



March 23, 2015

I had the opportunity to attend an informative and engaging two-day professional development training provided by Robert Kaplinsky on the topic of real-world, problem-based learning. Robert was a dynamic trainer who presented information in an unassuming, learner-centered way, allowing teacher participants to think about their own teaching and apply the new strategies accordingly.

Throughout the two days, Robert modeled sound instructional strategies as he explained the *why*, the *what*, and the *how* of implementing this approach to math instruction. He provided research-based excerpts, short videos, and data figures to support the approach in a way that was clear and thought-provoking to the teacher participants. Teachers gained an understanding of real-world problem-based learning through a student lens, then through a teacher lens. By working through the problems as Robert facilitated the learning, teachers had the opportunity to experience the thinking process of a student, while at the same time observing the role of the teacher. The teachers worked through multiple examples throughout the two days of training and were excited to implement the strategies upon returning to their classrooms.

When asked about the effectiveness of the training, every teacher who participated in the two-day professional development provided positive feedback. Below are a few examples:

As a math teacher, I tend to assume that I know the thinking process of my students until I started realizing that I should have known better. I did a couple of problems with two different sections today and I was amazed by the result. Though my students have a solid base of procedural understanding, they still lack the conceptual understanding.

I thought it was really great. He conveyed his message effectively and I believe it has impacted my day-to-day procedures right now.

I used the filing cabinet lesson; the kids loved the challenge!

I highly recommend Robert Kaplinsky's professional development focusing on real-world, problem-based mathematics. He challenges educators to think about math instruction in a relevant way and provides the support teachers need to successfully implement the ideas in their own classrooms.

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