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Full Length Research Paper

Employing cogenerative dialogue to share classroom authority

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Abstract

In America's high schools, particularly in large urban centers, racial and social class differences separating a teacher and students can create classroom management concerns that could seriously impede upon learning. These classroom management difficulties may branch from the misalignment between a teacher's instructional methods and students' learning approaches. This research reports data gathered from a New York City High School Suspension Center during a 9 month school year, including results from 56 focus group interviews and 300 hours of classroom observation. The data analysis reveals that classroom behavioral problems and authority concerns are prominent themes in this school. Informed by qualitative methodology, this study examines how classroom management difficulties can be cooperatively addressed when students and teachers agree to employ co-teaching as one way to distribute key aspects of classroom authority. The research utilizes a case study approach to examine the creation of student and teacher co-teaching opportunities through the use of cogenerative dialogue. This case study illustrates how co-teaching is one way that students and teachers can share classroom authority to generate productive learning environments and reduce classroom management issues.

Key words: Classroom management, cogenerative dialogue, co-teaching; interstitial culture, suspension centers.

Employing cogenerative dialogue to share classroom authority

Research indicates that instructional misalignment produces significant classroom management problems in urban schools. Ball (2002) extensively details how African Americans, racial minorities, and at-risk-students are particularly vulnerable to classroom management concerns since school completion acts as a gatekeeper to more advanced studies. Current research maintains that many classroom management concerns stem from the differences of race and social class between students and teachers (Ball, 1995b; Buzzelli and Johnston, 2002; Delpit, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Pace and Hemmings, 2006). Recent classroom management research tends to bifurcate the racial and ethnic make-up of the participants thereby simplifying classroom authority issues into a neatly constructed rubric measuring only

race (Delpit, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Pace, 2006). The aforementioned literature highlights that culturally responsive pedagogy bridges the racial partition between white teachers and African American students, thus creating more manageable classes. Additionally, such bifurcated models may be inadequate, particularly in urban areas like New York, where neat rubrics denoting only race are too simplistic because they account for neither social class nor the influence of parenting (Lareau, 2003). Although there are merits to such approaches, a teacher needs both practical skills and theoretical understandings in order to create productive learning environments. This research centers on such skills and demonstrates how students and a teacher can collaboratively build such environments.

This work reports the intricate student and teacher strategies employed in an effort to share classroom authority in a New York City High School Suspension Center. The results do not fit into convenient categories. Specifically, this research details how students and teachers used cogenerative dialogue, a teaching method that centers on member responsibility, to generate a distinctive, member explicit, interstitial co-teaching culture to help navigate classroom authority concerns. This work has found that distributing classroom authority among participants tends to produce teaching practices that are aligned with youth culture and such developed practices reflect its members. This work builds on the body of cogenerative dialogue research and maintains that salient student and teacher discourse changes the material and structure resources in the classroom (Tobin, 2005; Elemenky, 2005).

Othoring is a major obstacle to successfully managed classrooms

In the course of this research, the investigation studied the concept of “othering.” I was principally informed by Emdin’s (2007) work where he defines the concept as a procedure negatively demarking one individual or group from another. In the course of writing this article, on the basis of intriguing movie reviews, I viewed *The Class* (2009), a French film that depicts a Paris high school that is alternative in all but name. The movie encapsulates classroom behavior and teacher culture with such precision that one watches it as if it were a documentary. It captures the concept of othering with such accuracy that it startles even veteran educators.

The teacher in this film, Mr. Marin, instructs a classroom filled with the children of immigrants who represent the countries of France’s colonial past. The students have all the accoutrements seen in American classrooms: cellphones, iPods, loose-fitting jeans, hoodies, baseball caps, slang, anger, sweet smiles, attitudes and stories that inspire you, and, at times, break your heart. They are portrayed empathetically but without gloss or false emotion and the story does not end with mass scholarships to the Sorbonne.

In this film, the students participate in a classroom culture over which they have no control. They are the recipients of a caring teacher’s best plans but are never allowed the role of collaborator. Their failure to respond to the sincere efforts of Mr. Marin leaves him sputtering in rage. In one scene, he kicks a desk. In another, he angrily breaks into a playground meeting of his students to get in one last word. The movie’s theme does not excuse the words below from teacher Lawrence Apple, but it does speak to the complexities of teaching in an urban school comprised of suspended students.

Classroom authority and othering

These damn suspended kids! All they do is fight and here

I am trying to control them? Pointless! They don’t listen to me. They don’t participate in class. They don’t want to learn anything. The administration wants me to teach them something meaningful for their futures. It is a joke! Suspended kids who are in and out of jail, and I am their teacher. Crazy! This is Riker’s Island Prep (Riker’s Island is a New York City prison).

