Libby Manning: The Joy of Learning – Season 2, Episode 1

Amy: You're listening to Beyond 1894, a podcast where we hear from Louisiana Tech University scholars, innovators, and professionals on their personal journeys and the impact they're making in the word around them. I'm your host Amy Bell and my co-host is Teddy Allen.

school bell rings with light piano intro as students shuffle along and walk to class

Amy: In this episode, we will hear from Dr. Libby Manning. She has been a professor here at Tech for about 10 years in the College of Education, teaching Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership. In our interview, we talked about her experiences as a teacher, her teaching philosophy, and some of her teaching strategies. She even mentioned how she has had to adapt her teaching, due to COVID-19 and physical distancing.

Libby: So, what I discovered is they… We built communities often around novels, around characters and books, because when you live through "Number the Stars" or you live through "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry," and you go along these journeys with these characters, you can't help but be moved by that and you can't help but feel like you as a class somehow got them through those struggles. And they become a part of who you are. Books do, they become a part of you.

Amy: The passion Dr. Manning has for her teaching is truly inspiring. After interviewing her, I was motivated to try a little harder to be a better person.

Teddy: I'll let you know if you start making headway on that being a better person thing.

Amy: Oh, thank you.

Teddy: I'll be keeping and eye on that! Libby Manning. I will unashamedly say I just love Libby Manning and she's one of the first people I met when I moved to this town 12 years ago. And the first conversation we probably had was in the super one grocery store. And if you ask her, what have you read lightly, you know, strap in because she's gonna tell you. And she had me come talk to her fifth graders, believe it or not at A.E. Philips years ago, around Christmas time, and it was a Thanksgiving book or Christmas book.

Amy: Yeah.

Teddy: She said, I want you to read this book, and then come talk to the kids about it. Well, you know, that takes a minute to do, but it was Libby. So what are you gonna do? So I read the book. And we had a lively discussion in our classroom about it. But she's such an engaging individual. And there's nothing not authentic about Libby, when it comes to teaching. She is strapped in and you want your child okay? Well, that's how I want to teach my, my child about reading and comprehension, this kind of thing. She's spectacular.

Amy: She used the book “Number the Stars” to introduce her students to World War II. I think the book helped her students engage in learning and in class participation. And I think they had to engage emotionally, they emotionally connected to the characters, and that kind of brought them all together. Do you remember reading an assigned book in school that made an emotional impact on you?

Teddy: Great Expectations by Charles Dickens. And I never read a book that long or written like that. Yeah, I mean, I'm reading the punt pass and kick library from slum to Super Bowl, that kind of thing. And all of a sudden, we get Charles Dickens and Mrs. Haversham and all these people. And so, when Miss Mullins would say, “Okay, it's time to do great expectations.” I was fired up, I grabbed my book out from under my desk. I'm done everybody else's, though. But “not more Pip”. But anyway, that inspired me in that there were those kind of long stories about people I hadn't would have never been introduced to didn't know they ever existed. This, you know, world that Charles Dickens lived in. So that would be the first one that pops into my head. When I got to college, Robert Schneider, rest his soul, was a very inspiring teacher here. And Libby would know who he was and, and he tricked me into reading, and start reading more poetry and different writers that he liked. And it was fun, it became fun. And I started, like you said, you started learning something and enjoying what you were doing and learning. There were other types of literature out there that, you know, I didn't know anything, know anything about then. And so can a little bit more about it now.

Amy: I remember growing up, my dad would read a lot. So, I learned to read from my dad, because he was, he always had a book in his hand. And he would read to me and that's how we bonded. But in second grade, you may not believe this, but I was really shy. I was, I mean, I'm pretty introverted now, but I was so shy that I didn't even want to say my name in front of the classroom. I was that shy. And you know, when you're in class, they get, they pick on some students to read out loud. And I was so scared to read it out loud that I read. I messed up and I took a really long time. And I remember my teacher in front of the whole classroom, stopped me from reading and said, “Amy, you can't read. You need to go back to kindergarten to learn how to read.”

Teddy: I'm sorry.

