In the last twenty years significant attention has been given to the concept of authenticity in school settings. In their seminal article Brown Collins and Duguid (John S. Brown, Allan Collins, & Paul Duguid, 1989) highlighted the tension that often exists in schools between school culture on the one hand and the authentic culture of the learning domain on the other. Adopting the perspective that all learning involves a process of enculturation, they argued that the conceptual understanding of any domain cannot be divorced from the context of conceptual use, and that school activity structures need to be refashioned along more authentic lines. Citing apprenticeship models, such as Jean Lave’s (1988) study of tailors (from which later emerged the notion of legitimate peripheral participation (J. Lave, & Wenger, E., 1991)) they promoted the notion of cognitive apprenticeship (A Collins, Brown, & Holm, 1991; Allan Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989), which took the apprenticeship model and adapted it to cognitive strategies in the classroom.

Over time, a number of different but related bodies of literature have operated out of a similar situative perspective, investigating ways in which school structures may be authentic, how they acculturate students into modes of reasoning, communicate norms, and significantly, how they can be made more authentic. These approaches have understood all learning to involve a process of enculturation into the discourses of a community (J. Lave, & Wenger, E., 1991), and an increasing socialization into particular norms of behavior and dispositions (or, ways of thinking) associated with a particular community (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Activity structures in schools are not and cannot be neutral packages of learning. Whether the focus is on classrooms as cultural settings (Gutierrez, 2002, p. 315; Westby, 1997), student identity (Sfard & Prusak, 2005), or norms and dispositions (M Gresalfi, Martin, Hand, & Greeno, 2009), the recognition that enculturation constitutes a central aspect of learning complicates the implicitly cultural question of authenticity in learning. Different conceptions of authenticity imply different pedagogical structures, which will impact the social and cultural elements of learning in different ways. Perhaps the most notable example of instantiating authenticity in clearly defined activity structures is the constellation of project- and problem-based approaches (e.g., Barron et al., 1998; Edelson, 2001; Schank, Fano, Bell, & Jona, 1993:199) which tie individual and social theoretical accounts of learning and motivation to particular classroom activity structures. The numerous attempts to pinpoint the defining features of PBL (e.g. Savery, 2006; Thomas, 2000) have identified problem centrality, student-driven learning, autonomy and relevance. The most frequent descriptor, however, is real-world authenticity (Merrill, 2002; Savery & Duffy, 1996; Walker & Leary, 2009), an essential component of the theoretical justification of problem-based learning (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Stepien & Gallagher, 1993).

And yet, there is a substantial amount of ambiguity in the use of the term authenticity in these contexts. Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) originally conceptualized authenticity in terms of replicating the ordinary practices of a culture in the classroom. Ann Brown et al. (1993), however, noting the impracticality of apprenticing very young children into the practices of mathematicians, for example, understood authenticity as practices that prepared students for lifelong learning and future participation in the culture of the discipline—an approach that does not require replication of actual disciplinary practices. Others have argued for authenticity as a personal, or emotional, investment on the part of the student (Renzulli, Gentry, & Reis, 2001) which contains powerful enculturing features that are highly authentic, but which, surprisingly, do not resemble real world activities.

**Abstract:** This paper argues that a common paradigm of authenticity, best exemplified by problem-based learning, is not appropriate for foundational learning at the early stages of a domain. A novel second model is introduced, drawing on the notion of signature pedagogy, which contains powerful enculturating features that are highly authentic, but which, surprisingly, do not resemble real world activities.
This paper will use the context of Jewish religious education to more precisely explore the use of authenticity as a construct. Specifically, an example drawn from an in-depth case study (consisting of videotaped classes, interviews, survey, and test-score data) of three ultra-Orthodox elementary schools will be used to explore issues of authenticity, and to determine the appropriate circumstances in which different types of authenticity may be desirable. This context, Jewish education, connected as it is to a religious community of practice, provides fertile ground for exploring issues of socialization and authenticity. Indeed, socialization has been widely noted as a goal of religious schooling, and it has been argued that ultra-Orthodox schools, in particular, have as their central purpose the inculcation of the ultra-Orthodox worldview and culture (Krakowski, 2008, p. 17).

