Our Mission

AI is a disruptive, transformational technology that creates new challenges and opportunities for schools, teachers, and learners. In times of transformational change, how we respond to an innovation is more important than the innovation itself.
Our mission is to empower educators and learners to leverage artificial intelligence tools in ways that support, rather than undermine, effective teaching and learning. We help educators and students bridge the gap between what AI tools can do and how those tools should be used.
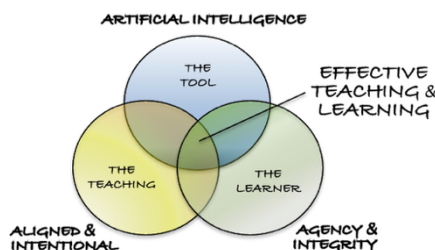
Our Vision

We envision a future where AI tools are everywhere, and educators are able to use them in ways that:
- **Align** priorities for teaching with students' opportunities to learn important content, concepts, and skills.
- **Intentionally** help students prioritize and align their strategy and effort to learn in ways that are rooted in research on effective teaching and learning.

We envision a future where AI tools are everywhere, and students are able to:
- Act with the **agency** necessary to pursue challenging learning goals, engage in productive struggle, ask clarifying questions, seek feedback, and advocate for their learning needs, with or without the use of AI tools.
- Demonstrate **integrity** and transparency when using AI tools, are prepared to explain their evidence of learning, and are able to monitor and reflect on the processes they've used to learn.
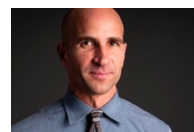

What We Offer

The Center for AI to Support Effective Teaching and Learning provides comprehensive, customizable services to meet the needs of teachers, leaders, schools, and districts. Our offerings include:

- **Professional Learning Workshops**: Hands-on sessions to build AI literacy, explore AI tools, and build the capacity of teachers and students to use AI tools to intentionally support learning.
- **Coaching**: Tailored support for schools or districts working to use AI tools in ways that are aligned to their mission and strategic goals.
- **Readiness Audits and Needs Assessments:** Conduct focus groups or surveys with teachers, students, administrators, and community members to gain a deeper understanding of stakeholders' uses and perceptions of AI tools.
- **Keynotes and Institutes**: Thought-provoking presentations by experts, including Center Director Tony Frontier, on the future of AI in education, current research, and practical applications for educators.
- **Resources**: Curated tools, guides, strategies, and frameworks to help educators use AI tools in ways that are aligned to their priorities for teaching and students' learning.
- **Policy Review and Design**: Review and provide guidance to develop policies and practices that ensure AI tools are used to support student learning, minimize cheating, and maximize academic integrity.
- **Research and Innovation Hub**: A space to collaborate with educators and tech leaders to pilot AI solutions, draw conclusions, and share evidence-based best practices.

Meet Our Director: Tony Frontier, PhD

Tony Frontier, PhD, is an award-winning educator with 30 years of experience as a teacher, principal, curriculum director, university professor, and consultant who works with teachers and school leaders across the globe to help them prioritize efforts to improve student learning. Tony facilitates engaging, practical, research-based workshops on a variety of topics, including student engagement, curriculum development, meaningful feedback, technology integration, and strategic planning. His books include *AI with Intention: Principles and Action Steps for School Leaders and Teachers* (2025) with a foreword by Jay McTighe; *Teaching with Clarity: How to Prioritize and Do Less So Your Students Understand More* (2021), and *Effective Supervision, Supporting the Art & Science of Teaching* (2011) with Bob Marzano.

To learn more about how to build your staff and students' capacity to use AI tools to support effective teaching and learning, e-mail tony@firsteducation-us.com

Closing the Gap Between AI-Related Challenges and a Desired Future

www.firsteducation-us.com   tony@firsteducation-us.com

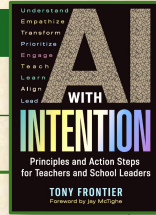| Typical Challenges and Needs	What We Offer
We are early in this journey of understanding what AI tools can and can't do and how they can be used by staff to support effective teaching and learning.	• Professional Learning Workshops • Readiness Audits and Needs Assessments • Focus Groups • Teacher Perception/Use Survey
We want to build the capacity of our principals and district office staff to make informed decisions or provide staff with sound advice on AI-related initiatives, issues, and topics	• Professional Learning Workshops for Leaders • Coaching
We need to better understand our students' and teachers' uses, perceptions, and attitudes about AI tools.	• Readiness Audits and Needs Assessments • Focus Groups • Teacher Perception/Use Survey
We want to learn the basics of what generative AI tools can and can't do including important differences among widely accessible AI tools and how to effectively prompt them.	• Keynotes and Institutes • Professional Learning Workshops • Coaching
We want to learn what the research says about how AI tools can support, and undermine, effective teaching and learning so we can support intentional decisions and choices in how AI tools are used in our school.	• Professional Learning Workshops • Keynotes and Institutes
We want to develop policies and guidelines around when and how AI tools should or should not be used by students and/or staff.	• Readiness Audits and Needs Assessments • Policy Review and Design
We want to ensure our teachers and staff are using AI tools in ways that are aligned to priorities to intentionally support effective teaching and learning.	• Professional Learning Workshops • Keynotes and Institutes • Teacher Perception/Use Survey
Widespread access to AI tools has renewed conversations around cheating, plagiarism, and academic integrity. We want to review and possibly revise our academic integrity policy to ensure it is aligned to best practices.	• Professional Learning Workshops • Keynotes and Institutes • Policy Review and Design
We want to support teacher's efforts to use strategies that maximize academic integrity and minimize cheating.	• Professional Learning Workshops • Keynotes and Institutes
We want to build the capacity of our teachers to show students how AI tools can be used with integrity and in ways that support agency and deeper learning.	• Professional Learning Workshops • Keynotes & Institutes • Student Focus Groups

Guiding Principles for School Leaders

Essential Question: How can leaders build capacity to ensure AI tools are used to effectively support intentional teaching and learning?