Amy: And I was so embarrassed that I stopped reading.

Teddy: Now see that’s somebody Libby would have a fistfight with?

Amy: Yeah.

Teddy: Bless your heart. Your teacher didn't know any better. But it's terrifying for some people to stand up and I mean, my, my granddaddy Teddy, if they call him and pray in church, he would look at where we called him. He said, “I beg to be excused.” And he would just bow his head, because he didn't want to pray in church. And he was a sweet guy. He just didn't want to talk in front of people.

Amy: Yeah, but in third grade. I had a great, phenomenal teacher. There we go. She read the first volume of the Boxcar Children. And I love that book. So that's how he started reading again.

Teddy: I think Libby would agree with this or Dr. Manning. When people say oh, I hate to read now you don't. You love to read open, close, stop, go, barbershop. So you probably, you know, you'd love to read. It's just we hadn't found what you love to read, yet

Amy: Maybe social media, memes.

Teddy: Haha, yeah and maybe we can expand from there. But, don't say you hate to read, you'd love to read. Just, we got to find somewhere and there's plenty of stuff. We just got to find your boxcar thing, or we got to, we got to find Dickins.

Amy: Or comic books, or fantasy.

Teddy: It's a start. Libby says, you gotta make it fun to learn. So, she tries to build a little community in her classroom, and then get them all engaged, you know, socially engaged and then they'll start learning. I think the term she uses is “it'll start sticking”, if it's

Amy: The information will start sticking, yeah. Well, I hope everyone else enjoys this conversation and I hope it sticks

Teddy: Atta way to bring it home.

Amy: Did you always want to have a career in education?

Libby: I think that if you ask my mother that question you she would answer with a definite yes that I always did. I also veered off for a little bit when I got to college and thought I wanted to do fashion merchandising, but that lasted for one quarter. And my mother would tell you that she remembers me playing school in the garage with my little sisters, I was the oldest and my three-year-old little sister learned phonics when she was about three or four years old, because I was teaching “silent e” with a chalkboard in the garage. And she didn't know any better than to go along with me. So she's a great reader now, though, and I'd like to think that maybe that's because she had such a strong foundation with her really wise, you know, ten-year-old sister playing school, but I think that was always part of what I wanted to do always part of what I was called to do.

Amy: Okay. And did you start teaching right after graduation?

Libby: I did. I started teaching. I got married two weeks after graduation. And my first job was in Shreveport starting that following August teaching kindergarteners.

Amy: Wow, why did you choose kindergarten versus any other grade?

Libby: Well, to be honest, at the time, that's where that opening was, was kindergarten. But I was led to want to do kindergarten or first grade because I had some amazing professors here at Tech. All of them were but there were two that really stood out to me. Dr. Janie Humphreys, who was just recently retired from the Human Ecology department, was one of my early childhood professors because my degree was in one through eight, but then I picked up a kindergarten endorsement. And so she taught me some early childhood courses. And Dr. Katherine Whiteman was my kindergarten methods professor and I thought to myself, they made me want to teach young children so much even though my degree went all the way

through, up through eighth grade. I thought I really am. There's something that's drawing me to that.

Libby: And so that particular job was open. And I did learn that it was not as easy to find a job as you would think right after. I wanted to start in April before I even graduated. I started going to interviews and schools just don't know what personnel will be back in August when you're trying to interview in April. And I remember thinking, “Oh goodness, am I ever going to even get a job.” And then, sure enough, then I was offered this when in June, and it was kindergarten. And I remember immediately again, it was before emails before you could have a computer or a cell phone or anything. But I remember calling my professors and saying, I've got this kindergarten job and seeking their advice on how to kind of get my classroom set up. They would come over to Shreveport for conferences and things, and they would stop by my classroom. And I know they did that for all of their former students. So, I felt that strong connection with my professors, even before there's digitally ways to make them. And I think that made all the difference.

Amy: And how long did you teach kindergarten?

