

Teaching Practice: A Cross-Professional Perspective

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Background/Context: *This study investigates how people are prepared for professional practice in the clergy, teaching, and clinical psychology. The work is located within research on professional education, and research on the teaching and learning of practice.*

Purpose/Objective/Research Question/Focus of Study: *The purpose of the study is to develop a framework to describe and analyze the teaching of practice in professional education programs, specifically preparation for relational practices.*

Setting: *The research took place in eight professional education programs located in seminaries, schools of professional psychology, and universities across the country.*

Population/Participants/Subjects: *Our research participants include faculty members, students, and administrators at each of these eight programs.*

Research Design: *This research is a comparative case study of professional education across three different professions—the clergy, clinical psychology, and teaching. Our data include qualitative case studies of eight preparation programs: two teacher education programs, three seminaries, and three clinical psychology programs.*

Data Collection and Analysis: *For each institution, we conducted site visits that included interviews with administrators, faculty, and staff; observations of multiple classes and field-work; and focus groups with students who were either at the midpoint or at the end of their programs.*

Conclusions/Recommendations: *We have identified three key concepts for understanding the pedagogies of practice in professional education: representations, decomposition, and approximations of practice. Representations of practice comprise the different ways that practice is represented in professional education and what these various representations make*

visible to novices. Decomposition of practice involves breaking down practice into its constituent parts for the purposes of teaching and learning. Approximations of practice refer to opportunities to engage in practices that are more or less proximal to the practices of a profession. In this article, we define and provide examples of the representation, decomposition, and approximation of practice from our study of professional education in the clergy, clinical psychology, and teaching. We conclude that, in the program we studied, prospective teachers have fewer opportunities to engage in approximations that focus on contingent, interactive practice than do novices in the other two professions we studied.

INTRODUCTION

“And now I come to a red-hot question: How about those terrible methods courses, which waste a student’s time?” (Conant, 1963, p. 137)

Conant’s provocative question raises a number of compelling issues for those of us who teach methods classes or study the teaching of practice. His wholesale condemnation of methods classes reflects the relatively low status of courses devoted to clinical practice in the academy, which creates an uncomfortable paradox for professional schools. All professional schools, from medical schools to departments of engineering, from seminaries to schools of education, are charged with preparing their students for clinical practice. Yet practice has always had an uneasy relationship, at best, with higher education. Even as higher education has embraced professional education as part of its mission, or in some cases, built universities on the foundations of teachers colleges, universities have been ambivalent about the status and content of the more practical coursework that is part and parcel of most professional programs.

Although all courses within professional preparation programs are implicitly tied to practice, there generally exists a set of courses that explicitly focus on the development of practice. Such courses are known by various names—homiletics or practical theology in the preparation of the clergy; trial advocacy or legal writing in the preparation of lawyers; clinical interviewing in the preparation of clinical psychologists; and methods of teaching in the education of teachers. Such courses are often taught by a shadow faculty composed primarily of adjuncts and clinical instructors who do not hold tenure-line positions (Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, Tollefson, & Mahlios, 2006). We know surprisingly little about the preparation for professional practice that occurs in the university context, particularly with respect to these more practice-oriented classes (Clift & Brady, 2005; Mudge & Poling, 1987).¹ What little we do know has

more to do with titles of these courses, or their place in the curriculum, than with how these courses are taught. What skills and content such courses include and exclude, what they model about the nature of practice, and how faculty teach the clinical skills of a profession would seem to have consequences for what prospective professionals learn about professional practice. We set out to explore how practice is taught in the context of university-based professional education, building in part on a related set of studies on preparation for the professions (Foster, Dahill, Golemon, & Tolentino, 2006; Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond, & Shulman, 2007). In this article, we provide a framework for thinking about the teaching of practice in the context of preparing novices to engage in what we have termed “relational practice.”

Cross-professional comparisons can be risky, in part because the nature of the work and status of the occupation can differ so dramatically (Abbott, 1988). We have chosen to focus our attention on a set of professions—clergy, teaching, and clinical psychology—that share a common goal of what Cohen (2005) termed *human improvement*. In all three professions, practice depends heavily on the quality of human relationships between practitioners and their clients. In a very real sense, therapists cannot succeed without the assistance of their clients, just as teachers must ensure the cooperation of their students if they are to teach (cf. Cohen). In this sense, novices across these three professions face similar challenges in engaging and motivating their clients, even as the circumstances of the work may make this task easier or more difficult. For example, teachers and clergy must build relationships both with individuals and with groups, whereas many therapists choose to work with clients in a one-on-one setting. In addition, clinical psychologists and clergy generally work with clients and congregants who have sought their help (cf. Norcross, 2002), whereas teachers work with students who are compelled to attend their classes (Cohen).² In contrast to therapists, teachers have less direct control over the terms of the relationship. Unlike therapists in private practice, who can elect not to work with particular clients, teachers cannot refuse to teach students who refuse to do homework. Clergy generally deal most directly with congregants who have chosen to participate, although they face increasing pressure to engage in various kinds of outreach to grow their congregations. Across these three professions, teachers face particular challenges, then, in developing educative relationships with students; they must accept all students who enter the classroom and figure out how to connect with them.³

Learning how to build and maintain productive professional relationships with the people in one’s care is no simple matter, yet many assume that this is a natural rather than learned capacity. Someone can be

described as “good with people” or a “people person,” but being “good with people” in purely social interactions is not the same as cultivating relationships in a professional role. The apparently natural aspects of the professional work—evident in the frequent observation that teachers are born, not made—creates additional challenges for professional education.

All three of these professions also involve complex practice under conditions of uncertainty (cf. Spiro, Collins, Thota, & Feltovich, 2003); the work is seldom routine because human beings are notoriously unpredictable, requiring that novices exercise professional judgment in responding to their clients. Given the familiarity of the work, however, novices may underestimate its complexity; teaching, for example, is highly complex work that, because of its familiarity, is presumed to be easy. So how do we enable novices in these professions to see the myriad elements that make up this complex work? And how can we best use the safety and structure of a university setting to help students prepare for conditions of uncertainty? All these features—the relational, familiar, and unpredictable nature of practice in these fields—pose challenges for professional education.

In this article, we propose a framework for thinking about the teaching of practice in the context of the university. From our cross-professional study, we have identified three key concepts for understanding the pedagogies of practice in professional education: representations, decomposition, and approximations of practice. Representations of practice comprise the different ways that practice is represented in professional education and what these various representations make visible to novices. Decomposition of practice involves breaking down practice into its constituent parts for the purposes of teaching and learning. Approximations of practice refer to opportunities for novices to engage in practices that are more or less proximal to the practices of a profession. In this article, we define and provide examples of the representation, decomposition, and approximation of practice from our study of professional education in the clergy, clinical psychology, and teaching.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Practice often is defined by what we do rather than who we are or how we think. A view of practice that focuses on techniques or skills may underlie the uneasy relationship of clinical preparation and higher education. However, we opt for a broad, expanded definition of practice

characteristic of sociocultural definitions (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996), one that incorporates both intellectual and technical activities and that encompasses both the individual practitioner and the professional community.

Practice in complex domains involves the orchestration of understanding, skill, relationship, and identity to accomplish particular activities with others in specific environments. Practice can be understood in terms of its goals, its activities, and its historical tradition (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996). When people learn a practice, they enter a historically defined set of activities that have been developed over time by others (Engeström, Mietinen, & Punamäki, 1999). As members of a profession, practitioners have a responsibility to their colleagues and their clients (Shulman, 1998), reinforcing the collective meanings of professional practice. Any concept of practice must also involve the identity of the practitioner (cf. Dykstra, 1991; P. G. Miller & Goodnow, 1995). Part of professional preparation involves the construction of a professional identity; in the particular professions that we have chosen to study, practitioners use aspects of their own personalities, as well as their professional identities, as an intimate part of their practice. To paraphrase Yeats, in these practices, one cannot easily distinguish the practitioner from the practice.

PEDAGOGY AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Preparing people for engagement in complex practice is no easy task. In his article describing a course in orthopedics for physical therapy students, Mike Rose (1999) described a wide array of instructional strategies used by the instructors, and the relationship between the practice for which people are being prepared, and the pedagogy of the class:

Students are learning the very procedures and routines they will use as physical therapists, and they do so in situations that, in some ways, offer a one-to-one correspondence to actual practice. Yet it is worth considering just how much instructional intervention is involved . . . tasks are frequently not presented in authentic wholeness but broken down and analyzed. . . . All this, in some ways, makes the activities the students engage in different from³/₄though still related to³/₄those found in authentic practice. There is a great deal of strategic instructional alteration and mediation of tasks in Ortho II; if this were not the case, the practices of physical therapy would be overwhelming and, to a degree, be kept opaque, even secret. (p. 154)

As Rose suggested, some of the activities used to prepare prospective professionals resemble the actual practices of the profession. Law students write legal briefs and argue in moot court, student teachers write lesson plans and design curriculum units, students in theological schools write and deliver sermons, and prospective therapists engage in role-plays of therapeutic encounters and see clients in supervised settings. Other activities, however, may seem more artificial, removed from the authentic practices and settings of the profession. We are interested in the kinds of “instructional interventions” that professional educators use to help novices prepare for relational practice, and how these amplify or make more transparent relevant features of practice.

Preparation for professional practice involves addressing some common challenges. All professional education must find ways of helping students build professional knowledge in a relatively brief amount of time, develop habits of mind and character that are appropriate to professional practice, learn clinical skills that they will need in their future practice, develop new ways of thinking that are characteristic of professional reasoning, and begin to construct a professional identity (Shulman, 1998).

In university-based professional education, the setting of higher education is generally far removed from the settings in which graduates of professional schools will work—leading to the all too familiar divide between theory and practice. Although most professional education includes direct clinical experience in field settings, practice is taught at the university as well. Another challenge for professional education is stipulating what novices might learn in college or university settings that they could not better learn in the actual contexts of practice—in clinics, congregations, and classrooms. Another challenge involves helping prospective professionals to go beyond the limited number of cases that they will confront in professional education and to build broader case knowledge. Finally, professional education must help novices attend to the complexities of interaction, whether in a classroom, congregation, or therapist’s office, and to respond in the moment under conditions of uncertainty.

