

Ed Tech Weekly Podcast - Episode 109

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Podcast Hosts Info: Ricky Zager - Host of the show.

Kristy Warren - Co-host and Google Certified Educator

Introduction

[Intro Music][00:00]

Ricky: [00:06] This is Ed Tech Weekly, I am your host Ricky Zager and this is episode 109. And In tonight's show Google's "Applied Digital Skills" Initiative, the Next Billion Ed Tech Prize winner, 4 ways to start a student help desk, and we'll break down some ed tech research...

Joining me on the show Google Certified Educator and my cohost, Kristy Warren... Kristy welcome to the show..

Kristy: [00: 29] Hey Ricky, how you doing tonight?

Ricky: [00:31] I'm doing good, excited to be here. A little bit of a cold but I feel like it gives me that 1-900-ed tech voice.

Kristy: [00: 38] (laughs) That's a different kind of show.

Ricky: [00:40] (laughing) That is a different kind of show.

Kristy: [00:43] Alright, tonight we also have our low down segment and we'll be sharing some ed tech facebook pages you should be following.

Ricky: [00:48] Yeah, I think it's a great way to get new information. I think a lot of teachers are on Facebook, a lot of everyone is on Facebook... let's be honest, on a daily basis we're there so having some good resources pop up in between some of the other nonsense probably isn't a bad idea. your timeline is excellent. But to get to that point Kristy... we got to start, as we always do, with that ed tech news run down.

The Rundown

[Rundown Intro Music][01:06]

[Story 1](#)

Ricky: [01:10] In our first story is some evidence based research about Ed Tech from edweek.org. They actually give 5 key lessons and they are... Expanding access isn't enough, Beware of online only courses, adaptive math tools hold enormous promise, Small reminders can help, and communication shouldn't be social psychology. So there is a lot to unpack with this one and I think that's why we are gonna make it our breakdown session.

Kristy: [01:37] Yeah, I love when research matches what we see in every day practice. It's a little validating so I look forward to breaking it down later in the show.

Ricky: [01:45] For sure.

Story 2

Kristy: [01:45] Our next story... With many schools implementing 1:1 device initiatives, the need for tech support is greater than ever. This article from EdTech magazine shares four best practices for getting students involved through student run help desks. The four practices include number one, Pinpoint learning outcomes and design the curriculum; number 2. Develop learning activities and assessments; number 3. Identify, recruit and promote the team; and lastly Establish a mission, purpose and goals. What do you think Ricky, do you see this in higher ed and what do you think about this in the K-12 arena?

Ricky: [02:18] Basically all of my job revolves around some level of tech help, and it isn't even really supposed to be that. But I do love the idea of letting students be involved and I think that should be happening with many aspects of ed tech whether it's creating stuff or helping teachers solve ed tech issues in the classroom... all of those things. But for me, I just can't see our faculty having their own help desk...uh that would be an interesting thing in my world but thankfully our university does have an official help desk which features a 24 hour phone number that they can call whenever they need help.

Kristy: [02:52] 24 hours? When do you get that late night shift?

Ricky: [02:54] Listen, I don't know. But I do know that I've gotten emails at 1 in the morning because somebody's freaking out that a test isn't working properly, or something like that so they are needed, that's for sure.

Kristy: [03:04] Definitely!

Story 3

Ricky: [03:05] Alright well, our next story, we are classing it up a little bit here with an article from Forbes that tells us African company Ubongo won the Next Billion Edtech

Prize. It's important to note that it is named Next Billion and that isn't the amount they receive, that amount is \$25,000... Which is nothing to sneeze at. But Ubongo is a Tanzanian "edutainment" service and that means they combine media, entertainment, and interactivity to help teach elementary age students fundamental STEM skills. So it's pretty cool. The really cool part about this is that the characters look and sound like Tanzanians because they are and that certainly helps students connect with the material. I think that is super important especially in those different cultures and different countries.

Kristy: [03:51] Yeah, I definitely want to check that out and I'm wondering what the company thought when they got that email that they won the Next Billion edtech prize.

Ricky: [03:59] (laughing) \$25,000. Let's be calm. it's not a billion ok. (laughing)

Story 4

Kristy: [04:04] Alright moving on to our next article, when you think about all the tech skills that we discuss, getting those into use can be tricky. This article from the 74 million shares information on the Applied Digital Skills lessons from Google. Jamie Sue Goodman, spearheads this ambitious program to provide educators with a rich set of video-based instructional materials that they can access for free. "Basically, every job out there requires some basic computer skills," she says. Now Ricky, you know I love Google, so of course I'm a fan. The Applied Digital Skills scope helps students prepare for life beyond the classroom, showing them how to create a résumé in Google Docs, organize college information in Google Sheets, assemble a presentation in Google Slides, and even analyze data to predict hit movies.

Ricky: [04:47] I know we talk a lot of ed tech and I'm pretty sure recently we mentioned why it just makes sense for companies to do exactly this. Offer free trainings to

get people to use your products in school and beyond...and listen, just because I'm not a Google Certified Educator doesn't mean that I don't see some of the awesome stuff Google is doing. And I think there is no surprise that they're on top of this.