Libby: I taught kindergarten for three years. And then my husband got transferred to Jackson, Mississippi, we made they're not taught first grade for two. And then we came back here, and I taught at the laboratory school for 17 years, I think. I had a total career of 22 years teaching kindergarten through eighth grade. I taught kindergarten at the laboratory school, I taught third, fourth, and fifth, I taught social studies or history for sixth, seventh and eighth grade, at one point, I kind of landed in fifth grade, probably more than any other grade. And eventually, that's kind of where I took root.

Amy: So, did you really like teaching fifth grade?

Libby: I did. I did, like it.

Amy: What did you like about it? Because I feel like you know, I'm not a teacher. So, I don't have that perspective. But as a student, like I remember, fifth and sixth grade were pretty hard.

Libby: They're tough, because you are really on the border, you're not in middle school, yet which middle school as we know. That’s a whole separate entity. But you're not even quite there. But yet, you're leaving Elementary. And so you're teetering on, like I said on that, and I'm not a baby anymore, but I'm not quite a big kid. And I've just, they are all different sizes, I’ve often said.

Amy: You’re transitioning.

Libby: You are, you are, and they're different physical sizes to you know, every bet that the girls are shooting up, the boys aren't quite there. And it's just everybody's sort of trying to find their face their place. Exactly, and you have to be, you have to be mindful that they don't want to be babied, but at the same time, they still need the nurturing. So, it was definitely an interesting tight-rope balance.

Amy: How did you balance that?

Libby: I think that it benefited me that I came from teaching kindergarten and first. My next job was fifth. I mean, that was the first job I had at A.E. Philips was fifth grade. And I remember

thinking, Oh dear, I mean, what am I going to do? I've been teaching kindergarten and first grade. And so, I started thinking about all the things that worked in kindergarten and first. And thought, Okay, you have to build a community. I still think that's going to be true for this. You've got to be able to have fun while you're learning like we want. We need to be able to enjoy our learning process, that's what's going to help it stick. And so it was those kinds of things that I took from my teaching a thematic way so that everything connects.

Libby: So, for instance, when, when I taught World War II, the WWII time period at the time that was kind of part of our Social Studies that we had different eras in history. And I taught it with *Number the Stars*, which was a historical fiction book. And then I found historical fiction picture books that went along to support that. So we were learning history while learning the stories, even though they were were fiction that were set in historical time periods. And we were able to tease out the facts, because that way they would remember and they could connect to a character.

Libby: And so, we would just say, you know, the name Lise and all of a sudden, they would remember the book. And that would make them when we'd say, you know, what about the Rosen's, how did they feel when they were had to flee? And it was like, they all of a sudden make this really strong connection. And so, what I discovered is we built communities, often around novels, around characters in books, because when you live through Number the Stars, or you live through Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, and you go along these journeys with these characters. You can't help but be moved by that. And you can't help but feel like you as a class somehow got them through those struggles, and they become part of who you are. Books do, they become part of you. And so when you share books like that, that builds an instant community, and everybody's just a little bit nicer to one another, after you finish a book where you feel like these characters have had to overcome obstacles in and you've had to help them and you've witnessed children being persecuted or children being made fun of then you're like rallying around them. And it just, it really does make you feel a little bit more of that empathy. That's so important that we know that the world needs much more of.

Amy: I feel like by using books, you kind of did a lot of different things. It seems like you built a community with the students as they bonded over a book. Right, and then in that book also served as an example or a case study for that larger historical idea that you're trying to teach. That's awesome.

Libby: And one of my favorite quotes, I think, about books and how and their importance, and about fiction, historical fiction, realistic fiction, is that we know that our children need to read informational texts, I mean, we know that most of what they're going to end up reading out in the world is information. So we have to teach our students to be able to finagle their way, like find their way through a piece of informational texts, because Stephanie Harvey, who is a leader in the field of teaching, reading strategies, particularly as it relates to informational texts said years ago, the goal of getting lost in fiction is to get just totally immersed in this book to where you don't even know what's going on around you that your characters are hanging on every little event and you're the one pulling them through it, I mean, that that's, you want to be able to not even feel like you can close the book to go to sleep because they might not make it without you. That's what that's how you know involved, you want to be in a book like a book that you're just so wholly engrossed in. And that's what we want for our children is to get lost in fiction. But when you get lost in nonfiction, you're just lost.