There is relatively little theory that informs the actual pedagogy of professional education, because this has not been the focus of many classic studies of professional education and socialization (e.g., Becker, Geer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961; Simpson, 1979). Jordan’s (1989) work on the training of midwives highlights the relationship between didactic instruction and learning “to talk” like a professional, while also illustrating the gap between the professional language used to talk about practice and the ability to engage in the actual practice itself. Rose’s (1999) research on the course for physical therapists counters notions of a simple apprenticeship model in the teaching of practice by exploring the amount of

instructional artifice required to teach novices the skills of the profession. Both of these studies look within a particular profession to see how professionals are taught. Donald Schön's (1987) work comes closest to providing a way of thinking about preparing professionals; his work also has the advantage of taking a cross-professional perspective. By using a comparative approach, we hope to investigate aspects of teaching practice that are deeply embedded within particular professions, while also looking for aspects of pedagogy that cut across professional preparation. Such an approach will enable us to explore more thoroughly a theoretical understanding of the pedagogy involved in teaching practice.

Both sociocultural theory and literature on learning from experience (e.g., Dewey, 1904/1965; Ericsson, 2002; Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez, & Angelillo, 2003) guide our inquiry into the teaching of practice. Sociocultural theory directs our attention to the settings in which novices learn, and the role of peers and instructors in guiding learning. Most forms of professional preparation involve opportunities for novices to use their knowledge in a variety of practice settings; the nature of these settings will help shape what they are able to learn. In such settings, novices can experiment with their new knowledge and skills. Yet, as Dewey reminds us, learning from experience is neither easy nor automatic. Professional educators face the complex challenge of using these diverse sets of experiences in practice as a tool to teach the principles and techniques that they intend; however, the unpredictability and messiness inherent in practice can work against their intentions. Part of our interest in this study is to examine how professional educators use various representations of practice to help novices learn to see and understand professional work in new ways.

At the same time, we are interested in the kinds of experiences that professional educators design for novices because opportunities for learning are embedded in the activities in which novices engage. Ericsson's (2002) work on the development of expertise illustrates the importance of looking at the nature of practice opportunities; he suggests that opportunities to engage in what he terms "deliberate practice" differentiate experts from accomplished amateurs. Finally, we are interested in the role of experienced others in helping to guide novice learning. For example, Schön (1987) suggested that learning in professional education requires not only opportunities to learn by doing but also careful coaching by others who have already been initiated into the profession:

Perhaps, then, learning all forms of professional artistry depends, at least in part, on conditions similar to those created

in the studios and conservatories: freedom to learn by doing in a setting relatively low in risk, with access to coaches who initiate students into the “traditions of the calling” and help them, by “the right kind of telling,” to see on their own behalf and in their own way what they need most to see. (p. 17)

Schön’s analysis emphasizes the importance of low-risk settings for novice learning. By focusing on the level of risk, freedom to learn, and kinds of coaching, Schön highlights the nature of practice opportunities as critical to professional learning.

DESIGN AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

This research is a comparative case study of professional education across three different professions—the clergy, clinical psychology, and teaching. Our data include qualitative case studies of eight preparation programs: two teacher education programs, three seminaries, and three clinical psychology programs. For each institution, we conducted site visits that included interviews with administrators, faculty, and staff; observations of multiple classes and fieldwork; and focus groups with students who were either at the midpoint or at the end of their programs. These methods are for studying the teaching of practice in each professional preparation program; we did not examine student learning beyond interviewing students about what they had learned during their courses and field experiences.

Because the study focuses on the teaching of practice, observations of actual classes form a significant component of our data. We oversampled for courses that are most closely tied to clinical practice (e.g., methods courses, courses in clinical interviewing, courses in homiletics and pastoral counseling), although we also included more foundational courses in our sample on the assumption that in professional education, all courses must address practice in some way. At each program, we observed at least five different courses—often observing multiple class sessions for each course—and interviewed each instructor both before and after each class that we observed. Interview questions focused on the instructional goals of the course and on the instructor’s teaching. We audio-recorded interviews and, when possible, we videotaped classes to provide a richer record for analysis; we also collected artifacts of instruction, including assignments, class handouts, and, in some cases, student work. In addition, we followed students into their field experiences, observing supervision and the practices of student teaching or internship. See Table 1 for

a description of the interview and observation data collected for each of the programs we studied.

Table 1. Interview and Observation Data Across Professional Education Programs

Clergy	Clinical Psychology	Teacher Education
<p>Faith Protestant Seminary Courses observed: 5 Total class sessions observed: 5 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th-year students ($n = 3$) Individual persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/instructors: 8 • Student: 1 </p> <p>Grace Protestant Seminary Courses observed: 6 Total class sessions observed: 15 Fieldwork/supervision observations: 2 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd- & 4th-year students following supervision ($n = 3$) Individual persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/instructors: 12 • Fieldwork supervisors: 1 </p> <p>Kahal Rabbinical School Courses observed: 12 Total class sessions observed: 17 Fieldwork/supervision observations: 6 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd-year students ($n = 5$) • 4th-year students ($n = 5$) • Students following course observation ($n = 2$) Individual persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/instructors: 14 • Fieldwork supervisors: 3 • Fieldwork interns: 3 • Student following course observation: 1 </p>	<p>Urban Institute of Psychology Courses observed: 9 Total class sessions observed: 12 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd-year students ($n = 3$) • 4th-year students following course observation ($n = 3$) • Students following course observation ($n = 5$) • Students following course observation ($n = 3$) • Students following course observation ($n = 4$) • Students following course observation ($n = 2$) Individual persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/instructors (17) • Students following course observation: 2 </p> <p>Consortium of Professional Psychology Courses observed: 7 Total class sessions observed: 14 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st-year students ($n = 7$) • 1st-year students ($n = 7$) • 2nd-year students ($n = 6$) Individual persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/instructors: 9 • Students following course observation: 4 </p> <p>School of Professional Psychology Courses observed: 2 Total class sessions observed: 2 Fieldwork/supervision observations: 3 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students following fieldwork/supervision ($n = 3$) Persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor/supervisor: 1 </p>	<p>Oceanside Teacher Preparation Program Courses observed: 15 Total class sessions observed: 17 Fieldwork/supervision observations: 4 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directors ($n = 3$) • Fieldwork supervisors ($n = 8$) • Fieldwork supervisors ($n = 8$) • Faculty advisers ($n = 7$) • Faculty advisers ($n = 7$) • Students, elementary ($n = 5$) • Students, secondary ($n = 5$) • Students, secondary ($n = 5$) Individual persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/instructors: 14 </p> <p>Riverdale Teacher Preparation Program Courses observed: 12 Total class sessions observed: 13 Fieldwork/supervision observations: 1 Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, elementary ($n = 6$) • Students, elementary ($n = 7$) • Students, elementary ($n = 5$) • Students, secondary ($n = 3$) • Students, secondary ($n = 5$) Individual persons interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/instructors: 12 </p>

On our first visits to sites, we identified classes for observation based on administrator and faculty recommendations and on our own review of syllabi to determine which courses seemed most directly tied to practice. During this first visit, we also led focus groups of 3–12 students; focus group questions prompted students to identify key classes, instructors, and experiences that had shaped their development as practitioners. For example, we asked novices, “What courses and experiences have had the most powerful influence on your development as a teacher/clergy member/psychologist?” We used these interviews to identify additional classes to observe and faculty to interview, and to develop an understanding of how novices themselves viewed their experiences.⁴

Data analysis focused on identifying common features of the teaching of practice, gathering examples of particular features across professions, and then examining these features to understand their purpose in professional education. Early on, we began to identify multiple examples of what we began to call the decomposition and approximation of practice. We began to code systematically for further examples of these phenomena across the full corpus of data and used these examples to hone our definitions.⁵

In the course of analysis, we began to realize that the principles of decomposition and approximation underlay a number of the common pedagogies for teaching practice that we observed, such as the use of role-plays, cases, and video. In this article, we use a subset of our data across the three professions to define and develop these principles. In other analyses, we investigate questions related to the content of methods courses, such as how novices are taught to respond to resistance across these professions (Grossman et al., 2007), how professional education helps novices cultivate professional empathy, and how programs provide opportunities for novices to begin to construct professional identities.

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING PRACTICE

REPRESENTATIONS OF PRACTICE: NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T

Professional education is replete with examples of the practice for which novices are being prepared. These examples include everything from direct observations of practitioners in the field, to professional videos explicating technique. A fuller, but still incomplete, list might include observations of professionals at work in clinics, classrooms, or congregations; written cases of practice, including the appellate cases used in law

schools or the cases of specific businesses used in business school; video recordings of various professional situations, both commercially produced videos of specific therapeutic interventions and classroom strategies, and raw footage of therapy sessions or lessons; and results of psychological assessments or examples of an assignment and accompanying student work. All these representations provide novices with opportunities to develop ways of seeing and understanding professional practice.

These representations of practice, however, can vary significantly, both in terms of comprehensiveness and authenticity. For example, in teacher education, students may encounter a range of representations of the work of teaching, from comprehensive records of a full year of instruction in a single teacher's classroom, including videos, student work, and lesson plans (e.g., Lampert & Ball, 1998), to brief narrative accounts of a constructed classroom dilemma meant to provoke problem-solving (e.g., Silverman, Welty, & Lyon, 1995). Examples of representations of practice in the preparation of clinical psychologists include videotapes of therapy sessions, case records of clients, assessment results from a battery of tests given to a client, and observation of live therapy from behind a one-way mirror. Students in a seminary have access to representations that include sermons and services conducted by experienced and novice clergy. Building on the work of Judith Warren Little (2003), we argue that the nature of these representations has consequences for what novices are able to see and learn about practice.