Lawrence Apple, Teacher, Liberty Suspension Center

Lawrence Apple, a pseudonym, verbalizes his frustration at his lack of classroom effectiveness and he predicts a bleak outlook for his students’ futures. Upon reading this text, one might assume these comments were made by a teacher describing students with whom he had no common bond. Yet, Lawrence Apple is a Guyanese immigrant whom many people perceive as African American. His comments capture the complexity of race in teaching in large urban centers like New York City. Apple negatively frames urban youth and criminalizes their problems. His remarks are angrily rooted in the notion that he is fundamentally different from his students. Apple describes his students as if they were “other,” even though he and many of his students are descended from the African Diaspora. Fanon (1967/1994) argued that “other” represents a danger to individual and institutional freedoms and therefore must be controlled. Said (1978), building on this notion of the “other,” maintained that a dialectical relationship exists between self and other, where each strives for control. I use Fanon and Said’s notions of the other and the struggle for control as a way to understand an underlying culture of resistance in urban schools. The education literature on classroom management often still stresses teacher control. In this work, I detail that classroom management concerns are frequently conceptualized as control over the other opposed to shared control with one another.

Apple’s orientation to his students as other diminishes his concern for their education and seemingly his compassion for their welfare. Furthermore, his anger and prejudice harden these differences and creates animosity that will spill into his teaching. When teachers view students from Apple’s extreme position, it shapes profound instructional misalignment that manifests itself as classroom management problems (Willis, 2001; Mullooly and Varenne, 2006). Apple’s comments are severe, yet do the underscore many teachers’ struggle to effectively manage their classrooms. The principle of control over one another still informs much of the research that has been conducted on classroom authority (Tobin, 2005).

Research questions

Research has explored how classroom authority can be deployed in ways that serve both students and teachers (Pace and Hemming, 2006). Additionally, research on

cultural responsive pedagogy has provided an important lens from which to understand some of the classroom behavioral concerns in schools (Delpit, 1996; Ladson-Billings; 2006). Both the literature on classroom authority and cultural responsive pedagogy informed the research questions. This investigation explores an understudied topic in the literature: co-teaching as a method to distribute classroom authority. This research was influenced by the recent work on distributed school leadership (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2007). I expand the notion of distributed school leadership to the classroom level and examine how shared authority is enacted in the classroom. This work theorizes that sharing instructional time distributes classroom authority and affords more teaching and learning opportunities while minimizing classroom behavioral incidents. The current work addresses the two following research questions. Each considers how cogenerative dialogue can foster a culture of co-teaching by dispensing classroom authority among stakeholders.

1. Can a student and his teacher utilize cogenerative dialogue to discuss ways to co-teach, thereby creating more equitably distributed classroom authority?

2. Can co-teaching distribute classroom authority and simultaneously minimize classroom behavioral episodes?

Previous research and posing a new question
The asymmetry between instructional approaches and student learning strategies are central to understanding issues of classroom authority. The differences between middle class teaching strategies and urban students learning practices are widely misunderstood (Emdin and Lehner, 2006). This misalignment occurs at nearly every level of the educational system and causes frustration for all participants. At this research site, exasperated teachers regularly complained that students were resistant to learning and disrespectful. Most complaints were more politically correct than Mr. Apple's, nonetheless, the frustration had similar themes. In addition to the cacophony of teacher voices, students grumbled that the curriculum was uninteresting, the content matter unrelated to their lives, and the teachers boring. The exasperation of each partner underscored how misalignment can undermine effective teaching and learning.

A number of researchers have examined urban classroom authority yet the disparity between teacher strategies to educate and student approaches to learn is still a widely misunderstood topic. Metz (1978), a pioneering researcher in classroom management, conceptualized classroom authority as a social construction. Her research examined how middle schools and their white classroom teachers routinely attempted to have control over African American students. Others have built on Metz's work. Particularly, Pace and Hemmings (2006) build on Metz's research and deploy her concepts to a new generation of classroom management research. Mullooly and Varenne (2006)

maintain that school structures perpetuate disparity by unequally distributing key symbolic and material resources to schools. Delpit (1996) described how schools often privilege white, middle class students by reproducing a school culture that rewards demonstrations of class-based language enactment. She maintained that teaching geared toward standardized testing often precludes African American from achieving as well as their white peers.