Amy: What do you mean? What do you mean you're just lost?

Libby: Like how many of us have read nonfiction or informational texts? And I always think back to textbooks, and you just read straight and somehow your brain is reading like a robot, you get to the end of a chapter, and you may have word called every single word, you call them all, but your mind was completely removed from the task.

Amy: For me, it's just like, Okay, how many times have I read this paragraph and still have not comprehended any of it?

Libby: Exactly, exactly. So there is an entire set of strategies that have to be taught for children, to be able to pull information deconstructed and reconstructed in a way where they can hold on to it for informational text. And then some of those strategies transfer to fiction. But then there's another set of strategies we look for there.

Amy: Out of curiosity, what are the strategies for nonfiction?

Libby: Oh, my goodness, the strategies for nonfiction there are so many. But first of all, you have to learn to monitor your comprehension to be able to know that when I'm reading, I'm getting it or I'm not. Yeah, and we don't want to even wait till we get to the end of the paragraph. We sure don't want to wait till we get to the end of the page.

Libby: So, it's teaching kids to monitor their comprehension, almost like a level and a toolbox that a carpenter has to use whenever he or she is building a shelf, it's like, I don't want a shelf that's going to be tilted. Even if it looks straight. If it isn't, then whatever I put on it is going to come crashing down. But if we don't teach our children to monitor and use a level almost in their brain as they're reading, they will keep going and not know they've lost their way.

Amy: What do they do after they're aware?

Libby: If they're aware, then we teach them some fixup strategies. So, one of them might be: first of all, notice, stop, think, and react, like stop in the moment. So, when you read a piece of informational text, you're not going to wait until the end, like we said, of a section. The moment you see something that is just like catching your attention, you're going to stop, you're going to think about it, and then in some way, you're going to react and jot some sort of note. So, we have like annotations in the margin, so that you can think about what it is you're thinking. Sometimes we make connections, sometimes we have questions. Sometimes we find out things that are just gross or yuck, or surprising or wait a second there's a new word there. I've never heard of that word before. And the best questions, the best pieces of text lead us to questions that are lingering, because that causes us to want to go find out more.

Libby: And so, it helps kids to understand that we're never finished learning. Like, I think that's such an important message that we need to all realize is that we're never finished learning, we are constantly needing to be open to either we all bring background information to whatever we're learning, but some of it is faulty. Some of the things that I think I know about a topic, are not exactly correct or accurate, because I've kind of snatched a little bits and pieces here. And maybe it's been up in my file folder for a while. And I haven't really accessed in a while. So there could be some pieces in there that are not quite right. I need to read in a way where I'm able to be looking for confirmation of those background information, or I'm looking for additions to it, or I'm looking to see that no that wasn't right at all, I now need to stop and consider this different idea. And let me make sure if that's correct, let me find another source for that. So it's just this ongoing process that we go through as readers, but we must teach kids to be able to do that. Because if not, they go through life as word callers. And not thinkers and we just can't have that

like the way that we get our world changed is one reader at a time and one writer at a time. But we have to teach them to stop and think not just wait till somebody gives me a set of arbitrary questions at the end to see if I can answer them. Like you can do that without thinking and without any of that sticking with you.

Amy: So, now you're a university professor, and you've been teaching here at Louisiana Tech for about a decade. Would you say some of your strategies for teaching college students have remained similar to those you've used in the past?

Libby: Yes, 100%.

Amy: Which teaching strategies have?

Libby: I think the ones that for sure, almost all of them to be honest with you. But the ones especially where children have to be children, whether they are little, or whether they are college age, or whether they are master students, because we're all children at heart. The ones that keep us physically engaged, cognitively engaged, and socially engaged. So that's sort of my barometer for my teaching. It's like how much, at like about percentage wise, I definitely want to be cognitively engaged but the only way that cognitive engagement is going to stick and our teaching is going to be sticky is that they are also socially and physically engaged in some way.