Little (2003) has begun to develop a framework for exploring how representations of practice in professional conversation afford opportunities for learning about practice. Drawing on Hutchins's (1996) work on the horizon of observation in learning to navigate, Little argued,

This horizon of observation structures how completely novices or newcomers are able to see, hear, and participate in the work in question: its central tasks, tools, and instruments, relevant categories and terms, and lines of communication. . . . These horizons vary in the degree to which they create broad or narrow opportunities for observing others, their interactions, and their tools. (p. 917)

For example, when teachers talk about their work, what aspects of practice are visible? Which are hidden from view? What consequences does this pose for what teachers are able to learn from each other? Little's work focuses on the representation of practice within professional communities, looking specifically at the ways in which teachers represent

practice to each other in the course of professional talk. We draw on her work in looking at how professional educators select and use representations of practice in their work with novices.

The nature of the representation determines to a large extent the visibility of certain facets of practice. In videos of practitioners at work, the interactive features of the practice may be visible, but the professional reasoning underlying the practitioners' actions may be invisible. Narratives of practice may include descriptions of the practitioner's thought processes in addition to descriptions of interactions with clients, yet novices may have difficulty envisioning the interactions being described. Our study is systematically investigating the kinds of representations used in professional education and what those representations afford for the learning of novices.

Consider, for example, two representations of the practice of clergy we observed in seminaries. In the first, as part of a class on presiding at life cycle events, an experienced clergy member told his class about the difficulty of presiding at the funeral of a congregant who was also a friend. His eyes welled up as he described the responsibility of clergy members to put aside their own grief to create "a sacred moment" for the mourners. He then described how he invited colleagues to serve as backups in case he was overwhelmed in the moment. This story, told by the experienced practitioner, served as an embodied representation of practice. The practitioner himself communicated something about the manner and, in this case, the emotional response of a clergy member called on to perform a difficult task. As students later told us, they saw in this instructor the kind of clergy they aspire to become—caring, engaged, and unafraid to become emotionally involved. At the same time, many aspects of practice are not visible in this representation, including how he actually conducted the funeral, how he drew on his colleagues, if at all, and what might be involved in creating a sacred moment for mourners.

In a second representation of the practice of presiding over funerals, Rabbi Silver,⁶ also a practicing member of the clergy, wanted to teach students to write eulogies. To give students practice in writing eulogies (a full description of this class follows), he invited a friend who had lost his father a few years before to come to class. The instructor then engaged his friend in what turned out to be part conversation and part interview to learn more about the deceased and his family. In this setting, students had access to the kinds of questions a clergy member might ask a grieving congregant, the kind of information he elicits about the person he will later eulogize, and his manner in interacting with a grieving son. However, the situation is far from authentic; the friend's father had died several years before, not in recent days, and he had related the informa-

tion previously. Rabbi Silver knew the story well, so students were not able to observe how he might conduct such an interview if the story were unknown to him.

In these representations, the professional education students observed and listened to their instructors in a classroom setting as the instructors described or enacted their professional roles. In another form of representation, instructors model professional practice while the novices act in the roles of clients, congregants, or students. For example, in an elementary education reading and writing methods class that we observed, Professor Heather Davis modeled a metacognitive activity that the novice teachers might use to help elementary school students articulate their reading strategies: She asked students to use modeling clay to create figures and then describe the thought process that accompanied the creation. Professor Davis explained the purpose of the activity:

It's useful for the teacher to have the student articulate how he/she is reading, so that we can understand the learning process. One way to do that is to start with something they *can* do or like to do . . . to talk about how to articulate with something like that and then transfer over.

After working with the clay, the prospective teachers then practiced this transfer process themselves by reading a difficult text and trying to articulate their reading strategies aloud. Professor Davis, an experienced elementary school teacher, also modeled her practice of reading stories aloud to a class. As she read a story to her graduate students, she moved in and out of the elementary teacher role, sometimes asking the novice teachers' questions about the story itself, as if they were children, and sometimes breaking out of role to explain when and why she might ask particular questions.

In these representations, the novice teachers had access to an experienced teacher's pedagogical actions and thought processes; Professor Davis both modeled instructional activities and explained their purpose. However, in this kind of representation, the experienced teacher is teaching other adults rather than children. The students do not have a chance to see how these activities might play out with a classroom of lively third graders.

Other representations of actual practice offered students the opportunity to observe their professors engaged in authentic settings. In another teacher education program, students watched a video of their instructor interacting with a child in the context of a math lesson; students observed the instructor elicit the child's thinking and pose additional

math problems, and they watched the child's responses. Students were able both to ask the instructor about her decisions and to rewatch the video to clarify their understandings of the child's thinking. In one clinical psychology program we visited, students had opportunities to watch from behind one-way mirrors as experienced clinicians conducted actual therapy sessions. Here the setting and practice are authentic, and students have access to both the therapist's actions and the client's responses, affording a broader horizon of observation, to use Hutchins's (1996) term. In instances in which the therapist then debriefs the session with students immediately afterward, students also have access to her reports of her thought processes.

Most professional education programs provide a wide variety of representations of practice through both coursework and clinical experiences. The key questions to ask about such representations include: What facets of practice are visible through these various representations? Which facets remain hidden from view? How do these representations open up opportunities to investigate practice? How do novices use these various representations of practice and practitioners to construct their own professional identities? What do they learn from these representations that may go well beyond the instructor's purpose in using them? For example, in a medical course (Igra, 2004), an instructor brought in a patient each week to illustrate the particular disease that students had studied. In talking with the patient, the physician hoped to illustrate the key features of the disease. When interviewed afterward, however, the students reported that they saw this as an example of how to conduct an interview with a patient. The instructor was horrified because he never intended this to be a model of an intake interview. The story reminds us that representations always carry more than their intended purpose. Professional educators need to be mindful of the range of meanings that representations convey and provide opportunities to debrief these representations with students.

DECOMPOSITIONS OF PRACTICE: THE NAMING OF PARTS

Responding to the typical fragmentation of professional education, many educators are calling for pedagogies of integration (Foster et al., 2006). Such calls for integration in professional education, however, presume that novices have already mastered the constituent parts of a practice and are ready to bring them together into a whole. As mentioned, all three of the professions we studied are examples of complex practice enacted under conditions of uncertainty. For students to learn to engage in complex practice, they may need opportunities first to distinguish, and then

to practice, the different components that go into professional work prior to integrating them fully.

Part of the work of professional education lies in identifying components that are integral to practice and that can be improved through targeted instruction. We refer to this work as the “decomposition” of practice—breaking down complex practice into its constituent parts for the purposes of teaching and learning. Decomposing practice enables students both to “see” and enact elements of practice more effectively. Some examples of the decomposition of practice might include focusing on the elements of lesson planning in teacher education, teaching aspects of speech and delivery for preachers, or targeting the development of the therapeutic alliance during the preparation of therapists. All these represent only a small piece of work in these fields, but they are seen as critical to the overall practice of professionals.

One of the well-documented problems of learning from experience is knowing what to look for, or how to interpret what is observed (Dewey, 1904/1965; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). Novices may not know what to attend to in looking at interactions between therapists and clients, the unfolding of a math lesson, or an interview between a rabbi and a grieving congregant. In fact, research on expertise suggests that part of what differentiates novices from experts is their ability to see and remember more details of a chessboard or classroom (cf. Chi, 2006). We contend that the use of various forms of decomposition in professional education helps develop a sense of the anatomy of the practice to be learned. To use a different analogy, decomposition makes visible the grammar of practice to novices and may require a specific technical language for describing the implicit grammar and for naming the parts.

In making facets of practice visible to novices, decompositions of practice in professional education can help develop a kind of professional vision (Goodwin, 1994) or “disciplined perception” of practice (Stevens & Hall, 1998). Goodwin identified the practices of coding and highlighting as central to the development of professional vision, which he defined as “socially organized ways of seeing and understanding events that are answerable to the distinctive interests of a particular social group” (p. 606). Building on Goodwin’s work, we argue that to help novices develop such professional vision or disciplined perception of a complex practice, instructors must first possess a set of categories for describing practice and then, during instruction, focus students’ attention on these components of practice. By decomposing complex practices, professional educators can help students learn first to attend to, and then to enact, the essential elements of a practice. Over time, many components of complex practice become routinized (Ericsson, 2002),

but in the initial stages, all components may require deliberate attention.

Although the metaphor of decomposition may invoke an approach that is rooted in the acquisition of disembodied skills, we intend something closer to the concept of metonymy or synecdoche in poetry, in which the parts maintain an integrity of their own even as they invoke elements of the whole. Learning to read liturgical texts aloud, for example, is both a professional activity in its own right and a single component of the practice of the clergy. Learning to manage transitions in a classroom is another discrete component of teaching practice, one that becomes almost invisible over time.

Reading for Preaching

A class we observed called Reading for Preaching represents one clear example of the decomposition of practice. Even the title of the course represents a decomposition of practice, because reading text aloud is only one part of preaching, and preaching is only one part of the practice of clergy. The course represents an opportunity to focus attention on one particular aspect of the practice of the clergy—preaching—and to parse the practice of preaching into speaking/reading as distinct from composing a sermon. The entire emphasis of the course is on reading scripture with expression as a way to involve listeners in the experience of the text and to provide an oral interpretation. Reading religious texts aloud is indeed part of what rabbis and ministers do, and it is this component of practice on which the class focuses.

In this class, speech is further decomposed into particular topics—voice and diction, phrasing and emphasis, and nonverbal communication—that are supported by a set of more general principles regarding the reading of scripture. These principles are introduced in seminar-style lessons at the beginning of the semester. The remaining classes follow a set format, in which individual students practice reading aloud in front of the class and receive feedback from the professor. Following is a brief description of an excerpt from one class.

On this particular day, the class read aloud Psalm 27. The professor, Laura Shepard, chose the psalm in part because it requires students to work with their emotions and to respond to the complex feelings in the psalm. She categorizes most texts as appealing to “the gut, the heart, or the head” and has students read aloud examples of all three kinds of texts during the course. However, she believes that students have the most difficulty reading texts that appeal to the heart, which include the psalms.

