

Reflections on Edifide
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The first workshop that I attended over the two days of the conference was also the best workshop that I attended. It was a workshop that focused on the basic of Project Based Learning (PBL), a topic that I have been interested in for a while now. Harry Blyleven helped a small group of us understand what is actually involved in PBL and he explained how he has used it successfully and how he has failed while trying to use it. This workshop reminded me of what is actually involved in PBL. It clarified a few misconceptions that I had, such as, "It's impossible to actually cover the curriculum with PBL" and "It's SO much work." Harry explained a garden project that touched on many aspects of his curriculum, and he explained that the project does not need to reach each and every single expectation. And, although he admitted it was a lot of work at first, he said that it becomes easier the more you are willing to be fluid and flexible.

As a new teacher, I cannot imagine myself implementing PBL in the first year of teaching. I would find it overwhelming. However, I realized from that session that PBL does not need to be an entire year project. Harry suggested a four-day project, which is something I would love to try, even in my first year. For example, I am currently teaching some lessons on Pioneer days for Social Studies. I would love to have the students create replicas of the various pioneer homes. Currently, the students are working through a workbook that this school has always used, but if it were my classroom, the workbook would be replaced with mini-projects. Starting small is better than not starting at all!

Overall, I have mixed feelings about the value of this conference. On the positive side of things, I thought it was wonderful to put teaching into perspective by talking about the story that every teacher is a part of. I have always loved that analogy and it is an amazing blessing to be such an essential part of a child's story. The overall themes that are discussed at these conferences are uplifting in a time of stress and worry. I also appreciate this conference as a time to network, and make connections with different teachers who might know of openings in the Christian

school system. For the first keynote, I decided I would not sit with Redeemer students, but instead made a point to find other teachers to sit with. I counted on sitting with teachers that I already knew a little bit, but ended up sitting with two younger teachers from Chatham Christian School. We ended up having a lot of similarities and I was able to share my worries and they were able to share their experiences in the classroom. If I work in a Christian school, which I hope to do, I would definitely find this type of conference an encouragement and a time to set goals for myself for the upcoming year –maybe a goal about assessment or a goal about a mini-project. When you are teaching every day, it is nice to have a chance to resume the student role once again. On the negative side of things, this conference comes at a very overwhelming time of the year and takes up the time that we would appreciate more as a break. I found that the conference focused on all the new up-to-date ideas in the education world; but, I already knew all those ideas because I am currently learning about them every day in class! It is hard to appreciate that time of sitting down in workshops when you still have 5 assignments due. I honestly felt that it wore me out to the point that I was unprepared to teach on Monday, both physically and mentally.

I am thankful to the OACS and Edifide for including Redeemer students in this conference. It is appreciated that we are not treated differently for being younger (as is the case with many of us) or inexperienced, but we are actually listened to as respectable educators who are as much a part of the story as experienced teachers are. The generation of teachers that have come before student teachers can share their stories with us, just as we can share our stories with them.