Libby: So, when we had to go to zoom, I had to get pretty creative on that. But, one of the things I realized was, you know what, I'm not changing the way I teach, I'm going to teach the same way. It's just that I'm doing it on a camera. So, anything that we would have literally cut apart and moved around and sorted out word wise, I sent them on Moodle and said cut these words out before class, put them in an envelope, we'll be using them. Cut these map pieces out before class but a clip on them, put them in an envelope, we'll be using them. So, that I found that instead of me providing them the materials that day of class we were going to do something, instead it was like I'm providing them for you but you're going to need to get them out, cut them and be prepared for the class to come. And actually, when we go back face-to-face, notice I said when because I'm very optimistic that certainly we will. Then I will also that's one thing I will take away is that instead of my, you know, providing them for them, I will have those ahead of time, so that they can just bring them in ready to go. So, there's a few things like that, that I'm thinking, Okay, I could use that, like, I'm trying to find the silver lining where I can, as far as the things that I'm now doing that I would like to continue to do, okay, once we once we get back face to face.

Amy: So, it seems like that's how you keep them physically involved is cutting and pasting, and...

Libby: Well and the moving and the manipulating and the hopping up and moving like in class, you would move to another group, or you would work around the room in a in like a format of a gallery walk, where I might have different pieces of texts around the room that are all on the same topic. But you've got to go around and be able to pull together as a group and decide and leave your mark on that piece of text. So, every group may have a different color marker. And as we rotate, each group is leaving their reactions, they're stopping and thinking and reacting to that piece of text. And so those kinds of things, definitely keep people moving. Plus it keeps them moving and engaged with other groups of students. So now, my cognitive, I mean, my excuse me, physical engagement, that piece of moving and shifting people from group to group is now a Zoom Room. So you know, but I make sure if you're in this Zoom Room at this

moment, then the next time we do a stop, I'm going to put you in a Zoom Room, possibly with a different group of people, or I'm going to put three people in a room instead of five this time, so that we can mix it up meet each other, get to know one another, build that community, because it's very important that we do that.

Amy: Okay. And so that would also be the social engagement area. So how does that affect whether or not this piece of information is sticking?

Libby: It's because it just, it gives you those modalities that that that it's entering for you. So, if one thing talk is so critical. Vygotsky taught us that social interaction that the constructivist, the idea that we construct our learning, but we construct it in a socially impactful way that we don't just learn in a silo, and that we learn from one another. So being able to have that social time. In fact, those standards that I referenced earlier, there's an entire section of standards that are dedicated to speaking and listening. And I think now more than ever, we need that. Like, we need to be able to understand that we've got to slow down long enough, and not just have these monologues that we need to truly listen to what someone else is saying and add on to it.

Amy: Active listening.

Libby: And that has to be taught. We have to teach our children active listening, and so are my colleagues that I just referenced Dr. Kimbell-Lopez and Dr. Cummins and I came up with something called a chat chart. And it actually we it's an acronym. And so like the C stands for "co-constructing meaning" and the idea that we don't just construct meaning on our own. Even if we read something and break it apart and take it in, we still co-constructed it, because the author and I've had a conversation. So the idea is that we have conversations in our minds, we have conversations with each other, but conversations have to occur. And so the see is the C is the co-constructing meaning, sometimes I'm confirming what you said that you saw something or you feel like this is the character trait for that particular character. I'm confirming it, I agree with you, because I noticed this character did this too. And that confirms it. But sometimes I might give you an on the other hand, sometimes I might disconfirm you not in a way to say you're completely wrong. But have you also considered this perspective that this might be a perspective, but in order for the C to work the H, we say that it can't just be CH it, it's the digraph CH makes the sound they stick together to make that sound? Well, the C and the H in the chat chart, do the same thing. Because you cannot co construct meaning if you're not really hearing what the other person is saying.

Amy: Is that what H stands for? Does H stand for hearing?

Libby: H does stand for "hearing", and so those are those active listening strategies that we were just talking about when you just said you have to be an active listener. So one has to teach you to do that. What does that even look like? I mean, it looks like nodding, it looks like eye contact, it looks like leaning in, it looks like all of those things where your face makes different, you know, looks to it, when somebody's telling you something to let that person know, you're truly paying attention to what they're saying.

