

2019 Career Development Grant Report
Personalized Learning Summit
Atlanta, Georgia
May 14-16, 2019

For my 2019 Career Development Grant I choose to attend the Personalized Learning Summit in Atlanta Georgia. This conference is sponsored by EdElements and this is the second time I have attended this particular conference. This event included over 800 educators from across the country including attendees from 8 different countries. Sessions that I was able to attend and extend my personal knowledge from included an Innovation Tour to Delta Airlines Corporate HQ in Atlanta, Keynote presentations by Chad Littlefield from We and Me, Golriz Lucina the head of creative for Soul Pancake, EdElements founder Anthony Kim, and author and principal Baruti Kafele. Breakout session that were useful were “You’ll Get There Faster if You Take your People With You”, “Making Connections Before Content Can Help Save Time and Build Engagement”, and “Total Motivation 101 - Science Behind High Performing Teams”.

The Innovation Tour to Delta Airlines was not much of a tour as we only saw the Delta Museum. Our time was spent listening to presentations from community outreach and corporate spokespeople about the background of Delta Airlines and how they have grown as a company since the merger with Northwest Airlines. The interesting thing that was described was a corporate view of Maslow’s hierarchy and how Delta come from a position of just trying to survive as an airline to growing into a top 10 Brand Name corporation this previous year. Delta no longer sees themselves as just an airline but a company that is constantly innovating through a focus on finding ways to reach all customers in personalized ways that provide services and interactions that each consumer expects for the price point that enter the air travel market. A take away from this is that as educational systems, when we can operate above survival mode, can also strive to find ways to interact with each of customers/students in a way that they will find meaningful that meets their expectations. Delta does this by providing multiple levels of service on each flight with clear expectations of what the traveler is paying for and what Delta will provide in return. If we could translate that for our students and really understand what they expect and want from school and provide experiences aligned with those desires that still met State Standards we may have a more success in growing our schools and keep students in an ever increasing competitive environment. We also heard a presentation from Delta’s department of Innovation called the Hanger. This presentation talked about how the airline actually goes through the innovation cycle which is a very familiar process similar to the PDSA cycle from Langford, or Strategic Planning Process as proposed by EdElements. An interesting note is that this small department of a huge company is housed “off-campus” to limit corporate influence over the process of creativity. The distance provides insulation and safety while allowing the creative problem solving process to occur without interference.

The keynotes delivered by Chad Littlefield and Golriz Lucina at the Summit were focused on building relationships and providing experiences that deepen connections between people. Mr. Littlefield provided multiple activities using experience cards with quotes and pictures that

were designed to make people talk to each other in a mode beyond small talk. Telling quick stories, asking clarifying questions, and sharing ideas were all experienced by this activity and this would be a great way to get people to know each other in more meaningful ways. This activity could be used in the classroom or with staff and would help build connections in the classroom. Ms. Lucina used videos and ideas from her media company, Soul Pancake, to remind us of the importance of practicing 5 key principles on a regular basis to build connection and relationships. The five concepts are 1) Know your personal “why”, 2) Show gratitude, 3) create intentional moments of connection, 4) celebrate joy, and 5) start now, do not wait. The 5 areas are all designed to help people celebrate positivity and help define personal meaning for the work we do. I will be suggesting to staff that they all find ways to implement these 5 concepts into their classroom to help build positive relationships with and between students.

“You’ll Get There Faster if You Take your People With You” presented by Etienne LeGrand discussed the importance of building a trusting respectful and positive environment to schools through how leaders behave as coaches, share leadership, and build a school where everyone is pulling for each other. She shared thoughts and ideas on how to build culture that promote high levels of learning that are sustainable. The biggest takeaway for school principals was that our behaviors, moods, and attitudes are constantly observed and drive the culture of the school. We must be deliberate in monitoring ourselves to promote positive outcomes for staff and students. “Making Connections Before Content Can Help Save Time and Build Engagement” was presented by Will Wise and Chad Littlefield. This session built around the idea of social connections being imperative when building teams to achieve maximum success. Psychological safety is proposed as the foundation that must be built followed with creating high levels of trust before learning can occur. Many teachers do not understand the importance of creating this type of environment during the first weeks of school. Providing PD in this area is suggested and will likely improve student performance and reduce conflict. “Total Motivation 101 - Science Behind High Performing Teams” presented by Will Corbett explained a theory of performance called total motivation that looks at why people underperform, cheat, or “choke” under pressure and how this is tied to student engagement and how their personal sense of play, purpose, and potential relates to performance. Mr. Corbett asserts that the more the game, project, or task is tied to these feelings the higher the level of performance becomes.

Overall this conference was much improved from the 2018-19 version for all learners. Some sessions that I could not fit in under the agenda were actual classroom simulations of what Personalized Learning looks like in many different subjects and grade levels. Teachers would be particularly drawn to these as they looked to be real world applications of what PL looks like in a classroom from my short peeks into them. The content for school administrators was also more focused with a couple different learning pathways mapped out in advance to select from. The Keynote speakers also had more meaningful content and ideas than last year. The opportunity to attend and learn this week was appreciated.



5-29-19