On the day we observed, Professor Shepard had students come to the lectern at the front of the chapel and read aloud. As they read, she

frequently stopped them to comment on some aspect of the reading and then asked them to read a line or passage again, incorporating her feedback. What follows is a brief excerpt of this interchange, taken from our field notes.

An Asian male student goes up to the lectern and begins to read the psalm aloud. After he has read, Professor Shepard comments on the lyric quality of his voice. She then asks him to read it one more time “slowing down a bit more on the doubt.” The student reads the psalm again, and the professor tells him that she wants him to notice one thing about the text, and she reads aloud a section of the psalm beginning with “evil-doers.” She tells the group, “This is the principle of threes, I want you to engrave upon your heart. If the poet gives you three parallel lines, it means build, build, build!” Professor Shepard then asks the student to read it one more time, trying to build in intensity as he reads these three lines. He reads, and when he finishes, Shepard comments that he did exactly what she told him to do.

Professor Shepard then calls upon another male student, Abel, who goes up to read the psalm. This time, she lets him continue to read much further into the text than she had had the previous student read. When she stops him, she tells him, “I heard the building very nicely.” She then tells him that there is another triplet, another set of three that occurs later in the psalm and reads it aloud (beginning “he will hide me, conceal me, set me high”). The student tries to come down from the lectern, but Professor Shepard stops him and tells him to go back. She then engages the class in finding the sets of threes in the psalm, telling them that these passages represent “stronger, tidier parallels. The three clauses are almost identical in length and structure.” Shepard then asks the male student to read through the second set of threes “with the same kind of increased intensity.” She asks the class, “Everyone get the three thing? Let’s hear Abel do it again.” The student reads the psalm again. This time, Professor Shepard comments on his posture, asking him to read it once again, but this time “hold your knees very still so there is no movement of swaying.” She tells him, “movement detracts.” She also tells him, “You’re trying indirect eye contact. Great choice! Choose one spot and look at it.” The student then begins again, but stops himself and starts again. When he finishes, Professor Shepard comments, “Abel has very good concentration. If movement doesn’t distract us, we’ll be pulled into his concentration.” She then asks the next student to read.

Professor Shepard clearly has a well-disciplined understanding of

speech; her comments are rooted in this disciplinary understanding of the categories and qualities of speech. She organizes her feedback around a set of disciplinary principles that she has in mind for effective speech, which she is teaching through this class: the principle of threes, the internalization of text, or matching the outer expression to the inner experience, the importance of nonverbal communication, including eye gaze and movement, and so on. When Professor Shepard gives feedback to students, it is generally organized around one of the core topics for the class, such as facial expression, emphasis, body movement, or verbal expression. Her feedback illustrates her own “professional vision” of effective preaching.

The decomposition of practice in this public forum also makes facets of practice visible to novices and helps them develop their own professional vision of practice. Through her feedback, Professor Shepard teaches students what to pay attention to in a reading of scripture. In fact, she comments that when students first enter her class, they generally lack a way of talking about the practice of reading aloud, which hinders their ability to give feedback to peers. She commented,

The class you saw today is actually a good example of a class where they started not having much language As the class went along, they picked up more and more language, they got more comfortable. That might be a good thing to say about today, they began to cross the line into feeling like they know how to label things.

The students were learning how to name qualities of the practice of reading aloud, including *emphasis*, *intensity*, *peak*, and *fulcrum*—all terms that we saw them begin to use to give each other feedback during this class. They were beginning to develop a more common professional understanding of this facet of a preacher’s craft by observing and participating in the feedback given to their peers.

Although decomposition is useful for developing professional vision—for learning to see and name the parts of practice—decomposing practice also allows students to begin to enact practice, to practice a relatively narrow skill in a safe space. The focused feedback allowed students to improve on the targeted skill while also gaining practice in the role of preacher. In addition, the feedback was focused on areas that are most fundamental to successful speaking and reading. When asked about how she decides what to comment on, the professor responded, “There are a few skills that are fundamental, and if they’re close to nailing a fundamental skill, then I would probably choose that.” We observed her

lingering on a particular student's reading, asking him to replay a particular skill several times until she felt that he had achieved it.⁷

Professor Shepard also identifies the relative difficulty and importance of the various skills she teaches. In the first class of Reading for Preaching, she introduced the skills of phrasing and emphasis, telling the novices that emphasis is the single most important of all the skills they would learn. She explained that emphasis is a signal of meaning and that changing the emphasis of a word in a sentence may change its meaning. She illustrated this principle using a passage from Luke. Emphasizing one word in the last sentence would make it sound as if the author of the gospel of Luke is refuting the writings in the gospels of Matthew and Mark; emphasizing another word would make it sound as if the author of Luke's gospel agrees with them. Changing the emphasis in this passage therefore has an important theological difference. Identifying the relative importance of various components of practice helps students gain a larger professional perspective; here, emphasis is not just a matter of inflection but of theological interpretation as well.

Professor Shepard has an undergraduate degree in speech, a doctoral degree in homiletics, and many years of teaching experience. She attributes her approach to one of her own professors, who was well known in the area of homiletics and for training the next generation of homiletics teachers in his denomination. It was from him that she developed the principles and categories she uses to talk about practice, and she developed her ability to give targeted feedback through her work as a teaching assistant in this same department. The principles she uses are drawn more generally from the discipline of speech communication. Her particular class, then, is rooted within the larger profession, both in terms of its content and its pedagogical approach.

Responding to Resistance: Clinical Psychology

One of the core practices of therapy involves the building of the therapeutic alliance, in which therapists must establish a trusting relationship with clients that will enable them to make progress. Building this alliance is seen as the cornerstone of a variety of therapeutic approaches (e.g., Horvath & Symonds, 1991). Multiple books and articles have been written on the topic, and clinicians have developed a variety of ways to talk about what building a therapeutic alliance entails. Several of the courses we observed in the three clinical psychology programs we visited included the decomposition of this facet of practice. In these classes, professors broke down the process of building an alliance into multiple steps and then focused on the skills required within each of these steps or

stages. One of the challenges in maintaining this alliance is responding to client resistance. Given the nature of the therapeutic process, students were told that resistance was predictable and were introduced to a variety of strategies for responding to resistance.

In a beginning class for preparing clinical psychologists, the professor introduced students to a new approach to therapy called *motivational interviewing* (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 2002), which tries to help clients discover their own intrinsic motivation to change harmful behaviors. This approach was further broken down into steps, including “reactance” and “rolling with resistance.” Rolling with resistance, in turn, was decomposed into several different techniques, which students practiced in class. As was true of Reading for Preaching, the instructor has a language for talking about how to respond to clients, a technical language that differentiates possible responses to clients, such as simple reflection, amplified reflection, siding with the negative, or shifting focus. As students struggled to differentiate these responses, Professor Miller gave examples of these responses, as illustrated in the interaction that follows. Here, Suzy struggles to understand the difference between a reflecting the client’s statement and shifting focus.

Suzy: What would you say... like what would you say right away if you wanted to have your next statement be shifting focus? Would you say [Suzy pauses as she looks at handout, thinking], would you say, “Well it sounds like you already know what you want to do; having other people tell you isn’t helpful.” Or is it just ask?

Professor Miller: See that to me is more of a reflection. Shifting the focus, as I see it, is asking, “Well, what direction would you prefer to go in?” You know, that’s how I [hear it?]. You know, so it would maybe sort of saying “Well, I hate people telling me what I better do.” And maybe just saying, “Well why don’t you tell me what are some of your concerns about your health.”

In this interaction, the distinction between responses that shift the focus and reflect back is not yet clear to the novice, so the professor both defines and provides an example of what she means by “shifting focus.” Furthermore, she asks students to practice these different responses in role-plays, just as Laura Shepard gives her students opportunities to read aloud from different kinds of texts; these pedagogies are forms of the approximation of practice that we take up next.

Challenges and Dilemmas

The decomposition of practice may provide a number of learning opportunities for novices, but it creates its own set of challenges as well. First, the ability to decompose practice depends on the existence of a language and structure for describing practice—what we earlier described as a grammar of practice. Without such a language, it is difficult to name the parts or to provide targeted feedback on students' efforts to enact the components of practice. Among our trio of professions, this language of practice seems particularly well developed in clinical psychology but less well developed in teaching. When Lortie (1975) described the lack of technical language in teaching, this included the lack of frameworks and category systems that allow us to identify the constituent elements of teaching practice, especially those that might be targeted in preservice education.⁸

Breaking practice into its constituent parts can provide a somewhat distorted view of authentic practice. At times, professors explicitly told students that steps for establishing a therapeutic alliance in practice, for example, were not as linear or sequential as they portrayed them in class. Although these distinctive stages may be less sequential in actual work with clients, the instructors believe that they serve as important pedagogical tools for novices (cf. Rose, 1999). Teacher educators often target lesson planning during professional education. However, the lesson plan, as practiced in teacher education, both captures and misrepresents the practice of experienced teachers. Although experienced teachers clearly have well-developed plans for class, they would seldom plan a lesson out of the context of a larger unit of instruction, nor would they plan for hypothetical learners, which we often ask novices to do. Yet these practice lesson plans also reduce the complexity of the task in important ways, focusing students' attention on particular aspects of teaching while ignoring others. Like the other examples of decomposition in preaching and clinical psychology, there is a certain amount of artifice in the task, but the artifice serves a pedagogical purpose. One could imagine a pedagogy of teacher education that built on crucial tasks of interactive teaching as well—giving directions, explaining a concept, responding to student questions—and provided the same kinds of opportunities for practice and targeted feedback that we saw in the cases mentioned previously.

We are also interested in both the advantages and disadvantages of breaking down practice for the purposes of instruction. One challenge occurs when students need to learn to integrate these components,

which may have been taught separately, in their practice. For example, the students in the Reading for Preaching class face a challenge of recomposition. When they read scripture in front of their congregations, it will not be enough for them to read with correct emphasis but poor phrasing, or with effective facial expressions but ineffective gestures; they must attend to all categories at once. The professor begins to work toward this integration or recomposition in her final assignment for the course, in which students choose a passage to read aloud, using everything they have learned in the class. Similarly, in unit-plan assignments, novice teachers are often asked to integrate a variety of components related to planning. As we investigate the decomposition of practice further, we continue to look for opportunities for recomposition, or integration, as well.