Amy: And I think we also want confirmation from someone that they have heard us, they've truly heard us and, in our society, looking, making eye contact, nodding our head, that is very common ways that we affirm that we're listening. It might look different for different cultures. But yeah, I think ultimately, we all want to know that what we heard was important enough for someone to pay attention.

Libby: Exactly. And that's where the A comes in. Because the asking questions part of the A gets divided into two parts. And the first part of asking questions is clarifying. So, it's saying to that person, so you're saying, and you're restating, then what you heard them, and then that person does know, they did hear me. Or right, then somebody can say, “oh, no, no, no that's not what I meant” and also “what I meant was,” and then think about how many misunderstandings could be eliminated right there. Right there.

Amy: By not making an assumptions. By caring more about understanding, the other person.

Libby: So that way, when the person clarifies and looks back and says, “So did you say...?” and then that person who said it or didn't, could say, “Oh, no, you must you must have misheard me,” or “I must not have made myself clear. Let me say it again.” And right there, we could eliminate so much. Yeah, so much negativity, so much frustration and angst. And so that is the A part is divided into the asking questions, clarifying questions, or extending questions. “Yeah, so don't you also think this? So, if you said that could also be this.” And so, you're extending your thinking that way.

Libby: And then the thinking further is just the idea of taking it to the next level. Like the big idea about this is so the idea is we want to teach children to have conversations that are at least three rounds each. And Dr. Cummins has taught me a lot about this. The idea that, in order for us to have a true dialogue, I say something, you say something back along that same line, I come back with something again, you do mean and so she literally teaches children, that when they say something, they count on their fingers, and just put it on against their legs so that they can remember, okay, I've had three. It's very important. And it's important for us as teachers to model that, to model it in front of our children with a colleague so that they can notice what we did, but also to model it with our children. And I think that that is one thing, one area, I know when I was in the classroom, and even now and in the college classroom, is a student says something. And it's very quick, it's very, you think time efficient to just go and answer it very quickly and move on to something else. But what if we stopped and took time to have a three-round conversation? Whenever we could possibly do that? What kind of rich vocabulary would we find that we could plant with our children? What kind of big ideas could we be starting to come up with? What kind of community could we build? If we just slow down to do that?

Amy: I think relationships will be strengthened tremendously.

Libby: No doubt.

Amy: So, I love that you're teaching kids that I was not taught that as a kid. I learned that through probably just years of socialization. But, I definitely look back and see how miscommunication played a really big part in the conflicts that I had in my life. And so, I love the idea of teaching kids how to communicate, how to active listen, how to seek information, and, you know, try to understand people and not make assumptions.

Libby: Thank you. I just feel like we're all after the goal of making this a more peaceful place to be. I mean just to stop and allow that to happen. But we've got to teach the children.

Amy: Well, we want to connect, we do but in order to connect, we have to communicate.

Libby: Exactly. And we have to communicate effectively,

Amy: For sure.

Libby: You're exactly right. That's so important. We all desire to be a part of a group. That's that to be a community.

Libby: Life's too short. It's just too short. And we've got to establish some communities that are, that are sound, that are going to give us what we need, that are not necessarily going to be that we're not going to hear the easy messages, not the messages of, “Oh, don't worry about that,” or “we'll take care of that.” But we're going to help you work through the hard parts, because that's the only way we get stronger. That's the only way we get wiser is by going through those bumps in the road. But we have to do it with friends. Or are we just feel like we are alone. And I and I don't want that for anyone, especially not our children.

Amy: Yeah, I wholeheartedly agree with you, for sure.

Amy: But I don't want to forget to talk about medals and missions.

Libby: Yes. The medals and missions actually came from this book, *Evidence-Based Teaching, the Second Edition* by Jeff Petty. And he talks in here about the idea that we have to help children to be able and adults I mean, we all are like this. To goal set, to be able to say, here's where I am now. What am I doing well, and what do I want to continue to do that’s going well, for me? But one of the things that I gleaned from this was the idea that when we are helping our students to see growth, they need to see it for themselves. They don't, Good job is not going to cut it like, “oh you did a great job on that.” You know, it's kind of like I know, you've probably heard the “everybody gets a trophy era.” Where we feel like, you know, consolation prize. Yeah. And they don't really even understand like what specifically was so great about this, so that I can carry it forward.