Elmesky (2005) outlines how African American youth often utilize play as a viable tool to shape classroom structures that actually enhance the quality of their learning. In her work, Elmesky details how these dispositions enacted by African American youth would likely be interpreted by teachers in traditional learning environments as disruptive, even detrimental, to developing a productive classroom environment. Tobin (2005) identifies that teaching practices initiated by middle class teachers are often at odds with the social and cultural capital possessed by African Americans.

My experience as a New York City (NYC) public school teacher has encouraged me to seek a more nuanced view of instructional misalignment. The NYC public schools may contain the most varied student body in educational history. Research that simply posits a view of schooling that describes middle class teachers and African American students does not describe immigration patterns in the United States. These patterns are magnified in New York City. Delpit and Ladson-Billings, two of the more well-known researchers on this topic, recognize and evaluate problems in urban schools but their scope fails to capture the complexity of New York City schools. A city of 170 languages forces scholars to consider the issue of instructional misalignment beyond the lens of race. Hegemony and class reproduction may be, in fact, more central issues. Urban students often dress and speak in a similar manner and their styles often reflect contemporary aspects of African American youth culture but many of the similarities end there.

Spring (2004) agrees that NYC students are a cross-selection of people who characterize the patterns of immigration in the United States. He maintains that race too often is construed as a political construct and American educational researchers have misapplied this notion to their work. American culture values individuality and up by the bootstraps clichés. Educational researchers should more readily acknowledge the role that hegemony plays in the production of an underclass and study more fully the intricate role of immigration in schools. Lawrence Apple did not view his comments to be about race but about misbehavior and misunderstanding across inter and intra cultural lines. However, in delivering his views, he philosophically demarcates himself from his students, the "others," which has significantly misaligned his teaching outcomes. One of the purposes of this research is to find an approach that provides a common ground for success in the

classrooms of teachers like Lawrence Apple so that effective instruction and learning can occur. Cogenerative dialogue and co-teacher are two such tools to this end.

Research site and methods

The current work chronicles an academic year (9 months) of ethnographic study at a Liberty High School Suspension Center in an 11th grade American History class. Liberty High School (LHS) is located in the East New York section of Brooklyn and is organized by the Alternative Division of New York City Schools. Suspension centers are small high schools that students attend after receiving a suspension for committing a violent offense. Students in suspension centers are precluded from returning to their home school for one academic year. Although there are over 40 detention sites, the New York City Department of Education has only 4 year-long suspension centers. LHS students range in age from 14 to 19 years old. 85% are males and 15% are females. LHS's roster records the student population as 60% African American, 38% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. The roster simply describes the students' race and does not reflect their ethnicity, which is more descriptive of this diverse student population.

Educational research has a strong tradition of valuing quantitative measures. Quantitative methodology provides significant benefits for studying classroom management and behavioral concerns. It accommodates a large number of subjects and has proven test and measurement reliability for quantifying particular classroom actions into larger groupings (Cresswell, 2003). Also, it provides cross sectional comparisons that provide macro-level understanding of classroom management data compared to smaller data sets from school based ethnography (Roth, 2006). There is, however, a growing inclination to acknowledge the importance of qualitative methods to provide insight into the multi-logicity of the behavioral concerns in classroom life, which may be best captured through ethnography. This study employs a qualitative methodology to provide insights into the use of a precise teaching methodology, cogenerative dialogue, which may not be easily accessed by quantitative measurements.

An ethnographic design was used as a way to understand how classroom authority was enacted in Liberty High School. Wolcott (1999) described ethnography as a method of looking and seeing. This research used ethnography to provide a method of 'sense making' (Garfinkel, 1967; Roth, 2006) and to better understand participant voices and numerous data resources. The two aforementioned research questions are presented because they were the most prominently coded themes during data analysis. I used a procedure identifying priori and inductive approaches to produce codes, groupings, categories and themes that previously have been used to study classroom life.

During the coding process, the subjects of shared classroom authority and co-teaching were separately coded. Once themes were coded, I used Roth's (2006) notion of "zoom and focus" on interactions to further explore its significance. Roth (2006) utilizes zooming and focusing as an analytic tool to recognize patterns in social life.

Additionally, this study uses a case study model to understand how classroom authority can be distributed. I examined roles for all students participating in the research, but this paper specifically focuses on one student, Cameron, and the convergence of his expanded student roles and his participation in cogenerative dialogue over nine months. In particular, I detail how Cameron Rogers, a pseudonym, sought ways to share classroom teaching time and authority. The data resources consistently demonstrate how Cameron actively sought a role and a voice in the class. These patterns of coherence were coded as attempts to share classroom authority and co-teaching respectively.