APPROXIMATING PRACTICE IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: LEARNING TO KAYAK ON CALM WATERS

“If you’re learning to paddle, you wouldn’t practice kayaking down the rapids. You would paddle on a smooth lake to learn your strokes.” — Professor of clinical psychology

A perennial challenge of professional education is that the field often seems far from the university. Even practical courses can feel removed from actual professional work, leaving learners unsure about how to make connections between experiences in university classrooms and practice in the field. The distance between these two settings has prompted some to argue for apprenticeship models in which professional education would be located entirely within the settings of practice. However, in the professions we have chosen to study, fieldwork apprenticeships such as student teaching or pastoral internships offer only a partial and sometimes problematic solution, given that practices in the field can often reinforce the status quo and even counter the teachings of the professional preparation program (Shulman, 1998). University classrooms, on the other hand, can provide learning opportunities that are absent in fieldwork, allowing novices greater freedom to experiment, falter, regroup, and reflect.

One way that university courses can provide such opportunities for enactment and experimentation occurs through the use of approximations of practice. Students may be asked to simulate certain aspects of practice through activities such as role-plays. Simulating certain kinds of practice within the professional education classroom can allow students to try piloting the waters under easier conditions. Providing support and

feedback while novices learn to paddle may better equip them to navigate the rapids of real practice.

Approximations can provide opportunities for novices to engage in “deliberate practice” (Ericsson, 2002) of particularly challenging components of practice. In his work on expertise, Ericsson argued that what differentiates high-level amateurs from experts in areas like sports or music is not how much time they spend practicing, but *how* they practice; experts spend more time on focused repetition of the challenging aspects of a task.

Such approximations also allow for the errors that novices inevitably make when enacting complex practice. In a description of the development of technical skill, Goffman (1974) elaborated on the role of simulated practice:

The capacity to bring off an activity as one wants to—ordinarily defined as the possession of skills—is very often developed through a kind of utilitarian make believe. The purpose of this practicing is to give the neophyte experience in performing under the conditions in which (it is felt) no actual engagement with the world is allowed, events having been “decoupled” from their usual embedment in consequentiality. Presumably muffing or failure can occur both economically and instructively. What one has here are dry runs, trial sessions, run-throughs—in short “practicings.” (p. 59)

In addition to providing opportunities to experience instructive failure, approximations may also require more elaborated versions of practice than what novices will enact later in their careers, such as detailed unit plans or verbatim accounts of interactions with congregants or clients. Although these activities are not entirely authentic in terms of their audience or execution, they can provide opportunities for students to experiment with new skills, roles, and ways of thinking with more support and feedback than actual practice in the field allows. Such elaborations also make more of the novices’ thinking visible by requiring them to provide more detailed plans and recordings than is typical of everyday practice in these fields.

As Rose’s (1999) work on the preparation of physical therapists cited previously shows, immersing students in the activities of actual practice may require extensive intervention on the part of the instructor. In the context of an advanced orthopedics class, he described the “instructional artifice” that this kind of teaching requires:

Tasks are frequently not presented in authentic wholeness but broken down and analyzed (e.g. the parts of the hand used in palpation, the steps in the palpation process); students are guided physically—held, positioned—repeatedly over time until some level of competence is attained; students are encouraged to articulate what they are doing and why and what they feel as others work on them (think of how odd this would be in most real-world settings); students appropriate mediating devices (like the movement diagrams) to assist them in acquiring techniques and concepts, devices they will not use . . . as professional therapists; and so on. (p. 154)

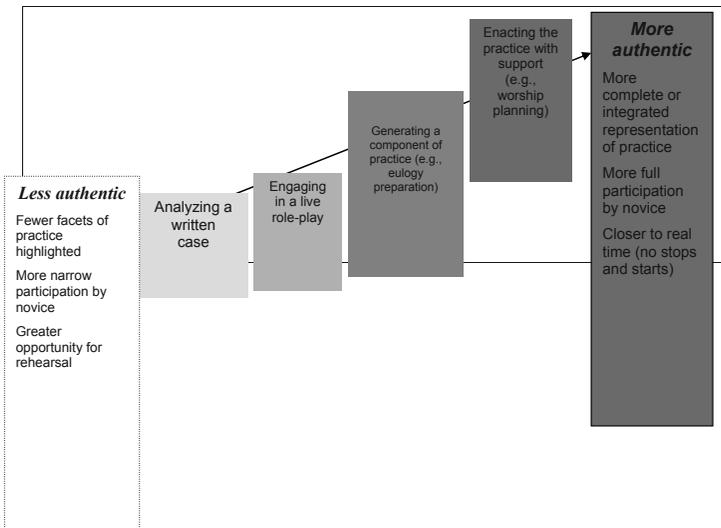
In part, approximations are designed to focus students' attention on key aspects of the practice that may be difficult for novices but almost second nature to more experienced practitioners. The elaborate lesson plans often required of student teachers, for example, barely resemble the kind of planning that more experienced teachers do. As Goffman (1974) noted, "An interesting feature of practicing is that instructor and student are likely to find it useful to focus conscious attention on an aspect of the practiced task with which competent performers no longer concern themselves" (p. 65).

By definition, approximations of practice are not the real thing. They differ with regard to the level of completeness and congruence with which they approximate practice. In Figure 1, we suggest that approximations may fall along a continuum, from less complete and authentic to more complete and authentic.

Toward the "less authentic" end of the continuum, we might place the opportunity to practice reading scripture aloud described previously. Here, novices are asked to enact a relatively limited component of what preachers do in a setting that is far from authentic. They also have multiple opportunities to prepare for the reading and then to reread once they receive feedback. At the other end of the continuum, we might place student teaching, in which novices are asked to enact a much more complete approximation of the teacher's role; however, student teaching, with its provision of a more experienced teacher in the room, is not isomorphic with the practice of a first-year teacher. One question regarding approximations has to do with how these varying degrees of authenticity afford different opportunities for novices to learn skills in a classroom setting and then to use them in more authentic settings.

In the classrooms we visited, we observed multiple opportunities for students to engage in tasks that correspond to, but also differ from, actual practice. We also observed the ways that instructors guide students

Figure 1. Authenticity in Approximations of Practice



through these activities. In the following examples, we highlight several features of approximations: (1) the facet or component of practice that is targeted for approximation, (2) the degree of authenticity, or how closely the activity approximates actual practice, and (3) the role of the professional educator.

To illustrate the use of approximations in the preparation of professionals in these fields, we include three examples of approximations: an instructional sequence on assessment and instruction in reading; a reenactment of an intake interview used to help future rabbis learn to write eulogies; and collaborative worship planning at a Protestant seminary. These examples vary with respect to the degree to which they approximate actual practices in the field, which we discuss in terms of their “authenticity,” as illustrated in Figure 1. For this reason, we will present them in the order outlined in Figure 1, moving from less authentic to more authentic approximations of practice. Our examples do not come close to representing all possible approximations, but together they highlight some central features for professional educators to consider when using such approximations with novices.

Approximating Teaching

In the elementary literacy course we introduced earlier, Professor Davis not only offered representations of practice but also engaged novice

teachers in a series of approximations of increasing authenticity. As discussed earlier, novice teachers explored their own reading strategies by acting in the student role, but then “entered” into a classroom as more expert observers: They watched a video of a second-grade classroom in which students were reading aloud in pairs. The 2 1/2-minute video clip focused on one pair of girls, Tyra and Diva. Professor Davis asked the novice teachers to pretend that they were in the classroom observing and to take notes as detailed as they could. The novice teachers’ first look at this video was fairly unstructured; they did not have the professional vision to know what to look for or how to make sense of what they were seeing. As they shared their observations, Professor Davis asked the novice teachers to focus on the students’ reading strategies. Although teachers might or might not take unstructured written notes as they circulate, informally assessing students’ pair reading is a critical component of practice.

The subsequent activity brought students even closer to enacting the teacher role. Professor Davis guided the students through a “miscue analysis,” or a developmental reading assessment (DRA), an assessment technique mandated by the district. DRA helps to develop novice teachers’ understanding of students’ reading. Professor Davis further explained to her students,

The reason people do miscue analysis is to take an even closer look at the strategies children use when they’re beginning to read. We use it to analyze errors. If you think of errors not as mistakes that have to be remediated, but as windows into a child’s thinking, then paying attention to the patterns of those errors can give you insight into their reading.

Professor Davis then demonstrated the kind of markings that teachers use to record students’ oral reading and then played a short audiotape of a third-grade student engaging in a DRA. Each novice teacher acted in the role of assessor, marking the text and then trying to find patterns in the student’s reading.

This task is more authentic than the video observation; novices engage in the same analysis that the teacher would do in real time. At the same time, the task was shortened in duration and simplified because the novice teachers were not distracted by the actual physical presence of the reader. On the tape, the teacher giving the assessment prompted the student’s reading; the novice teachers only had to listen to the patterns of error without having to guide the assessment process. This simplifies the

difficulty of the task, so that novices can attend to fewer elements, but also diminishes its authenticity.

For the final activity, Professor Davis turned the lesson from reading fluency to reading comprehension and asked the novice teachers to further approximate the teacher role. The class returned to the video of the two second-grade students, but this time, they were to imagine that they were the teachers and were following up on the pair reading activity by engaging in a reading conference with the students. As the novices watched the video, they wrote questions that they might ask in a reading conference. During the class discussion, Professor Davis categorized the novice teachers' questions under four headings: Meaning Making, Strategies, Reading Practices & Experiences, and Other. In this excerpt from field notes, Professor Davis elicited questions and helped the novice teachers reflect on kinds of responses that their questions might elicit. One student asked, "I liked the way you read that—why did you use that voice or why did you read it that way?" Professor Davis responded, "[to help] kids articulate what they do—the decisions they make. So you can get a sense of what reading strategies they're using." After the discussion went a bit further, Professor Davis noted that "there aren't many questions about thinking about children's reading strategies or their reading practices or experiences that they brought—so what questions might you add to this list?" In this response, Professor Davis reminded the novice teachers to pay attention to how to ask questions about children's strategies. Professor Davis commented in a postobservation interview that although novices were able to analyze and observe students' reading strategies, they had difficulty imagining how they would use this information to formulate follow-up questions in a reading conference. The first activity resembled the kind of observer role that they were used to from their student teaching field placements; the second phase of the activity asked them to take on a more active, and probably more authentic, teaching role, guiding conversations and shaping instruction through questions. As the discussion continued, the novice teachers generated new questions, trying to focus on reading strategies. These were questions that they were not able to come up with as they watched the video but could begin to formulate with Professor Davis's guidance.

