



5 Reasons Teachers Using Tech are Super Heroes

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Vicki: Today we're talking with Kecia Ray [@keciaray](https://twitter.com/keciaray). She's one of the most fantastic people for understanding how technology is being used throughout the world, and she is the former president of ISTE, the [International Society for Technology in Education](http://www.iste.org).

Kecia, tell us about the topic we're going to talk about today.

Kecia: Hello, Vicki, you are such a champion and hero of mine. I wanted to talk today about why I think Teachers Using Technology are Super Heroes. So, I've got five things that I believe make a teacher who uses technology and really embraces it – a superhero.

Vicki: Awesome! OK, what's our first?

Kecia: So, the first thing that make a teacher a superhero is the way they use data to improve learning and mastery for their students. And teachers who use technology can **use technology in such a way where**

they're collecting formative data every day, every single moment of the day. And they look at that data, every single moment of the day, and they analyze it, and they decide what needs to be done to redirect construction, to regroup, to reteach, to enrich, to enhance – all on the spur of the moment, because they have ready access to the data. You can only do that if you know how to use technology, especially really fabulous software, which teachers who use technology know how to find.

Vicki: And this is so important! I've literally got a lesson tomorrow with six formative checkpoints as we're having our class discussion and talking. And it's just so important and empowering for the teacher, you know?

Kecia: Oh yeah, absolutely. When I was teaching – which I'm going to have to admit was back in the hey days of the eighties – we didn't have that. And I say frequently to my sister, who has access to this in her classroom, "You are so lucky! I would have to wait until the end of a week, and then I would have to address any kind of challenges for the next week." And so, we were always lagging in the way that we were redirecting instruction because we just didn't have immediacy of the data. You guys, the people in classrooms today are so privileged because they have that kind of access all the time. And you can move so much faster through mastery when you have access to that.

Vicki: Unless they're stuck in the eighties, and we won't go there because we're taking about superheroes who use tech. OK, what's our second, Kecia? (laughs)

Kecia: (laughs) That's so true. OK, this may be a little "out there," but I've gone into so many classrooms who are really **experimenting with AR and VR and using video conferencing**. Now, I know these are new technologies, and technologies – well video conferencing isn't new but it's, it's a technology that sometimes is challenging to introduce into a classroom – but if you can, the level of interaction that you can bring into your classroom -- and exposing your kids to experiences far, far, far beyond the walls of the classroom is just extraordinary. And teachers who bring these types of technologies into their classroom increase interaction in their classroom, they increase engagement in their classroom, and they are assured to have more enthusiastic learners. I've seen it first-hand, I know it, and I believe it.

Vicki: And you know what? [Google Cardboard](#) costs like, what -- \$12 – and every kid has a smartphone. So how hard is it?

Kecia: Yeah! It shouldn't be that hard. I mean, it really shouldn't. And it is so engaging. I mean the kids are just drawn to it, they're drawn to it. To them, it's like a game. And anytime – you [know we had a fabulous speaker at ISTE a few years ago](#), who talked about gaming in the classroom. Anytime you can take your classroom and transform it to something that is inspiring for kids, that's something that is really going to switch that light on for them. And I've seen classrooms where they've done the VR and AR, and even the Augmented Reality where they have – I just saw [a new app today](#). It's Aboriginal. It's in Australia. It's Aborigines. You can take a picture of an object and put it into a location where it ONCE existed, and the object walks around!

Vicki: Wow.

Kecia: It's just so cool.

Vicki: (agrees)

Kecia: And kids really... they're drawn to it. Yeah, and once you have them... We used to call that a "hook." I'm sure there's another fancy name for that now...

Vicki: I think we still call it a hook! (laughs)

Kecia: Do we still call it a hook? (laughs)

Vicki: Yeah, we do! We do! (laughs)

Kecia: (laughs) Yay, you're validating me! I could still go back in the classroom. Thanks, Vicki! But once you have them hooked in the lesson, you can go, you know, the sky's the limit.