Kristy: [05:08] Definitely!

The Breakdown

Ricky: [05:09] Alright... well let's get into the breakdown and for that we are going to be digging a little deeper into those 5 key lessons that have been learned through ed tech research. Let's just start with the 1st, which explains that expanding access isn't enough and could even be detrimental to students... which seems a little counterintuitive.

Kristy: [05:26] Yes, It turns out that just giving students access to computers or devices isn't enough... and I think most of us know this... there has to be some level of support and direction or any initiative would fail. One of the things we do is to provide that just in time support to teachers by having ed tech coaches on site. Now we have done this where we have added this on to a teacher's already full day. Which has been challenging but in our remote areas that is the best way we have found to do that. I'm sure there are other ways out there and I'd love to hear from them. But really supporting students I think also starts with supporting our teachers and helping them move along that SAMR progression so that they are asking kids to do things differently otherwise it is just a fancy word processor that we're putting in the hands of students.

Ricky: [06:14] Yeah and even if it's a fancy word processor it may not work well. But if you do have any experience with this and you want to help Kristy this could just be a reach out show for Kristy to help her and her district out but I'm sure there's a lot of listeners that could use some extra advice on ways to really make sure there's sup-

port for students and teachers with these 1 to 1 or any technology initiatives for that matter. I mean I really hope at this point that it's not a surprising revelation for anyone. Support your teachers and students with as much evidence based teaching and learning strategies as possible.

Kristy: [06:55] This next lesson tells us we should beware of online-only courses. Ricky, I know you work in the online courses world so I'll let you take this one.

Ricky: [07:01] At face value this seems pretty damning but when you get into the research it reminds me a lot of the previous lesson. They reference a lot of online intervention classes that struggling students are put in and those courses are generally self-paced with very little interaction between teachers and students. Of course this is going to fail, you are taking students with motivation or other learning problems and expecting them to take ownership without any real support. It makes me sad because I worked in dropout prevention many years ago and they were trying to funnel our students into a complete online program and we fought back hard. We knew, logically, it was a bad idea but we also had numbers to prove it. Of about 6 students they convinced to take this route 0 of them completed anything and ended up dropping out. Online can be awesome but throwing underperforming students in an unsupportive online environment will never work.

Kristy: [08:15] Let's get into the next lesson which is that adaptive math software holds an enormous amount of potential. Basically saying here that math software with the ability to adapt to how a student is progressing can be a powerful tool if done correctly. The problem is some of them work well and others have struggled to show statistical improvements.

Ricky: [08:50] Yeah, I assume that the more data these programs get, the better they should be come but we need to make sure the students who are contributing to that data aren't just guinea pigs. I think the other two lessons are worth checking out

but in the interest of time let's move on to the lowdown segment. If you want to see the other lessons or read more about the ones we discussed you can check out edtechweeklshow.com or just use the googles.

The Lowdown

[Lowdown Resource](#)

Kristy: [09:45] Ok, for tonight's lowdown segment we wanted to share some Facebook pages that may be of interest for those in education.

Ricky: [09:52] Yeah, I assume most of us spend a chunk of time on facebook so I think it is a great idea to follow a few education pages so you get some good resources in your timeline. And if nothing else, you can hopefully see less political nonsense in your feed.

Kristy: [10:06] So let's start with the big list that we found on [we are teachers.com](http://weareteachers.com). We'll put the link in the show notes so you can find all of their suggestions but we wanted to highlight a few. We'll start with Mr. D... Joe Dombrowski... he has been on Ellen so he has quite a following and if you are looking for ways to infuse more fun into your teaching this may be the page for you.

Ricky: [10:28] Yeah, he definitely has personality and can make you laugh and hopefully learn something too. Now this next one I think is the must follow for all teachers. It is called Love, Teach and it is a very holistic look at teaching, attitude, inspiration, and fun. Again, if you only follow one, make it this one.

Kristy: [11:04] And I think before we end this segment we should share one more. This one is Getting Nerdy with Mel and Gerdy, and may be worth a follow for

the name alone but they share cool science videos, teaching ideas, and science humor and their content is geared towards students of all ages.

Ricky: [11:23] As a nerd myself, this one really makes me happy. Let's get to the social meeds.

Social Media

Kristy: [11:30] Edtechweeklysho with no W at the end is how you can find us on instagram, twitter, and facebook. and you can follow me @kristymwarren

Ricky: [11:39] And you can follow me @4techteachers. And remember that our show is available wherever you listen to your podcasts and now it is also available on Spotify. And if you listen on iTunes, please give us a review.

Show Ending

Kristy: [11:51] And don't forget you can email the show edtechweekly@gmail.com. send us your ideas, suggestions, or ways you'd like to be involved.

Ricky: [11:59] And We'll see you next week on Ed Tech Weekly!

[Outtro Music][12:00]