I zoom in as Cameron, a LHS student, interacts with his social studies teacher. Cameron is a student who is enrolled in an 11th grade American Social Studies Course. Employing Roth's approach, I examine their interactions and exchanges for patterns and contradictions through Roth's approach. The two episodes presented below illuminate clear patterns of coherence supporting the efficacy of cogenerative dialogue to address classroom management concerns.

Coding: classroom authority and cogenerative dialogue

The current work studies Cameron's use of cogenerative dialogue to produce, reproduce and transform the distribution of classroom authority in his social studies classroom. Based on Roth and Tobin's (1999) original work, researchers have examined how this practice coexisted with the development of new learning strategies to improve science and math classrooms. I built on this work and extended the scope of the research by examining how the initiation of cogenerative dialogue often facilitated the development of new learning roles for students and expanded instructional opportunities for teachers. This research explores the complex social and cultural process involved in producing shared classroom authority and describing its replication in the classroom to create instructional alignment. This study examines an under explored topic in the literature: it traces previously undemonstrated episodes of shared classroom authority first exhibited in cogenerative dialogue, and then reenacted in the classroom.

Data: coding enactments of co-teaching and shared classroom authority

Cameron did not simply "co-teach" after some inspirational talk and a few cogenerative dialogues. That is the formula for "inspiring" movies. For Cameron, his classroom progress was a longer journey. Cameron was initially very reserved in the classroom and he rarely participated. Later, as he became more involved, Cameron's classroom participation grew gradually. When

Cameron and his teacher talked about classroom authority, his later enactment of such a role in a 'middle' step was central to the passage. Appiah (2006) describes this learning state between full enactments of a new role as interstitial culture. Cameron took an instructional role in the classroom after 10 cogenerative dialogues and also began to demonstrate the interstitial practices of shared authority.

It is worthy to note that once Cameron volunteered to participate in the cogenerative he started to speak-up in the first session. Such early enactments were coded as 'shared classroom authority' or 'co-teaching' but they were not the more pronounced version demonstrated later. Nonetheless, coding of such occurrences fell into the larger categories on the understanding that small enactments of new learning culture is often required before full-fledged demonstrations (Roth, 2006). One such example appears below.

Cameron: This is what I am saying Mr. L- we can really teach this stuff. These dudes get power. My peers understand strength. We could use that in understanding the Spanish-American War.

Teacher: How?

Cameron: Well, you can talk about it in simple terms. America wanted Cuba way back when. What was it: "walk soft and carry a big stick." Well, that ain't just Teddy Roosevelt. That is life- like the hood.

Teacher: Okay, but how can we use it?

Cameron: I don't know this American history. But, I know that in East New York people are always striving to keep their territory and their reps. I don't know how, but the ideas seem close to each other.

The vignette above demonstrates one clear theme: when a student performed the curriculum tasks in class and chose to be fully invested in the lesson, he more easily produced the learning cultures needed for the lesson. Moreover, because the learning practices were cogenerative, Cameron usually showed full engagement when learning the content matter. The interesting result was a burst of confidence that encouraged the student to attempt to co-teach the material, often at a level unsuited to his current knowledge. I therefore needed to nuance Appiah's (2006) original notion. Appiah noted that interstitial culture was a type of middle space between cultural enacted. This was true for Cameron as seen above. He needed to attempt participation and co-teaching a number of times before it was all together successful. Cameron was employing a type of interstitial participation and co-teaching culture before it worked well in the classroom. Social life does not play out as neatly in class as in theory. Cameron's ability to collaborate grew over time. However, once these new forms of knowledge were understood through cogenerative dialogue, Cameron often displayed this new knowledge in the classroom and placed himself in the position of being able to communicate this knowledge to others.

The research collected data from a number of sources. At each stage of the research, data were collected via field notes, interviews, group discussions, and digital videotapes of the cogenerative dialogues and classes. The students, social studies teacher, and researchers viewed the video in iMovie on a Macintosh MacBook Pro. In particular, the digital video served as an important artifact. The student, social studies teacher, and researchers reviewed it often during cogenerative dialogue. During these sessions, they analyzed the ways that students and teachers engaged each other and the curriculum. They then analyzed similar interactions. Participants used these recorded sessions to speak about ways to integrate classroom structure so that all students more fully engaged in classroom learning and students understood the atmosphere necessary for successful classroom study. By attempting to create more student learning opportunities and empowering in-class learning experiences, participants in this research engaged in many distinct roles. At all stages of the research, much of the data were collected via digital video tapings of the cogenerative dialogues and classes. Regularly students, researchers and the social studies teacher would view the video in the Macintosh software application, iMovie.

