

## My Top 6 Highlights from ATD TechKnowledge

Posted by [Carla Torgerson, MEd, MBA](#) on February 18, 2019 at 4:58 PM

Last week I was at [ATD TechKnowledge](#). This is an important conference for instructional designers, developers, and learning leaders, particularly those who use instructional technologies.

It was great to see old friends and make a number of new ones. I also learned a lot at the sessions and events. Here are my top 6 highlights:

**1. Virtual Reality:** VR continues to be a huge buzz, especially as we figure out how to use it effectively for learning. I even got a chance to try a VR simulation created for workplace learning. I took on the role of a technician working on an offshore oil rig; I was a new employee and had to address several valves that were failing due to high pressure. I had to find them and then release the pressure, but unfortunately, my inability to solve all three problems in a timely manner resulted in the rig blowing up. Perhaps I'll stick to my day job. :)

**2. Marketing and Learning are Overlapping:** I had a number of conversations about how the fields of marketing and learning are overlapping more and more. Marketers are now using artificial intelligence to take lots and lots of data and find patterns, like segmenting audiences, just like we are doing as we try to personalize learning for our audiences. It's clear that us learning folks still have a way to go, but I continue to be excited by the power of big data in enabling us to tailor learning experiences. I also talked with two people at companies in completely different industries who have both added marketing people to their L&D teams. As we use more performance support and informal learning in our learning ecosystems, marketing professionals will enable us to better engage our learners and improve performance.

**3. Gamification:** I really enjoyed Karl Kapp's session on gamifying your learning. His biggest tips: begin with activity, create curiosity, create a challenge, and give meaningful choices. When we do these things we engage our audience and create skills that will transfer to the workplace.

**4. Microlearning:** I really appreciated Shannon Tipton's comments in her session about how an advantage of microlearning is that you can change it easily. I agree completely – with microlearning we may finally be able to become as agile as we want to be! Of course, I also had fun at my own session where we did an activity to identify where people could go micro in their own work and then looked at some examples of microlearning projects used by workplaces today. I got lots of positive feedback and I even had one person tell me she was going to rethink her whole program as a result! I love talking with people about their learning strategies and helping them to think differently!

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**5. xAPI Cohort:** For those who follow me on LinkedIn or Twitter, you know that I found Megan Torrance's xAPI Gnome unattended and held him for ransom! My ransom demand? That I could attend [xAPI Cohort](#) with her that afternoon. What started as a practical joke turned into an opportunity to grab a number of xAPI experts to present briefly at xAPI Cohort with an impromptu live feed from ATD TK. Thanks to Megan and the whole Torrance Learning team for pulling that together!

**6. Making the Impossible Possible:** By far my greatest highlight was the closing keynote from Ben Nemtin, co-creator of "The Buried Life" on MTV. He talked about how we tend to bury those hopes and dreams that are most important to us, as we live our every-day lives. Research says that at the end of our lives, 76% of us will say we didn't do all we wanted. So, how do you make sure you actually get to your bucket list? Start by writing your list down. This makes it actionable. Then tell others about it. Ben said that most people don't share their bucket list because they are afraid of not making it happen. But when you share your goals, those people around you will help you achieve them. I left this session inspired to put my own bucket list on paper and start achieving them!

Overall, it was an outstanding week, getting to connect with old friends, and make many new ones. I'm already looking forward to the conference next year!