To address questions of authenticity, this paper will present a case study of new paradigm of authenticity, contrasting it to an existing paradigm (which I call comparative authenticity) that is implicit in problem-based learning. I argue that each serves different pedagogic and cultural goals, and are therefore appropriate under different circumstances. PBL, I argue, is beneficial in later stages of learning trajectories, as it models real world activities, bringing the school and real-world contexts closer together. In so doing, however, the culture created remains a school culture, albeit one that has more personal relevance to the students. The class activities are coherent regardless of whether the students participate in or are expected to participate in an outside culture in the future. The novel authenticity paradigm that I will introduce (term ed constituent authenticity), and is particularly appropriate for the earliest stages of a learning domain. To introduce a model of authenticity derived from literature on professional education, which I argue complements comparative authenticity in early stages of learning. Using a 1st grade Chumash (Bible) class in an ultra-Orthodox Jewish elementary school, I will argue that A. Chumash learning is a prototypical example of signature pedagogy, and B. while its practices do not resemble real world practices, they are an authentic component of real world practices, and are particularly well suited for the acquisition of basic knowledge and skill acquisition early in the learning trajectory.

Rather than conform to uniquely classroom- or school-based structures, the PBL curriculum replicates the activity structures of the real world. This model of comparative authenticity is not applicable in all contexts, however. In the remainder of the paper I’d like to introduce a model of authenticity derived from literature on professional education, which I argue complements comparative authenticity in early stages of learning.

Lee Shulman has used the term signature pedagogy to describe key similarities in professional instruction across a wide range of fields (Shulman, 2005b). Certain instructional formats, such as the Socratic dialogue in law school or new doctors’ medical rounds, are clearly and unambiguously identified with particular fields. Though this distinctiveness is what makes them signature, these pedagogic approaches nevertheless all share certain characteristic features (Shulman, 2008); they are pervasive and uniform in their fields, involve fixed routines and rituals, are visible and interactive, and each inculcates particular habits in students. Such habits differ between professions: legal training develops habits of mind (thinking like a lawyer), while medical training develops habits of practice (acting like a doctor), while clergy training creates habits of the heart. Shulman argues that signature pedagogies are found in professional schools precisely because professional schools require more than just understanding; they demand education for practice (Shulman, 2005a). In such contexts, the pedagogy must include mechanisms for socialization into a profession’s culture and epistemology (Shulman, 2005b, p. 5).

Elementary Chumash Study

Shulman’s key insight is that the development of norms and dispositions in professional education through pervasive and uniform interactive routines is essential for socialization into the culture of a community of practice. I’d like to suggest that signature pedagogies may also be found at the K-12 level, constitute a type of authenticity (constituent), and are particularly appropriate for the earliest stages of a learning domain. To illustrate, I will describe introductory Chumash instruction in ultra-Orthodox elementary schools. Boys in this
community are expected to engage in religious study throughout the entirety of their lives, giving school religious material such as chumash a clearly articulated context of use that is central to the entire endeavor of boys’ ultra-Orthodox education (much like the clearly expected use of professional education). As with signature pedagogy, chumash pedagogy is pervasive (some variant is present in nearly all ultra-Orthodox chumash classrooms); uniformly executed, with fixed routines and rituals; public and interactive; and inculcates habits of heart, practice, and mind (or, dispositions) that are central to participation in ultra-Orthodox life.

Unlike PBL, signature pedagogies do not directly resemble real-world activities, because the structure of signature pedagogy does not reflect authentic practices in the real world, but e.pands the culture of the real world to include the practices of school. In most domains, professional training bears little resemblance to the real-world activity in the profession itself (and law school pedagogy has been criticized on these grounds (e.g. Hyland & Kilcommins, 2009)). Similarly, the differences between chumash learning in the elementary school classroom and adult learning practices are quite substantial, most notably visible in the absence, in adult practices, of choral reading, which is central to 1st grade practice. Chumash study in 1st grade is profoundly enculturating, and genuinely authentic, but does not resemble practices outside of school. To demonstrate, I will describe one short example from a corpus of videos of chumash class drawn from the case study, in which the students review a verse from the chumash story of Noah and the flood that deals with how the wickedness of man prompted God’s decision to destroy the world. The verse in question (one of four reviewed in this class) describes the wickedness of the sons of the elohim, who took wives inappropriately (Gen. 6:2).

Throughout the entirety of class, the rebbe (religious instructor) circulates throughout the room, holding flashcards with two or three Hebrew words from the text, color-coded to indicate the different parts of the Hebrew word that translate into separate English words, or to indicate the word’s root, tense, or gender. For this specific verse, the rebbe begins by asking an individual student to identify the root of the Hebrew word גו (va-yir-א, from the three Hebrew letters reish, aleph, and hei), by pointing to a previous verse that contains a word with the same root. He then points out the function of three additional Hebrew letters contained in the word va-yir-א: the prefix vov, which means and, and the yad-prefix vov-suffix combination that renders the verb third person plural (they). The students translate the root together, and then, at the rebbe’s instruction, the class engages in choral reading. They chant the verse together in Hebrew, interspersing every few words with the English translation they have previously learned. The rebbe then points out (slowly, and with much repetition and questioning of students) that another Hebrew word from the verse, גו (vov-suffix denoting the third person plural. The rebbe continues in this vein, first asking one and then the other half of the class to chant the verse together again, and concludes with a summary of the content of the chumash story to that point. He explains that God was unhappy with the wickedness of man (specifying kidnapping wives, killing husbands, and worshipping idols) and that God gave the people 120 years to repent before he would destroy the world.