Introduction to results

Cameron had been at Liberty 2 months when I asked him to join the cogenerative dialogue group. His hunched shoulders, his eyes focused on the desk, his initial unwillingness to interact with his peers all seemed to be wordless "no trespassing" signs. In some ways, the difficulties of being accused of a school crime, which ultimately lead to his suspension, seemed to have made him very insular. He made a point to separate himself from others. His body language suggested that he wanted to keep to himself. Cameron could exhibit a quick rage when others invaded his perceived space. He always wore a baseball cap with an unbent visor, and spoke to his teachers only when spoken to, though always respectfully. Fascinated by his iPod, he compliantly put it away upon request, though it would reappear the next day. Every other day or so, Cameron would suddenly bolt from his seat to go to the boys' room, a place where students made surreptitious phone calls or met friends. Cameron spoke reverently about Brooklyn, his home borough, and the latest musician who impressed him with swagger, glitz, and the aura of power. Despite his age, Cameron was a freshman in terms of the credits earned. He described how his freshman label caused him shame. He has an individualized education plan, (IEP), and is learning social studies in an inclusive setting where learning disabled students attend classes with their non-disabled peers. As recorded in field notes, he expressed ambivalence about school. Often, he

described his desire to succeed. At other times, he expressed his situation bleakly: "I don't care, they are all stupid at this school and I am never getting out of here anyhow."

Like many suspended students, he seemed unable to plan a successful course of action for his schooling. When asked about his part in any failure he continued a harangue about the school. During interviews, he often was reluctant to accept personal responsibility. However, when asked if he expected teachers to pass him despite his truancy he looked down. In spite of his athletic skill, Cameron once stated, "they even flunked me in gym." Before assignment to Liberty, he attended a large high school near Coney Island and went to a class or two before finding an unguarded door for his retreat. Even at Liberty he was never without his hooded sweatshirt. If Cameron had to leave, it would not be a coat in a locker that stopped him. In fact, Cameron was at Liberty because a school security guard did try to stop him from leaving at his last high school. Cameron pushed the guard, the guard tumbled and Cameron exited. This act of impulse cost him a year's assignment to a suspension center.

Cameron Rogers was assigned to the social studies class at Liberty, where he seemed to search for his classroom role. He often acted roughly with his peers, yet, somewhat paradoxically, he could exude great warmth. The research film chronicles his search for a suitable classroom identity. For example, the video captures his protective body language and his mumbled imprecations when his space was violated. During a research meeting, Cameron playfully commented on his behavior stating: "I don't know why I am trying to look so tough." Cameron's slurs and rough language are also detailed on the video. He often cursed and could act aggressively. At times, Cameron also connected to his classmates to whom he expressed forms of solidarity via his expressions of warmth, shared stories, and playful roughness. The video observed his polite behavior and expressions of interest to be shown to any student or teacher who sat near him and talked. I included him as part of a group of students who took part in a fledgling project on cogenerative dialogue. The students and instructor made the class user friendly by discussing curricular issues and classroom power sharing through the use of cogenerative dialogue.

I traced data that tracked Cameron's new learning behaviors in cogenerative dialogue and how these actions were exhibited in the classroom. This research reports that data derived from recorded video from the second week until the last day of the school year. This paper sequentially examines two taped vignettes to illustrate cogenerative dialogue as a generative field to grow and produce new classroom culture. Cogenerative dialogue, as evidenced in these scenes, coexists with high levels of group solidarity and joint commitment to successful classroom learning. These vignettes

demonstrate how culture learned in cogenerative dialogue can produce practices that bring alignment between a teacher's pedagogical strategies and students' learning behaviors. These vignettes also demonstrate how culture learned in a cogenerative classroom can collectively produce practices to help align a teacher's pedagogical strategies and students' learning behaviors.

Research question 1: Can students and a teacher discuss ways to distribute classroom authority?

Two vignettes demonstrate the efficacy of co-teaching strategies produced in cogenerative dialogue and how they dispense classroom authority more evenly. I argue that when classroom authority is shared, co-produced pedagogy generates more successful curriculum understandings and behavioral problems are less common.

The first vignette is taken from a cogenerative dialogue on a day when Cameron, his classmate Ramel, and the teacher participated in this group. This cogenerative dialogue occurred three months into the research. During the cogenerative dialogue session, the teacher asked Cameron if he would start the session. Cameron spoke informally but he recounted the three basic tenets of cogenerative dialogue:

1. Students must show respect within the group and classroom;
2. One person would talk at a time, and;
3. The group needed to design a plan to further the educational goals of cogenerative learning in the social studies class.