Authenticity and affordances. The emphasis here is on enactment, not just on reflection. Novices are asked to come up with actual questions to ask students, not simply to discuss the kinds of questions they *might* ask. The task is authentic in that the novice teachers are observing actual elementary school students engaged in a classroom activity. The partner reading activity is one that the novice teachers would use in their

teaching, and they would need to generate follow-up questions for reading conferences. The artifice of the task offers several opportunities for novice learning. It reveals how difficult it is to ask generative questions and, more important, gives the novice teachers a chance to “rehearse” and revise their own and each other’s questions with guidance. By generating questions as a group, the novice teachers can more quickly see their overarching tendency to ask what Professor Davis calls “meaning-making” questions focused on a particular text rather than questions that would surface information about the students’ reading practices more generally. By categorizing the questions, Professor Davis gives the novice teachers a disciplinary vocabulary and a framework to understand how their questions reveal the focus of their teaching.

The artificial nature of the task—developing questions for students present only via videotape—provides additional reflective time for the novice teachers. Because they are observing the students on video rather than in real time, they can review the tape to focus on reading comprehension. Professor Davis structured the activity to maximize this experience; the first time that the novice teachers watched the tape, they simply recorded what they saw. This would have been a familiar practice for them from early student teaching. The second time that they watched the tape, they stepped into the teacher role and concentrated on one particular aspect of the students’ reading. In a real classroom of 30 active second graders, even experienced teachers would have difficulty attending to one pair of readers. Even if they could listen to this one conversation, the novices might have difficulty knowing where to focus their attention and consequently how to follow up individually and in a way that would further a particular student’s learning. When the novices begin teaching in actual classrooms, their conferences will need to be brief and extremely focused; they will need to choose their questions carefully but will have little time to prepare. The practice setting gives novice teachers an opportunity to rehearse not only the subject of their questions but the phrasing of them as well.

The efficacy and inauthenticity of the tasks are actually linked, because the entire class session focuses on one aspect of teaching that would be difficult to focus on in a classroom: listening to students and trying to elicit their thinking. The novice teachers study their students’ thinking and learning before they focus on their own teaching; indeed, the learning module precedes the teaching module in all the courses in this teacher education program. In the chaos of an elementary school classroom, it may be difficult for teachers to listen carefully for student thinking. The approximations that Professor Davis offers the novice teachers

quiet the background noise so that they can tune in to one facet of practice at a time.

Approximating Funeral Preparation

Rabbi Noah Silver wants his rabbinical students to practice writing eulogies. He warns them that how they enact the rabbinical role at funerals will have significant consequences for the relationships with congregants:

The other moment as clergy that is absolutely crucial and that makes or breaks your relationship with a family for generations is a funeral. If you do a good job at a funeral, if you tell the story well, that family will be bonded to you literally for generations. Of course the opposite is also true: If you screw it up, you will be a son of a bitch for generations to that family. They will not forgive you.

Rabbi Silver's objective for this exercise is for these future rabbis to understand the common pitfalls of eulogy writing so that when they are called on to write a real one, they will avoid the most predictable kinds of errors.

Rabbi Silver's approach to teaching about funeral preparation and eulogy writing involves a multistage process. In the first stage, Rabbi Silver provides students with a representation of his own practice when he explains the funereal duties of rabbis. In the second stage, as described previously, Rabbi Silver reenacts a consultation between himself and a family member of the deceased while the students observe and take notes. Finally, in the third stage of this process, each rabbinical student must prepare a eulogy based on his or her observation notes.

The three stages of Rabbi Silver's teaching of funeral preparation incorporate both representations and approximations of rabbinical practice. To prepare the students for the first representation and clarify its purpose, Rabbi Silver tells students that he will orally "walk" them through each step that they must follow, from the time they get the call informing them of a death to the moment that they leave the cemetery with the family. Then, in careful detail, he describes the rabbi's role in working with the coroner, the cemetery, the synagogue, and the family. In this stage, Rabbi Silver is representing his own experience as a means of generalizing about rabbinical responsibilities more broadly. His representation takes the form of didactic instruction, in that he formally tells his students the procedures they should follow, and he includes "tips"

that he has learned from his own experience. In this representation, students have greater access to what a rabbi's responsibilities are, but they are not invited to participate in any way.

The second stage of the lesson, the reenactment, is a representation that has as its goal an approximation of practice. For this reenactment, Rabbi Silver is joined by Bill, one of his dear friends. Bill's father died some time ago in a bicycle accident. Years later, Bill still feels this tragedy vividly. Each year, he agrees to come to class and talk about his loss in front of the rabbinical students to help them learn about being with someone in grief. Students observe this counseling session, taking notes to prepare a eulogy for Bill's father. This second stage involves an approximation, as students participate in a small portion of the rabbi's duties in that situation—the taking of notes. Rabbi Silver tells the students that their recording of the conversation must be perfect if it is to help them write a flawless eulogy. As rabbis in situations like this, they must engage in “a balancing act between tuning in to [the grieving person's] frequency and carrying them through their sadness.” The key, Rabbi Silver tells them, is to remember that “the difference between the writer and everyone else is that when surrounded by tears, there is a shard of ice that allows him to take notes.”

Though Rabbi Silver tells students that he will intentionally model the kinds of questions that he asks in such consultations, students do not practice conducting these sessions themselves, nor do they actually practice delivering the eulogies that they write. In this case, the expert models one aspect of funeral preparation—responding to a grieving family member—so that the novices can enact a narrowly focused portion of the practice that follows: writing the eulogy.

In some respects, the reenactment of the conversation with Bill is highly authentic in that it concerns real grief over a real loss. By asking Bill to tell stories about what his dad was like as a young man, as a father, and as a husband, Rabbi Silver and Bill together recreate the moment of his passing, bringing the agony of that sudden tragedy to life. These memories are so vivid for Bill that he cries, just as he must have years ago. Rabbi Silver and Bill both “play” themselves in the reenactment; there is no effort to pretend that they are not friends or that the session deals with more recent grief. Both Rabbi Silver and Bill maintain their roles throughout the reenactment, never breaking to address the students or to acknowledge the discomfort that Bill might feel in crying in front of a crowded room.

But there are also ways in which the activity of meeting with a bereaved congregant has been distorted to allow students to witness the counseling session and then practice writing eulogies. For example, it takes place in

a classroom setting rather than in Bill's home or the rabbi's office, and it is far from private. The conversation itself is also shorter than Rabbi Silver likes such sessions to be, which leads him to skip over some of the questions he would normally ask. In addition, although raw emotions do surface during the conversation, this example does not represent new grief, which may make the exercise itself seem less urgent for the students but also removes some of the risk that they might feel in drafting such an intimate document. Finally, the rabbi himself has heard the story before; his interview can therefore anticipate issues that he could not have anticipated the first time round.

In a related approximation of practice, the students write practice eulogies based on their notes of this interview. Though the students do not actually deliver these eulogies, they do share them in written form with their colleagues and with Rabbi Silver, who gives them feedback on how they might be improved. They also give them to Bill, whose father, one student remarked, "must be the most eulogized man ever." Having the family member receive the eulogies increases the authenticity of the exercise by simulating the actual transaction between the rabbi and the family members and providing an authentic audience for the eulogies.

Identifying common problems. We observed the interview and the following week's class when then students met to talk about the eulogies. Rabbi Silver prefaced his comments by telling students that he would "jump from eulogy to eulogy and look at some of the common problems." He assured them that "nobody is getting picked on" and continued,

This is all for us to learn and grow and for certain avoid these problems when it is for real, because that is really why we are doing this. Practicing on your first real patient is not a great idea for a doctor, and not a great idea to practice on your first congregant as a rabbi either.

This framing underscores how the approximation gives students the opportunity to learn some of the common pitfalls of crafting eulogies, but in the relative safety of a classroom rather than at a funeral, where the consequence of error is more severe. By approximating the practice of eulogy writing in this way, Rabbi Silver creates an opportunity for students to make mistakes in a public, but less risky, setting. The approximation also explicitly focuses on a high-stakes component of practice.

After reading from a number of papers and highlighting strong transitions or instances in which details need to be corrected, as well as errors of tone, Rabbi Silver arrives at what he tells them is the central flaw in the most of their eulogies: Very few of them have mentioned that the death

was tragic and unexpected.

When it is a . . . man . . . getting hit by a truck and killed on his bicycle, when it's a murder, when it's a suicide, you cannot just walk up to the lectern and start your eulogy as if that is not in the room. You have to lance that issue first . . . and none of us did.

One student suggests that she thought she should intentionally avoid mention of the tragedy, especially because this was just an "exercise." In response, Rabbi Silver acknowledges that they may have omitted this detail because the tragedy was not current, and this was an assignment that was not completely authentic. "We are suffering a little bit from the artifice of the device." But in large part, he attributes the omission to students' lack of experience in knowing how to address the circumstances of death. He tells students, "part of the hesitancy of dealing with this is that we don't know how to deal with it. We know we should, but since we don't know how, we just move on as if he died in his sleep at the age of 95. But he didn't, so we need to deal with it."

Affordances. The power of approximating eulogy writing is that it facilitates this sort of public realization of error in the safety of a classroom. This activity gives students opportunities to consider the scope of their responsibilities around grief and funeral preparation, while focusing their primary attention on the writing of the eulogy. The reenactment of the interview offers both context and content for their writing, without requiring students to attend to multiple facets of rabbinical practice at once. It also affords them opportunities to develop a vision of what a consultation with a grieving family might look and sound like and to hear an expert model the sorts of questions they might ask to gather the information needed to write a good eulogy.

