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Creating Authentic Mathematical Experiences

Several years ago, I published an op-ed in the Toronto Star newspaper, arguing that far too many of our students spend their formative years doing what no mathematician would call mathematics. Instead of providing high school students and undergraduate students with authentic mathematical experiences that develop their creativity and problem-solving skills, the majority of students receive a watered-down product, the equivalent of learning art using Paint By Numbers.

In this interactive presentation, I will share six stories of authentic mathematical experiences, three stories from my life as a student and three stories from my life as an educator. I will share the key characteristics of each story that led to transformational change in the learner, and explore how these stories might relate to each of our lives, as mathematicians and as mathematics educators.