The group discussed ways to cooperatively develop the learning practices in the class and, from the outset, Cameron and Ramel seemed fully invested in this process. Later in the week Cameron, Ramel, the teacher, and researchers reviewed the video on a Macintosh Powerbook Pro using iMovie. The research reveals evidence that showed that were highly engaged during the 22 minutes meeting. Informed by Collins (2004), the empirical evidence demonstrating elevated levels of emotional energy was seen in the group's mutual focus, shared mood and comprehensive focus to the task as reviewed on the video. While coding the data, the research team noted 10 different statements from Cameron that referred to co-teaching. The data noted that his input could be particularly helpful if his suggestions could be implemented in the class.

During the second and third levels of analysis, I watched the videotape in real time. I noticed the sustained attention and ardent interest Cameron showed during the meeting. His posture was upright, he leaned slightly forward and his eyes focused on the speaker, all indicators of non-verbal participation. At times, Cameron's suggestions became the focal point of our meeting when he commented on the quality of teaching and learning in our classroom. When reviewing this section of the video, I saw how he offered a number of co-teaching suggestions during session that could be

helpful to distributing classroom authority. I later shared these vignettes with Cameron to confirm that he in fact was suggesting that the class employ co-teaching (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). He agreed. Cameron also noted the intense focus displayed in the meeting. He commented that if a high level of student focus could be produced in the classroom, like it was in the cogenerative dialogue, then the likelihood learning could increase. Particularly, Cameron commented that if future classes could be inaugurated differently, then the interests of his classmates would increase.

Hey, I like this video. I think we need to do something about the way we're teaching this stuff. Did you see how everyone was involved in on the tape. Well, it is not like that in class. Not everyone is interested and we could change that up by doing something related- something that represents the students. (Cameron, cogenerative dialogue)

His suggestions helped both the teacher and the student/researchers pinpoint that shared classroom authority could change learning results. As a result, Cameron became a vital part of creating a new learning environment in the class. Primarily, he was able to reproduce the culture that he enacted in cogenerative dialogue and nuance these ideas for classroom use. For example, Cameron attempted to involve himself to the greatest extent possible. The field notes and the video also capture how Cameron enthusiastically interacts with Ramel and the teacher.

Another instance of shared authority is seen in the transcript below which was recorded in the 12th week of research. In this session, Cameron suggested a strategy to insure that his peers stay on task and involved in the lesson.

Cameron: We need to connect what we are learning to life... to life, to Brooklyn.

Teacher: Okay. What should be do?

Cameron: We could talk about the rap wars

Teacher: How would that work?

Cameron: You know, we are talking about war. We could relate that to rap. 50 Cent is trying to take over. Dip Set is trying to take over. We could use that and relate it to social studies. We really could use anything. It don't need to be rap. Anything could work if we all try.

Cameron suggested the development of a contemporary approach to insure that his classmates related to the lesson. He expressed his ideas with energy but also with an overt concern for his peers, indicating that his suggestion was, at least in part, an act of cooperative learning. Cameron articulated that the group could achieve more together if these peer focused recommendations could be implemented. Ramel excitedly resonated with Cameron's idea, showing that he also valued the importance of collective achievement.

Cameron, Ramel, and the teacher discovered the importance that collective achievement and group orientation by the use of cogenerative dialogue played in his schooling. Cameron then stated that the next step was to implement practices which would mutually benefit all participants.

Addressing the need to align classroom teaching and learning, Cameron created peer relevant, urban contemporary issues to relate to the standard curriculum to create instructional alignment. As he had stated above, he saw how peer interest could be heightened by implementing student suggestions and squaring them with curriculum standards. Cogenerative dialogue provided this field of possibility where Cameron, Ramel, and the teacher expanded the normal parameters of classroom life and rethought current practices and roles. Because rules and goals were not pre-structured, Cameron brought to the groups' collective understanding the need to insure peer learning. Possibilities for alignment occurred in real-time by participants within the field when the group implemented a practice to follow-up on Cameron's suggestion. Cogenerative dialogue allowed the social space for roles of teacher and student to collaboratively restructure our learning environment.

Research question 2: Can co-produced pedagogy afford more learning opportunities?