In actual practice, there will be few, if any, opportunities for these rabbis to elicit feedback on eulogies that they are preparing to deliver. Rabbi Silver explicitly tells them that they will not be able to check facts, such as the accuracy of names, with loved ones before the funeral because sharing the eulogy with them in advance would deny the mourners part of their grieving process. The classroom exercise also allows the students additional time to craft a eulogy. Given Jewish rituals around death, they are more likely to have a day, rather than a week, to write and revise. The rare opportunity to get feedback on a draft of a eulogy, an opportunity that Rabbi Silver tells them he wishes he had been given as a new rabbi himself, also offers them a space in which to experience some of the predictable errors of practice and to have those mistakes highlighted. In actual practice, the consequences of failure will be greater, but this sort

of experimentation can allow novices to learn about their mistakes in a low-risk environment.

In this elaborate lesson on eulogy writing, Rabbi Silver provides a structure for some of the uncertainty that the novices will face as they move toward more authentic practice. Our next example looks at worship planning at a Protestant seminary, where the chaplain collaborates with a team of student pastors to prepare weekly worship services for the campus. Of our examples, the work required of novices in this case most closely resembles the responsibilities of real practice; however, the support they receive from experienced practitioners and their peers in trying out the role allows for different kinds of learning as well.

Approximating Church

Every Wednesday morning at Grace Seminary, a team of student worship assistants meets with the chaplain, Dr. Paul Sims, to plan upcoming worship services for the school. A morning chapel service takes place from 10:15 to 10:45 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Students, faculty, and assorted guests serve in various roles—preacher, liturgist, scripture reader, and so on—and each chaplain’s assistant takes primary responsibility for the planning and scheduling of one week of services at a time. The worship team meets once a week to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the most recent services and to refine their plans for upcoming services.

Planning daily worship approximates a role that will be central in the practice of these future pastors. In the Protestant denomination for which Grace Seminary prepares pastors, a congregation’s weekly service would typically include certain features: a homily, scripture reading, prayer, music, and the celebration of sacraments. At the seminary, these aspects of worship are distributed among four brief services throughout the week. For example, Monday’s service includes a homily, but the sacrament of communion is celebrated only on Fridays. Tuesday’s service focuses on prayer, and each service incorporates different kinds of music.

Dr. Sims observes that when you put all four services for the week together,

You’ve got a rather complete service, although you’ve got a little bit of each in every one of the services. But for us this tends to be a very meaningful part of every day. And also it offers students a chance to see how specialized services can be designed and experienced.

Aspects of participation in the worship-planning team make it highly authentic. First, these worship services are an important part of the community life at the seminary; elements of a service can prompt conversations in classes and around the lunch table. In addition, the students are being supervised by the chaplain, the person who serves as the pastor of the seminary community and fulfills a variety of clergy roles, such as counseling students during times of grief and tending to their spiritual development. As a pastor of future pastors, he is engaged in authentic practice as a clergy member.

The students talk about the importance of having role models who embody the practices that they hope to develop as pastors themselves. As one student said, "For me, [they] are real . . . what they teach is exactly who they are in every context that they're in . . . they're modeling everything that they teach, and that's what, as a pastor and a person that's in ministry, that's what you are going to be asked to do also." Another student commented about the faculty, "They embody everything that they teach, and they're able to meet us where we are and come to wherever we are. We all have many different places where we are, and yet they're able to enter into whatever we are and make us go further." Guided by these mentors, the students are better able to envision the clergy role before they have to practice it on their own. These instructors are embodied representations of practice; in this case, instructors model the kind of pastors students hope to become.

As the students try out one aspect of the role, Dr. Sims provides guidance about how their plans might play out in the actual service. In addition to their weekly team meetings, Dr. Sims provides this kind of feedback in individual consultations with the worship assistants. He and the student continue to confer and to bounce drafts back and forth up until the day of the service. Devon, one of the worship assistants, notes how this feedback has helped him:

I may write something, and there's maybe a phrase that's a little funky and I get feedback on that. It's like yesterday's service. I wrote this prayer, and I had missed . . . the brokenness in personal relationships. So Dr. Sims just made the comment that that was missing, and so I went back and looked through and added a couple more stanzas to really complete [it] . . . when we are in a church, you're not going to have [people] right there to say, "How does this look?"

Devon recognizes the opportunities for thoughtful revision that this kind of feedback affords, particularly because it maintains a respect for

his independent efforts as a novice.

Affordances. The distribution of the components of worship over the span of a week affords students opportunities to experiment with adding creativity to each aspect of worship. By narrowing the focus of worship planning for each day, students can focus on each portion more deeply. Although Dr. Sims expects that students will always begin by looking at the scripture readings assigned to that day by the lectionary, he hopes that they will be creative in how they design a service based on those selections:

I encourage them to listen to the scripture, put their ear to the scripture and to believe that God can speak in a contemporary voice through these scriptures. And . . . week after week of trying to do this and listening to others, without realizing it you begin to develop a repertoire of styles, of working together, and of presenting worship.

Although these students will coordinate many worship services as pastors, they will not do it with the frequency that the seminary services require. In addition, services in the parish are often quite predictable or formulaic, with less expectation for creativity on the part of the pastor. Dr. Sims notes the way that the 30-minute format encourages deliberate attention to coherence:

In working with the students, we try to plan services that function like a door on a hinge, where you don't hear the squeaky noise or you don't see it as being unable to fit within the frame. There's one hopefully smooth motion between the beginning of the service, the hymns, the prayers, and the way the movement . . . is implemented for the whole community. A good service is almost seamless . . . the real challenge in a 30-minute service . . . is even greater because you don't have much time, and every movement has to be calibrated with real purpose in mind.

It is difficult to attain a seamless unity of theme and structure in such a brief service, not to mention the practical concerns of coordinating the worship participants. The students learn that they must begin their planning early, and they also acknowledge that this process allows for greater freedom than they might encounter later in their ministry. Cass, one of the chaplain's assistants, points out how they are learning to balance flexibility and focus as they plan for worship:

For me it has been a really good experience to be creative with worship and to have the flexibility. I know whenever I went back to my home church over Christmas break, I wanted to do all these new and inventive things that I'm able to do here, and yet [I know] the reality of "this is what we always do, this is what we need to do, we need to sing this type stuff." . . . It's a good creative process but . . . there [are] limits to what we can do, and we know it needs to be within a context, learning how to craft a service that is completely around a theme.

Students must strive for a sense of unity in the design of each service, giving worshippers a variety of ways to access the day's theme without losing the focus. Her colleague Devon agrees, pointing out that the opportunity to be creative encourages him to generate original elements of worship more often than full-time ministry will allow:

For me this year I tried to write a lot of my own liturgy because I have 5 days once a month, and so I can give a little extra time to that, where when I get out to the parish, I'm not going to have that kind of time every week to write my own liturgy.

These approximations of actual practice provide opportunities that students are unlikely to experience in the same way in the field.

Challenges and Opportunities

These approximations of practice have certain obvious limitations. Because they distort the features of practice in various ways, either by allowing students to focus on one primary component or by encouraging students to experiment with its features, they risk representing too narrow a view of what the work entails. In many cases, the approximations allow students to practice the moves of a therapist, teacher, pastor, or rabbi within very narrow boundaries. However, the approximations also limit the difficulty of the task, helping novices hone in on dimensions of practice that otherwise might get lost in the fray. One question to ask about approximations is the extent to which, over time, the approximations get closer and closer to the demands of actual practice.

Classroom approximations of practice can be more or less pedagogically useful. The role of the instructor—in planning, modeling, and providing feedback—shapes the learning potential in each of our examples. Who is guiding the approximation, and the nature of the feedback provided during these approximations, matters. All three of these instructors

are deeply immersed in authentic practice and have a wealth of experience from which to draw. They know how to prioritize the acquisition of specific professional skills, and they can readily anticipate where students will stumble. They are able to decompose complex practices into their constituent parts in designing these approximations. Though students will never engage in the full scope of practice in the university or seminary classroom, these instructors know how and when to invite novices into certain aspects of practice in order to refine particular elements.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing features of these approximations is the way they allow novices to experience and learn from errors. Although novice mistakes were most starkly highlighted by the homiletics professor's response to the student eulogies, to some extent, each of these approximations assumes that students will flounder when they first try out the practices for themselves. If we accept that the novice's earliest attempts will be fraught with awkwardness and uncertainty, then it is far better for those experiments to take place within the safety of the classroom than in the presence of vulnerable students, clients, or congregants. In fact, one could argue that it is even necessary to provide these opportunities for failure, which allow novices to contend with their own feelings of disappointment or discouragement and learn to respond in professionally appropriate ways.

Focusing on high-stakes practices via approximations is one way for professional education to reduce the risk of error in the field. Medical education, for example, relies increasingly on simulations prior to actual patient care to minimize risk, something that preparation for airline pilots has done for years. Although these approximations can never completely eliminate the nervousness and uncertainty of practice under more realistic conditions, they can certainly help students avoid predictable—and often costly—errors.

CONCLUSIONS

Although we have presented them separately, the concepts in this framework—representation, decomposition, and approximation—clearly overlap and underscore each other. For example, every approximation engages students in some element or version of practice, and so in that sense becomes a representation of practice for others. The distinction lies in the novice's role as observer or actor. A representation *illustrates* a facet of practice, as does Rabbi Klein's anecdote about conducting a funeral, whereas an approximation *engages* students in that practice, as does the eulogy-writing exercise. Approximations of practice also rely on decomposition; instructors must select a component of professional work

that forms the basis of an approximation. Because representations and approximations can rarely capture the whole of a practice, instructors must necessarily engage in the decomposition of practice in planning for their use. For example, even the most authentic approximation that we have discussed, worship planning, artificially breaks down the elements of a service over the course of a week so that students can focus on each piece separately. Instructors who develop and guide students through approximations such as worship planning must be deliberate in their decomposition, breaking practice into parts that students can experience with some degree of integrity and from which students can learn to reintegrate what they have learned.

