

Implementing Cogenerative Dialogues and Teaching the Whole Student

Based on the works of Edmund Adjapong, Ph.D. and Chris Emdin, Ph.D.

Cogenerative dialogues ("cogens") are structured, reflective conversations between the teacher and a small group of dissimilar students that can help the teacher "communicate effectively across cultural, social, ethnic and economic boundaries" (LaVan, 2004).



Students and the teacher co-develop strategies for instruction that focus on students' social emotional and academic needs. The dialogues enable open communication about both the teacher and students' perspectives on schooling.

Goals of Cogenerative Dialogues

1. Gain deeper understanding of students and their experiences
2. Improve teachers' pedagogical practices
3. Improve relationships between students and teachers
4. Improve classroom culture
5. Improve overall school culture


"[As a result of the cogenerative dialogues,] a lot of my students who normally wouldn't speak up or who felt shy are now the ones that are speaking up now. Because they feel that they have a voice and they feel respected. It's a collaboration. It's seeing the teacher and the student [as] learning from each other. Now that they're giving the input, they're more engaged."

- NYC high school teacher & teacher coach

Process for Cogenerative Dialogues

1. Identify 4-5 students* who represent different populations of the class
2. Identify general questions that will elicit information about the students' experience
3. Meet with the students outside of classroom time
4. Co-generate a plan of action
5. Implement the plan of action



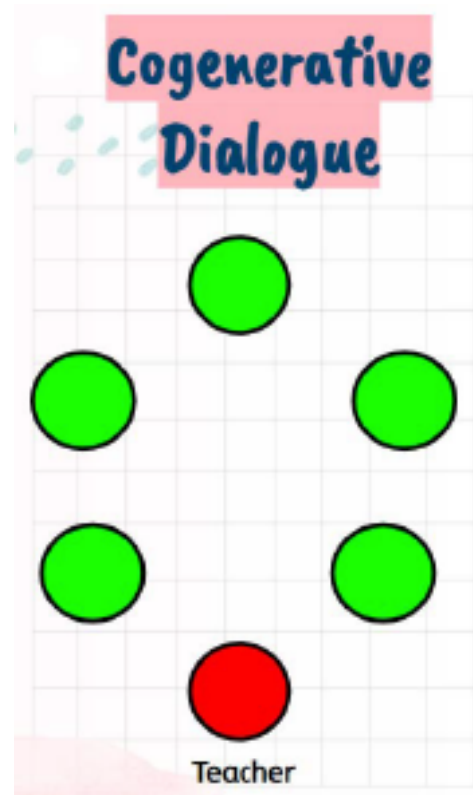
 = Student who is selected to participate in cogenerative dialogue

* Students who might represent various groups:

- Overachiever
- Different personality types (e.g., leader, talkative, shy)
- Student with a disability / exceptional learner
- Multilingual learner

Protocol

1. Using the template provided on page 3, identify what you want to explore and/or gain a deeper understanding about your classroom environment and students.
 - The focus could be instruction, classroom culture, knowing your students better, etc.
2. Identify and invite students to the cogenerative dialogue.
3. Schedule time outside of classroom time to host the cogenerative dialogue.
4. Develop 3-5 questions that you want to ask students based on what you want to explore more.
5. Host the cogenerative dialogue.
6. Begin by sharing with students:
 - What a cogenerative dialogue is
 - What the goals are
 - What the structure will be
7. Establish community norms for discussion which may include:
 - Be respectful
 - Be honest
 - What is shared during the cogenerative dialogue stays between the students and the teacher
 - Equal turns to talk
 - Sit in a circle (when in-person)
8. Identify a cogenerated plan that is agreed upon by both students and the teacher that explains how you will use the information/data gathered during the cogenerative dialogue to make the classroom more inclusive and responsive to the needs of students.
9. Implement a plan of action within **one-week** of the initial cogenerative dialogue.



Cogenerative dialogues **foster positive relationships** among students and between students and their teacher. Strong relationships foster **positive emotions**, which create a **more powerful connection to the content**. A whole child approach in “which teachers must have an understanding of the realities and experiences of their students inside and outside the classroom” (Emdin, C. 2021) provides opportunities for equity.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Action: Cogenerative Dialogues Planning Document

Schedule	
Teacher Name	
Date	
Time/Period	

Choose one of the sentence starter options below to identify what you want to explore and/or gain a deeper understanding of as it relates to the classroom environment and students.

1. I want to gain a deeper understanding of my students'...
2. I want to gain a deeper understanding regarding why my students...
3. I want to explore solutions for improving...
- 4.

Response:

Cogenerative Dialogue Participants	
Student Name	Student Category
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Questions for Students

Sample Questions:

- *What brings you joy?*
- *What makes you happy?*
- *What do you enjoy about my class?*
- *How can I best support all students to be successful?*
- *What do I could I improve on as a teacher?*
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Cogenerative Dialogue Norms

1. Be respectful
2. Be honest
3. What is said during the cogenerative stays between participants and teacher
4. Equal turns to talk
5. Sit in a circle (when in-person)
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Cogenerative Dialogue Notes

Cogenerated Plan of Action

A plan that is agreed upon by both participants and students that explains how you will use the information/data gathered during the cogenerative dialogue to make the classroom more inclusive and responsive to the needs of students.