The small group sessions enabled me to study Cameron's expanded student roles beyond the alignment created in classroom use of cogenerative dialogue. Upon micro-analysis, the cogenerative dialogue produced the social space that helped Cameron build the positive emotional energy to enact new learning practices. One of my concerns in the research was that Cameron would not be accepted by his classmates as a classroom leader. He placed barriers around himself, as noted previously, and the students knew him as a somewhat reclusive, and at times, even a slightly menacing individual. However, a small number of students had broken through his reserve and recognized a warmer, more interactive peer, and their goodwill assisted immensely when Cameron took his role as a classroom facilitator. Most importantly, Cameron did his part. He showed respect for his classmates in his cogenerative role and he showed an interest in the material that encouraged them to do likewise. His focus, animated involvement, and elevated mood increased his sense of group membership and resulted in higher degrees of solidarity with his classmates.

Cameron, some of his peers, and the teacher began to share a passionate goal to change the outcomes in our class. In addition, Cameron's suggestion to keep peers on task and involved in the class were a micro-demonstration of his new found desire to merge his knowledge with classroom practice. His demonstration of how to keep students involved heralded more action on his part. In that moment, although he only produced the co-teaching dispositions in cogenerative dialogue,

Cameron envisioned a curriculum that would engage his classmates in the lesson. It was here that Cameron began the creation of the temporal cultural needed to connect the lives of students with the curriculum. He recognized that his suggestions about rap, music, or Brooklyn street life were only temporal practices needed to garner interest and as he stated, seen in a previous discussion, that “really anything can work.” This idea prefaced the creation of interstitial culture for the functional purposes of connecting the less engaged students more fully with the curriculum. Cameron suggested that through the imaginative use of youth culture could create a positive association with the broader curriculum. It was these initial steps which lead to more of Cameron’s peers becoming involved in changing the way authority was distributed in the classroom.

While examining the video, I studied how Cameron began to co-teach during classroom time. I examined coded video interactions Cameron had with his peers. The video showed 106 separate episodes of co-teaching over a nine month period. Many of the co-teaching efforts were not particularly strong, especially at the beginning. Often these co-teaching examples showed his inexperience and his lack of background knowledge in social studies. During these times, he attempted to introduce ideas appropriated from cogenerative dialogue meetings into the class. These attempts showed that he was grasping the ideas but not in their totality. As with all teachers, he would veer off unexpectedly into uncharted territory or find himself lost in an example and the teacher would gently bring him back to the subject. I analyzed all coded “co-teaching” vignettes and closely examined the video where Cameron seemed to enact this new practice. The coded examples clearly show that Cameron began to assert himself in the class more effectively with experience and a clear plan formed in the group cogenerative meetings.

The research does not show any direct trajectory for co-teaching. I analyzed the video weekly during participant research meetings to monitor progress. But as to be expected with any new form of learning, Cameron did not regularly enact the co-teaching practices in the classroom that were developed in cogenerative dialogue, even though these meetings occurred weekly. During this period, cogenerative dialogue seemed to highlight only the possibilities of the practice. However, as time progressed, Cameron exhibited multiple roles in class that he first demonstrated during cogenerative dialogue.

This vignette took place during the third month after cogenerative dialogue was initiated in the classroom. Prior to ending cogenerative dialogue two days earlier, the students and teacher decided to co-teach specific parts of the lesson on influential twentieth-century American social reformers. Cameron’s responsibility was to assist the teacher in introducing the aim of the lesson and to facilitate class involvement. Cameron told his class-

mates politely and clearly to take their seats so that class could begin. Then, he helped the teacher introduce the lesson by answering the focusing question. Ten minutes elapsed and the teacher inaugurated the main part of the lesson. During research meeting, the teacher shared that “things went smoothly- better than planned” (Personal Communication, 2005). Later, the research team performed an in-depth video analysis of the class.

Cameron was a clear leader in this class. Specifically, he orientated the class by using peer terminology to describe the topics that were going to be covered. Cameron also used initiative in the role of cultural broker by attempting to bridge the generational, cultural, and racial differences that might have impeded the lesson’s effectiveness. The following transcript records how Cameron skillfully translated the aim and restated it to his peers in simpler terminology.

Teacher: Today’s lesson is on reform. With that said, can you think of someone who changed history? Can we think of anyone like that?

Cameron: Rodney King.

Teacher: Rodney King. Okay, how did he change things?

Cameron: Well, when he got knocked*(a street term for arrested) and the riots happened, everyone asked why this happened. He changed things because people, black people started to ask... “what’s up?”

Teacher: Okay, I can see that and a lot of people would agree with you.