In opening the doors to the teaching of practice across professions, we hope both to illustrate the complexity of the very methods courses that Conant (1963) derided and to provide opportunities for professions to learn from one another. Our approach highlights the possibilities for teaching practice in the context of university coursework, suggesting what students can learn in the university setting that differs from what they can learn through observation or experience in the field. We argue that the artifice involved in such examples of the teaching of practice affords unique learning opportunities for novices. The examples that we have shared suggest that *inauthenticity* has its own advantages. The focus on components of complex practice allows students to hone their skills in a single element of reading, therapy, preaching, or worship before they have to manage all the competing demands and conditions of uncertainty in actual practice. In the safety of the classroom, students can practice what they might say at a funeral without alienating a grieving congregant, or rehearse how to respond to an angry client. As we observed, taking on the role of the client or elementary student in such approximations may help novice professionals develop intellectual empathy and allow them to give feedback to their peers about the experience of being on the other side of the interaction. Based on such feedback, students can revise the questions they might ask in a reading conference or their responses to resistance in a therapy session. In both of these cases, the professors not only helped students shape the focus of the conversation but also gave them actual phrases and language on which to build. In these cases and in worship planning and reading for preaching, students had time to rehearse, revise, and retry their responses so that they would not become flustered in a high-pressure moment of practice.

In each of these cases, the disciplined perception of the instructor served to highlight essential features of practice and focus feedback where it would be most useful. Indeed, the key role of the instructor becomes clear in the framework we present. As demonstrated by the

approximations in worship planning and reading instruction, the instructor must help students understand to what extent the methods course experience does and does not represent actual or usual practice. In the cases in which students watched their instructors on video or through a mirror, the instructors' debriefing connected what students observed to principled practice and a theoretical framework.

Such approximations of practice will never replace the need for students to engage in real settings of practice with actual clients; this is an essential part of professional education and one that many professions are trying hard to incorporate earlier into students' experiences.⁹ However, the work done in methods courses can by prepare novices better for the challenges of practice and by helping them develop ways of interpreting and understanding professional practice.

This framework also underscores commonalities across professional education. Much of the literature on teaching in professional schools focuses on singular pedagogies—the case-based seminar in business school (cf. Barnes, Christensen, & Hansen, 1994), the crit in art studios and architecture (cf. Doidge, Sara, & Parnell, 2006), problem-based learning in medical education (cf. Barrows, 1996). Yet a focus on singularity may obscure, in fact, the common ground that professional educators share. The framework described in this article is an initial effort to create a common language that would guide both the discussion and analysis of the pedagogy of professional education.

The use of such a framework could inform research on the teaching of practice in powerful ways. For example, rather than treating case methods and the use of hypermedia as separate pedagogies, researchers of professional education might profit by focusing on these as instances of different representations of practice and examining systematically how features of the profession are represented in each media. What can narratives written by practitioners capture about facets of practice that video footage cannot? Rather than treating videos and narratives as separate phenomena, we can begin to array such representations along a continuum with regard to facets of practice that are visible to novices.

We also need further research and conversation on what constitutes defensible decompositions of practice. Within teacher education, microteaching was soundly criticized for focusing on elements of teaching that, although easily enacted, were deemed trivial. What are manageable chunks of professional practice that might form the core of preservice practices? How do professional educators select a set of practices that have integrity on their own and that will also serve novices well in their early years of practice? A number of researchers are currently working on these very issues in teacher education (e.g., Franke,

Grossman, Hatch, Richert, & Schultz, 2006; Kazemi, Lampert, & Ghouseini, 2007).

Another avenue for research would be to analyze the array of representations of practice that novices encounter across the curriculum. What aspects of the work are missing, for example, in the variety of representations that novices encounter during their time in their professional programs? How often do novice clergy see examples of clergy engaged in pastoral counseling? What opportunities do they have to observe clergy negotiating the politics of congregational life? How often do novice teachers encounter opportunities to observe interactions with parents during professional education, or do novice therapists observe court-mandated or group therapy? Researchers can then analyze how differential access to various aspects of practice during professional education shapes the development of novices in a field, with regard to developing both identities and skills.

Similarly, researchers in teacher education can begin to array such teacher education approaches as microteaching, model lessons, unit planning, simulations, role-plays, and student teaching along a continuum of approximations of practice and investigate the affordances and constraints of these different approximations in preparing novices for different aspects of practice. We can then begin to analyze how these approximations are arrayed across a curriculum; do the approximations of practice approach authenticity as novices move through the curriculum? Or are novices asked to approximate only certain elements of the practice, leaving them to experiment with other aspects on their own? Professional educators in other professions could engage in similar analyses of the aspects of practice that they ask novices to approximate and how these change over time.

Our study also emphasizes the value of looking beyond professional boundaries in investigating issues of professional education. Our preliminary analyses of our data reveal the value of such a cross-professional analytic perspective. For example, we analyzed our data to look at whether approximations in different professional education programs focused on aspects of preactive, interactive, or reflective dimensions of practice. We found that in comparison with our other two professions, teacher education provides multiple approximations of various aspects of preactive practice in teaching; novices are asked to engage in simulated lesson planning, unit planning, even planning for classroom management. However, they encountered many fewer opportunities in the context of coursework to engage in approximations of interactive

practice— such as how to respond to a student’s question or orchestrate a discussion—than did novices in clinical psychology. Because many of the most difficult aspects of teaching lie in these interactive dimensions of practice, novice teachers may be losing valuable opportunities to hone their skills in these areas. In contrast, the use of role-plays and video role-plays in clinical psychology provided novices with multiple opportunities to enact the role of therapist during simulated interactive practice. In the role of therapist, novices had to learn to respond in the moment to a client’s challenge or flirtation. Groopman’s (2002) description of how medical students generally lack opportunities to learn to give bad news to dying patients offers a chilling reminder of the costs of overlooking opportunities for novices to engage in efforts to approximate compassionate care, even as the examples from clinical psychology help us understand how such caring behaviors might be taught.

Looking specifically at professions that share similar challenges to teaching, such as professions that engage in what we are calling relational practice, enables us to see how other educators have responded to the challenges of preparing novices to create relationships that are crucial to the success of professional work. What one profession may ignore in its professional education may be the centerpiece of another. For example, we saw numerous instances in which novice clinical psychologists were being prepared to respond to resistance in their work with clients (Grossman et al., 2007). Yet despite the potential for resistance in the classroom, we saw relatively few examples of teacher educators addressing this challenge during coursework or providing novices with the conceptual understanding and skills of addressing different kinds of resistance from students. In another example, we saw relatively few examples in clinical psychology of novices learning how to manage group interactions; most representations and approximations of clinical practice focused on the dyad of therapist and client. Clinical psychology might learn from teacher education how to prepare novices to attend to the needs of individuals within a group setting, and the range of needs and abilities represented within a group. As these comparisons suggest, looking at how other professionals are prepared can increase our own “pedagogical imaginations” (L. Slominsky, personal communication, March 2002) and stimulate discussions among professional educators about how to learn from each other as we strive to improve the preparation of novices within our own fields.

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Notes

1 It is also true that we know relatively little about what goes on inside the classrooms of higher education more generally.

2 However, psychologists and clergy may also work in settings in which clients have not necessarily chosen their help, such as hospitals, prisons, and court-mandated programs.

3 We realize that our discussion of relational practices evokes classic feminist scholarship that examines the extent to which women value interdependence, relationships, and responsiveness to others (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982). Other feminist scholars have also explored caregiving work in the labor market. O'Connor (1996), for instance, outlined several key issues, which include "the invisibility of care-giving work and its skewed gender distribution [and] . . . the undervaluation of paid and unpaid care-giving work" (p. 14). Fletcher (1999) illustrated how relational behaviors in the workplace go unrecognized and may undermine women's ability to succeed. This scholarship has particular resonance given that women constitute the majority of current practitioners in two of the three professions in our study (clinical psychology and teaching), with the number of female clergy steadily increasing (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). We recognize, however, that a focus on women's particular capacity for relationships and caregiving is a highly contested notion within feminist scholarship. Many scholars have been reluctant to associate women with relational work, asserting that this association reinforces gender stereotypes and potentially increases gender inequality (cf. Epstein, 1988; Larrabee, 1992). In our study, we have not highlighted the role of gender in the practice of these professions, although we recognize that others might take such a perspective.

4 We did not interview graduates of these programs, although we always tried to interview students at early and later stages of their preparation. Although interviewing graduates would have given us a different and valuable perspective on preparation, we did not have the resources to include another population. However, early on in the study, we interviewed early-career graduates from several of these programs to get their perspective on what was most and least valuable in their preparation to help us design the observations and interviews.

5 We also developed a set of codes that we used to code for (1) focus of instruction (e.g., negotiation of personal and professional; building relationships), (2) representations and transparency of practice, and (3) pedagogy. We then used the codes to identify instances of the phenomena, as well as patterns in the data.

6 All names of individuals and institutions are pseudonyms.

7 This process of giving feedback involves a process similar to Goodwin's (1994) notion of "highlighting." In a forthcoming paper, we explore how feedback both highlights features of practice and "tunes" performance.

8 Lesson planning might represent one example of the decomposition of practice in teacher education. Planning is only one part, albeit a critical part, of teaching. A variety of conceptual schemes exist for naming the parts of a lesson plan, including the famous five-

step Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP) model, promoted by Madeline Hunter; these schemes break down a lesson into constituent parts, such as the “anticipatory set,” guided practice, and closure. A possible explanation for the popularity of ITIP might be the value of such decompositions and an accompanying descriptive language for practitioners. In a field that lacks a specific technical language, ITIP provided a relatively enduring set of terms that could be used to describe classroom practice across a variety of settings and subjects. Magdalene Lampert’s (2001) recent book represents perhaps the best current example of the decomposition of teaching as a practice.

9 For a discussion of this issue in legal education, see Sullivan et al. (2007).

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