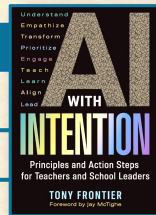| Guiding Principle	Strategic Choice	Action Steps
Lead by Learning: Build a shared understanding of what AI is, and isn't	**Learning Organization** vs. **Reactive Organization**	• Learn the basics • Acknowledge misconceptions • Identify patterns & trends • Learn the jargon • Know the Gartner Hype Cycle
Take a Transformational Approach: Align leadership behaviors to the transformative implications of AI	**Transformational** vs. **Transactional Leadership**	• Align leadership to the magnitude of change • Ask big transformational questions • Place purpose and pedagogy before tech • Provide opportunities for practice & play
Emphasize Integrity: Align expectations for academic integrity with intentional opportunities to learn	**Humanism** vs. **Behaviorism**	• Teach students what academic integrity is • Articulate expectations for stakeholders • Clarify the when & how of students' uses of AI • Emphasize integrity, transparency, & explainability
Fidelity Before Efficiency: Empower educators to use AI tools to support intentional teaching & learning	**Effectiveness** vs. **Efficiency or Automaticity**	• Avoid the 'twin sins' of AI integration • Discuss fidelity, efficiency, automaticity, and effectiveness • Take the expert approach: Know how, why, & when • Ensure fidelity, transparency, and explainability

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Guiding Principles for Teachers & Learners

Essential Question: How can teachers and students use AI tools to support intentional teaching and learning?
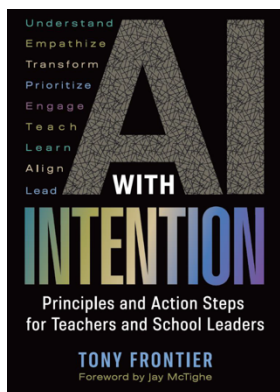
Guiding Principle	Strategic Choice	Action Steps
Stand in Their Shoes: Take an empathetic approach to students' perceptions of AI tools	**Empathetic Design** vs. **Non-Empathetic Design**	• Acknowledge students' misconceptions about learning and how AI could deepen misconceptions • Take action to address student misconceptions about learning • Affirm students' strengths, challenges, & interests • Minimize cognitive load
Know Your Purpose: Prioritize students' strategy & effort to learn	**Learning** vs. **Compliance**	• Acknowledge that superficial uses of AI harm learning • Avoid the 'twin sins' of curriculum design • Emphasize purpose for learning, not compliance • Teach students to plan, monitor, & self-assess • Emphasize integrity, transparency, & explainability
Prompt AI Tools Intentionally: Use AI tools to create clarity for teaching and learning	**Clarity** vs. **Clutter**	• Prioritize before prompting • Prompt with purpose • Revise for fidelity, document for transparency, & ensure explainability • Use AI tools as a fidelity coach • Use AI tools as an empathy coach
Use AI Tools for Intentional Learning: Empower students to use AI tools with agency as learners	**Independent Learners** vs. **Dependent Students**	Teach students how to: • Pursue learning goals • Self-assess • Ask for help • Provide meaningful feedback • Be persistent and assertive • Apply strategies for intentional learning …Including when using AI tools

Recent Resources by Tony Frontier, Director of the FIRST Education AI Center for Effective Teaching and Learning, on Effective Use of AI Tools

AI with Intention: Principles and Action Steps for Teachers and School Leaders (© ASCD 2025) **by Tony Frontier, Foreword by Jay McTighe**
https://www.ascd.org/books/ai-with-intention?variant=124032

"Yes, AI has many downsides, so we need to know what 'wise use' means, and here is where Frontier's book is gold. Whether you're an AI enthusiast or a skeptic, *AI with Intention* challenges assumptions, offers fresh perspectives, and inspires meaningful dialogue about the future of education. AI is not good or bad; it is here to stay, and this is the best book I have read to introduce all to optimize the power of AI."
—**John Hattie**, Laureate Professor, Director of the *Melbourne Education Research Institute*

Deeper Learning, Not Passive Compliance: Given the Right Framing, AI Tools Can Empower Student Agency and Curiosity by Tony Frontier
Educational Leadership – February 2025
https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/deeper-learning-not-passive-compliance

Catch Them Learning: A Pathway to Academic Integrity in an Era of AI by Tony Frontier
The Cult of Pedagogy – May 2025 (article and podcast are linked below)
https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/ai-integrity/

Taking a Transformative Approach to AI by Tony Frontier
Educational Leadership – Summer 2023
https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/taking-a-transformative-approach-to-ai

The What School Could Be Podcast with host Josh Reppun – February 2025
Guests John Hattie and Tony Frontier
How should schools respond in an era of everywhere, all the time, access to AI tools?
https://blubrry.com/wscbh/141448509/139-two-towering-redwoods-in-the-research-of-how-we-learn-john-hattie-and-tony-frontier/

The Balance with Catlin Tucker Podcast – April 2025
Guest Tony Frontier
AI with Intention: Dr. Tony Frontier on Leading, Teaching, and Learning in the Age of AI
https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ai-with-intention-dr-tony-frontier-on-leading-teaching/id1485751335?i=1000701825792

For other articles, books, and podcasts with Tony Frontier, see https://tonyfrontier.com/

To learn more about how to build your staff and students' capacity to use AI tools to support effective teaching and learning, e-mail tony@firsteducation-us.com