The next one? This is not necessarily something you might teach in a classroom, but it's certainly something that's relevant to every student and every teacher in our schools, and that's **social media**. Social media is something students are going to explore on their own, no matter what. So, having a teacher who understands social media and who can model good social media practices is one of the most beneficial assets a school can have today. A teacher who understands and who models social media – great social media practices.

Vicki: Excellent. And that is very true. What's our fourth?

Kecia: Fourth is **24-7 learning and teaching**. So, teachers who use technology often times will build out their lessons online. They're either going to use a Learning Management System that's provided through their district, or they're going to find something online. They're going to build a lesson out, and they're going to make it available. They're either going to video their lecture, or they're going to put material up. They're going to find a way to make sure their kids have access to that content 24-7. So, teachers who really embrace the technology in such a way that they're transforming their classroom to 24-7 access? Super hero. (What student wouldn't want that opportunity?)

Vicki: Well, those that want to get out of things. But... like, I had a student that had to go home today, and I said, "Oh! Do 107 and 108, and then I'll see you tomorrow. And they were just able to go into my Learning Management System and just do it.

Kecia: Yeah! Yeah! It's just there. No missed time. There's no gap!

Vicki: OK. What's our fifth?

Kecia: The fifth one is **connected teachers**. So, connected teachers influence connected learners. Teachers who connect through their professional ed tech networks learn new and cool things to introduce to their classroom every day. People listening to this podcast are going to learn some of the things we've talked about. People who follow you learn stuff every single time they click on your Twitter or Facebook or anything. You're such a wealth of information for teachers, and for lead learners across the country and world. But, you've got to stay connected. And teachers who do that and stay connected to their peers across the country and throughout the world make them better teachers. And because they're so connected, it also makes sure that their learning and their teaching is more relevant to their students.

Vicki: So, Kecia, I have a question. So, these are awesome. I love and totally agree with all of them. Is there a mistake that teachers who are trying to use technology make, that's a common mistake?

Kecia: Well, I think that probably our most common mistake that I see is when they just substitute the technology for something else, and they don't really transform their practice. So, when I, again, a million years ago started teaching -- started on a blackboard, moved to a whiteboard, then moved to an interactive whiteboard -- if my teaching pedagogy didn't shift, then I'm really not doing anything different than using chalk and a blackboard. So, I think the most common thing is they just substitute that technology, but they don't allow it to push their pedagogy and to really think differently about how they could deliver the content, or create their lesson in an interactive, engaging, innovative, facilitated way. They just kind of stick with the norm.

Vicki: Yeah. And without that student excitement... I mean, if you're just substituting, you don't get the student excitement that's like the nitrous in the engine that makes you go, "Yes! This is awesome!"

Kecia: Yep, you really don't. If you think about where kids are when they leave your classroom -- they're going to be gaming, they're going to be online, they're going to be in a lot of stimulating and typically media-rich environments. So if they come to your classroom, and they don't have anything that's stimulating, and they don't have any rich media -- then they ARE going to check out. And they are going to find ways to disrupt you, because they're not interested. I think the interest lies in the way that we deliver the instruction.

Vicki: So, teachers, we've gotten so many fantastic ideas.

1. We need to use our data to improve learning, with formative assessment.
2. Use Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality. I'll include some links to some shows in the Shownotes that we've done before, because there's so many great ideas.
3. Use social media, and I'll also have links there.
4. Look at a Learning Management System and blended learning, because every classroom is made of bricks and clicks, and we've got to put those two together.
5. And then be connected! I would recommend that you connect with Kecia, and connect with so many of the guests that we have on the show, because there's so many people out here who can really inspire us and give us so many great ideas.

Thank you, Kecia!

Kecia: Thank you. It's been my pleasure. Make sure they get all my contact information. I'd love to connect with everybody.

Transcribed by [Kymberli Mulford](#)