't ever assume that all or even majority of the class already knows what you're talking about. Often times it will pay you to start from the bottom and work your way up through the students. We all learn differently and at different paces. Some people are ashamed when/if they don't already know certain things or certain processes. You don't want them to feel uncomfortable. You always want to do what is best for the class or training session as a whole.
10. **As a training specialist, what are your short/long term goals for this current position?** Short term goals would be to get my students the equipment they need to continue learning new tech methods in this storm shelter. Long term, I'd like to learn how to write grants to offset the cost of the much needed training materials and equipment I'd like to see at this school.
11. **Do you feel that as a training specialist, is the cost of higher education worth the investment of your current position?** Wow! I was not prepared for that question Robin! Honestly speaking, no. Would I go public with my feelings? No. I feel that Higher Education is overrated anyway. The cost of it is even more ridiculous. Especially given that you may or may not find a rewarding career when you're done.
12. **With your job experience, have you ever considered being a consultant instead of working with the public school system?** Never! The risk is far too large for me to take. I'd rather enjoy the perks of being a state employment and rely on the fact that for the most part, my job is somewhat secured. I've never believed in taking huge chances like that. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying it's a bad choice; it's just too risky for me. But I feel that everyone should do what they want to do. Then you'll love heading out to work on Mondays!
13. **What is your approach to training your faculty and students?** Clarity. I make sure that I'm prepared first. When I'm prepared, there's no doubt that I can perform more than I'd set out to. It warms my heart to see everyone on the same page with learning and grasping the information that has been set forth before them.
14. **Would you describe your training methods as generic or with your own added style?** I'd have to say it would be a mixture of both. The knowledge I've acquired over the years and along with the required strategies given by my administrators, I manage to use a little of it all.
15. **Overall, as a training specialist, what are your future career goals?** I'd like to facilitate district-wide training and ultimately progress to facilitating state and national educational trainings. I love what I do; therefore I'd like the opportunities to push it to the maximum capacity.
16. **If given the opportunity to do it all over again, is there anything you would do differently?** Of course! First I would have learned early on how to network in the field of grants administration in addition to the career I've chosen. Only if I had known more about the processes, requirements and logistics of grant writing, I would then be more of an asset to my students and my school district.

Overall Interview Impression:

I know this may sound crazy but first of all I learned that it's almost normal, even in school districts, to be hired as one job title but actually end up doing much more! I see that a lot in the private sectors but somehow I felt as if it was "different" with working in the government or state environment. This interview gave me hope... Hope that I too will acquire the knowledge and experience to someday go to work and enjoy what I do. I have hope that I will have a career... Jeanetta enlightened me that training is important and it's the key to success. You have to effectively train your staff and your students if you're expecting to see positive results in the end. I learned that training seems to be more important in education because this is where students initially learn to train before they even choose a career. Educational Training is the nucleus of all types of training. I can see myself training faculty and students. However, if it's in public or private school settings, it would be training only and not teaching. If I have the opportunity to train in postsecondary education, I would love to train and teach all at the same time. That's my ultimate goal.

Just as Jeanetta said, now is the time to make connections and meet people. Now is the time to research and learn about my prospective field and gain as much knowledge about it as I can. Now is the time to prepare for my success! I'm grateful for this opportunity!