Libby: Well, that's what medals and missions is all about. It's giving you the feedback of not good job. But it's giving you the feedback I noticed, I noticed the way that you began that story by orienting your reader to the setting. I noticed the way that you really went in and did a show not tell strategy right here so that your reader could visualize exactly what it was that you were trying to illustrate for them. I noticed the way you ended this work with really strong emphasis on the characters' feelings and actions and a little bit of dialogue, to leave your reader like thinking about that central idea or theme that you wanted them to take away. So do you see how specific that was? Super specific to what you're noticing that they did. A next step for you would be.

Libby: And anytime you hear a next step, that's your mission. So, being able to negotiate with children and say, what do you think your medal was here? What do you think? Where is something that you notice that you're doing as a writer today, or a reader, or mathematician or a geographer or a scientist can just be wherever you're teaching? What is it you're noticing, you're doing? Well? What's the next step? Because we're never finished. We're never really there. And so, if I never know where I am, though, if I never know that I have accomplished that it makes it very difficult for me to want to continue to try to learn if I'm not really sure, where is, where are we going? And what are the steps for me to get there? And what am I already doing well? Because I don't want to feel like I'm spinning my wheels like, can you could you give me just a little help. But the very powerful thing is to help children go back into their writing and notice it with you. Because they need to see what they're doing. They can name the work, they can carry it forward with them. And that's what we want.

Amy: Okay, yeah. So, speaking of medals and missions, where do you think you're going next? What is your next step? What is your next mission?

Libby: Well, I think I mean, I love what I'm doing in the classroom is my department head and I laughed the other day. He said, “I remember when I interviewed here, and one of the first things when I was talking to you about what do you love most about your job? You said to me, ‘the classroom is my happy place.’” And I said it. “Yes, it is, it is my favorite thing to do.” I also I enjoy, like I said, working with the children, still I don't ever want to lose touch with that. Because the minute that I lose touch with working with real children in real classrooms, then how do I know that when I'm saying to students, how do I know where the hard parts are? How do I know how to come over those hard parts, if I haven't had that opportunity to continue to do. So, I am just recently a grandmother. I have a beautiful little granddaughter named Megan Kate, who is born on September the sixth and I am going to be a grandmother again to another precious granddaughter in December.

Amy: Double congratulations!

Libby: Thank you! So I am. I think that what I have realized I texted my daughter the other day and I said, I don't know why. But I know she's only six weeks old or seven weeks old. But it is like really even given me more of a sense of urgency that, oh my goodness, we've got to make sure these teachers are ready for these children that. We that every second counts that they're in those classrooms. Because if you think about it, I know when we were in elementary school, it didn't feel like this. But kindergarten through 12th grade. It's a blip on your radar screen of life. And yet, that's how much time we have in a public education arena to get our children ready for the world, whatever that may be. And that eight hours a day that we have them in school has got to be used to every second’s benefit, like we can't leave any second and attended. And so, whatever that means, we've got to find ways to make sure that we are giving our children every bit of benefit for an education and keep them engaged constantly throughout the day.

Amy: Well, thank you so much for being on the podcast, talking to me. This is a great conversation.

Libby: Thank you so much, Amy. I appreciate it. It was a lot of fun.

Amy: Thank you for listening to this episode of Beyond 1894. If you liked what you heard, please rate and review us. It will help others find our podcast. If you would like to find details about the episode, check out our show notes. To find our podcast webpage, go to 1894.latech.edu/beyond. If you have suggestions for future episodes, email us at 1894@latech.edu.

Amy: Beyond 1894 is produced by the Office of University Communications, with help from The Waggoner Center. Dave Norris is the executive producer. I, Amy Bell, am the producer and chief editor, and Teddy Allen and I are co-hosts.