In reviewing this verse, the rebbe focused on the grammar and meaning of two particular words in the verse, asked the class to chant the verse and its translation several times, and briefly discussed its meaning in the context of the larger biblical story. This complex structure allows the students to gain basic fluency in reading and translating the text through frequent practice and repetition, and importantly, reflects two distinct enculturating elements: students’ development of dispositions regarding the nature of the chumash text and student identity development in relation to that text. They acquire the ultra-Orthodox epistemology of chumash study in that the text is assumed to be essentially literal, and textual interpretations (such as elohim translating as ruler, rather than God) are clearly marked as fixed by tradition, rather than open to careful new readings. The structure of chumash learning also leads students to understand the nature of the practice in their lives; for example, vocabulary, grammar, and reading practice are integrated with the study of the text itself, conveying the sense that the practice of chumash study (which they will all engage in as adults) is itself valuable, not any one component skill. They also learn that the text has active moral and religious implications, such as the importance of repentance or punishment and reward: basic principles that shape the ultra-Orthodox worldview.

The norms, dispositions, beliefs, and assumptions that students develop about the text and its role in their lives, about religion and the nature of reality demonstrate that 1st grade chumash activities must be understood as part of the same larger practice of chumash study that adults engage in; the separate context of study (school) is simply the first stage of the practice. The authentic practice of chumash study must be understood quite broadly; it extends to childhood school learning as well as every other authentic context in which chumash study is engaged, yet the school activity does not necessarily resemble the adult activities. In the next section I argue that this is appropriate to the aims of early foundational instruction in any domain.

The implicit assumption that authentic activity is activity that models the real world has rarely been made explicit, and the benefits and limitations of this paradigm have consequently not been well articulated. In particular, authenticity has not been explored in detail at the earliest stages of learning domains, which may stem from the difficulty of modeling authentic practices that already take the skills being developed in the classroom...
for granted; authentic modeling cannot realistically be used to acquire these basic skills themselves. Yet a larger encculturating context providing a clearly defined, specific cultural context of use (which informs essential conceptions of what activities mean to students) is desirable even in early learning; without such a context, the practice and repetition necessary to develop fluency in basic skills can seem boring and meaningless to students.

In this paradigm of authenticity classroom activities act as a distinct first stage of an authentic communal practice that spans school, culture, and community. Chumash learning socializes students into an actual community of learners that extends beyond the classroom itself, in which communal understandings of the role the material will play in students’ lives impacts the particular narrative that students develop about what they are doing when they study chumash. This type of authenticity is a particularly good fit for foundational learning in any domain, as the activity structures need not closely resemble authentic practices (which is in any event impossible at such an early stage of learning), but might be better reconceptualized as the first stage of encculturation into a larger cultural context of knowledge use. By fostering cultural dispositions and communal narratives in the context of foundational skill acquisition, school activity structures are themselves considered an essential part of the communal practice. In contrast, the type of real-world modeling found in PBL might be more profitably employed much later in the learning trajectory.

As with professional education, the context of religious education is highly specific, and reflects an unusually well-structured set of cultural assumptions that drive the learning and socialization process. To apply this paradigm more broadly we need to first articulate a clear vision of what mature authentic practices looks like. In which authentic contexts will these skills used: What mechanisms will tie classroom activities to future contexts in ways that facilitate basic skill acquisition: We need to develop theoretical accounts of how practice, repetition, and skill development can be given an authentic encculturating context that socializes students into future mature learning practices. What are the essential dispositions, beliefs, or worldviews that motivate this practice in the real world, and how can we incorporate them into current instructional structures: Drawing on the common features of signature pedagogy identified by Shulman, I would begin by suggesting that whatever the mechanism, it should, as Shulman suggests, first entail some element of public performance, be uniform across contexts, and should involve fixed routines and rituals. Second, it should include a clear account of the epistemology of the learning practice and a clear articulation to the students of the expected contexts of use. In reading, for example, the nature of the texts used to learn how to read can implicitly shape student conceptions of both the nature of reading itself, and the role that reading will play in their own future lives. This will create a coherent group culture around the practice that is explicitly connected with future engagement in the practice, shaping student understandings of the nature of the material and its role in their lives.

References
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