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**Learning first, technology second. This is episode 81.**

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VICKI: Happy Motivational Monday. Liz Kolb [@ikolb](https://twitter.com/ikolb)

is with us today talking about how we can put learning first and technology second. So Liz, this is the title of your book <http://amzn.to/2q8Y9KY> that has just come out. How do we put leaning first and technology second because there's so many toys and things we can play with out there? Isn't it easy to get distracted?

LIZ: It's very easy to get distracted. And I absolutely am guilty of being distracted by the technology which is why this book came about. Over the last couple of years many teachers and administrators had come to me saying we now have a one-to-one program, we now have a lot of technology in our school through difference funding sources but now we're worried about whether or not the technology is actually effective for the learning. We're using it a lot but we feel as though maybe we're using it because it is shiny and it looks good and it feels good but we're not actually impacting learning in a way that is meaningful.

I spent six years looking through the research on what's effective and ineffective when using technology and learning and I found that there are a lot of things that we know about goof effective instructional strategies with learning that we were leaving out when we were integrating technology. So, things like when we look at engagement, no just looking at whether not the student is using a device individually but making sure that they are having some kind of human-to-human contact co-engaging or what we call joint media engagement and working together with the screens.

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This framework came about because of much of this research that I looked at and I originally developed this triple E framework <http://tripleeframework.com/> which is what the book focuses on for my student teachers. They found it to be incredibly helpful, so then I have kind of decided to put it together into this book. The reason why it's called **Learning First, Technology Second** is because the framework focuses on the learning goals and the end in mind and thinking about the ways that we leverage technology in order to meet those learning goals rather than focusing on the technology first and the wow of the technology.

VICKI: So what is the triple E framework? Are you able to give us a quick summary because we'll, of course, want to point everybody to the book?

LIZ: Yes. So the E stands for engagement and learning goals, enhancement of learning goals and extension of learning goals. And all three of those were again, informed

by the research that engagement does not necessarily mean looking at the device but it actually means what we call high attention as well as high comprehension. So they are not just focusing on the device but they're actually focusing on the learning goals through the device in some way. And then enhancement looks at how we leverage the learning through technology, how we're adding scaffolds in support. So is it differentiating learning? Or are we helping students get to those higher order of thinking skills. What is the value added beyond something we would do with traditional tools? There's no value added, then we should question why we're using it.

And then the third level is extension which talks about how technology can reach students in their everyday lives and extend learning to the authentic everyday world and make those connections for students. Kind of situating their learning in what they're seeing in the outside world.

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VICKI: So really we don't use technology for technology sake, technology has to actually improve learning, right?

LIZ: That's our hope. I am somebody who the first time I learned PowerPoint I turned all my lectures into PowerPoint thinking that was the magic snake oil that we needed to have students learn. And what I found was that while they were engaged, they weren't actually learning more. My few students were still few students. My students who did well still did well. And so, I realized that there's a lot of ways we use technology because it looks good and it's kind of shiny, but if we want to look beneath the surface we really want to look at how it's actually meeting and helping us get to the learning outcomes that we help our students get to.

VICKI: So, Liz, this is Motivational Monday and I have all of this worry. Like, "oh my goodness." What does work? Can you point us and motivate us, help us to point towards things that actually do work in the classroom?

LIZ: Yea, there's a lot of great things that work with technology. First of all, co-use is very important as I mentioned earlier. Working together on a screen is how students begin to reflect on what they're doing on a screen. So rather than having students all working individually with headphones on and their own iPads in the classroom, pair them up, have them work together. That can make a large difference in their ability to comprehend what they're seeing and doing in the classroom.

VICKI: Also the other thing that we want to think about is how are we able to use technology to connect to everyday experiences. So rather than having them isolated in a piece of technology think about how we can use things like Skype <http://www.skype.com> to connect to other classrooms or something like the Google Expeditions <https://edu.google.com/expeditions/> to experience what it

might be like in the article if we can't actually get there. So thinking about how we're using technology to help students experience things that they couldn't experience and work together.

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That co-engagement is so key and it's just a small change that you can make. Pair students up or choose a software like Google Docs <http://docs.google.com> that allow students to work with other people through the tool itself in a synchronous way.

VICKI: So collaboration and working together and co-creation is widely important?

LIZ: Yes, it is. So skills, those higher order critical thinking skills that we continue to talk about – I know many people talk about the **C's** and making sure that that's actually happening with the technology and it's not so isolated.

VICKI: And Liz, you know, you're speaking my language when you talk co-creation because when we create and we help kids create things that are more than they would have been as individuals that's when the magic happens, isn't it?

LIZ: It is. And it's so amazing because the other things we do in the classroom, we often have students paired up and working together or we're working with the students and helping them work through ideas and build knowledge together. Sometimes we put technology in front of them we forget they still need to do that, they still need to have those conversations.

VICKI: They do. I'm just really excited to hear you talk about co-creation because it's just not something people talk a lot about. I mean, I think people forget the greatest software ever invented is the human brain. And when we truly unleash that collaboration and co-creation is when we see things that we couldn't do without technology. *VICKI DAVIS @COOLCATTEACHER*

LIZ: Absolutely. And very rarely are the greatest inventions and things we've seen in society individually created. There's always a group of people working together to make that happen. So even if I can give a quick example; in my daughter's classroom they use Google Docs to write their stories and work on editing. And the teacher actually shares with the parents when they're going to be working on it so we can log in at the same time that they're working on it.

And the teacher gives us some scaffolds as supports of what we should ask and how we should ask it and what we should be looking for.

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So we're having these conversations to help them build their writing and as a parent I'm also learning how to learn them, so we're both learning at the same time.

VICKI: Now, that's a genius teacher. I hope after the show you'll introduce me because you have blown my mind. I mean, I know we have helicopter parents and that's not necessarily a good thing. However, that really is unleashing the power of parenting and partnering with teachers and parents and students, isn't it?

LIZ: Absolutely. And parents want to know how to help their children learn. And many times they just don't know how to do it. So they'll often just plug their child in front of an app or a computer to do it but in reality if the teachers can get them online at the same time and give them some support and how them how to do it the parents are really excited to do that. And I can't tell you how excited my 4<sup>th</sup> grader is to see me logged on at the same time. And all of a sudden she's really interested in the different forms of grammar and the detail in her writing. And it has exponentially improved her writing and my ability to see those things as well.

VICKI: My mind is just running and there's so many ideas with what we've discussed. And thinking about co-creating with parents as well as peers is very powerful. So listeners, Remarkable Teachers, we're going to be hosting a giveaway for Learning First, Technology Second so do check the show notes [www.coolcatteacher.com/e81](http://www.coolcatteacher.com/e81) and enter to win and take a look at this book. Liz has done so many great things, she's one of the first people that I read when I really got in to using cell phones in the classroom. She has so many resources for us. But let's really think about Learning First, Technology second. But also when we're learning how we can be co-creating ad collaborating. I'm so excited.

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VICKI DAVIS @COOLCATTEACHER

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