Cameron’s attempt to integrate the day’s topic of “reform” with Rodney King was a clear example of his support of the lesson. This attempt was an effort to make the lesson assessable to his peers. Educators could fairly question his example of Rodney King as a reformer or his chronology of the Los Angeles riots. Such examinations would miss the greater pedagogical issues. Cameron engaged and he co-taught. He changed his position in social space from student to classroom advisor, and sincerely desired to assist in the lesson. Just two days removed from our cogenerative dialogue, Cameron saw himself as equally responsible for the results of the lesson and took action on this belief.

Cameron also attempted to align the question addressed in the aim. He did this by reflecting on the African American experience. By raising the social issue of racism, he mediated between the aim of the lesson and ideas he thought his peers would readily understand. His use of an urban analogy (Seiler, 2002) provided a structure to his peers by expanding the context of their traditional understanding of reformer by including Rodney King. When Cameron cited such an infamous event, a number of his peers were able to situate the canonical definition of reform, and juxtapose it to their experience of racism. By providing this analogy, Cameron intervened by supplying scaffolding by which his peers could become central participants in the lesson. His expansion

of reformer also broadened the scope of conversation from textbook social issues to the real life issue of racism.

Students built on Cameron's illustration and added the names of attorneys, hip hop artists, politicians and actors as examples of Black reformers. Due to Cameron's co-teaching, the teacher's initial query for a reformer had changed. Cameron had provided an appropriate context to start the conversation. Now with the classroom practice more aligned, the teacher continued to build from Cameron's example. Additionally, with an avid learning environment set, the teacher could introduce material that would enhance the students understanding of what a reformer is; contrasting the word's referent with that of entrepreneur. By comparing and contrasting the words and then relating these examples back to the lesson, students participated more actively and shared their ideas more freely.

I note here that Cameron's example, although heartfelt, was not understood by a good percentage of the students in the class who were recent immigrants and/or too young to remember or relate to the Rodney King example. Cameron had done to his classmates what had often been done to him in his education. He used an example selected only from the perspective of his culture and attitudes. The failure of Cameron was mediated by his classmates, however, another example of interstitial culture. Although all students did not know Rodney King, they did know the behaviors that caused the Rodney King fiasco and they built on these in the class in positive contributions.

Cameron also exhibited additional behaviors that helped structure the in class learning. Upon close examination of the video, I saw evidence of Cameron's ability to transport culture learned from the cogenerative dialogue and reenact these practices in the classroom. His classroom interactions with peers showed signs of mutual respect. These interactions seemed to have built small amounts of group solidarity. Cameron also exhibited the same high emotional energy interactions in the classroom that were seen earlier in cogenerative dialogue. Before class began, Cameron was shaking hands with fellow classmates and seemed to have a good rapport with many of his peers. Later, when I questioned him about these behaviors, Cameron articulated that he saw himself as a type of intermediary between our small cogenerative dialogue group and the larger class.

As the class transitioned from the aim to the body of the lesson, Cameron was actively engaged and visibly supportive of my role as teacher. He demonstrated this support by maintaining eye contact and responding to questions asked of the class. Upon close analysis, symmetry existed between his alert, slightly leaning forward posture seen during cogenerative dialogues and his engaged pose seen during class. In fact, within a few minutes of starting this class, other students also started to lean forward- seemingly engaged and focused on the

lesson. Even Ramel, who, two days earlier, was not facing the group, now sat upright, faced the teacher, and made eye-contact during the lesson. Cameron had set the tone that this class was important and worthy of his attention and he demonstrated this by being attentive. Cameron's alertness coexisted with the attentiveness and focus of his peers.

Cameron expressed his group membership and solidarity by affording the teacher a high-level of respect and often giving him his undivided attention during the lesson. In turn, his attentiveness influenced the group and set the stage for larger successful interaction ritual chains (Collins, 2004). In time, this type of attentiveness would become a mainstay in the classroom but its roots must be traced back to Cameron's initial behavior seen in cogenerative dialogue. As a result of the cogenerative dialogue, Cameron now had higher expectations of himself and his peers. As he expressed in the smaller group, Cameron envisioned our class as a space where collective learning took place and success was shared as a group. I saw this attitude expressed in his behaviors throughout the class. Although this analysis is only focused on his body posture, and his non-verbal responses, they are significant in expressing his role as a legitimate peripheral participant (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In watching the digital video of Cameron, it became apparent that he was already looking for ways to more dynamically contribute in classroom activities. He had become a participant, not a peripheral observer; cogenerative dialogue simply created the opportunity for him to focus on these new roles. When I invited him into the group, he was ready for his new roles and pursued them.

For Cameron, social studies was intellectually rigorous and an intensely social event where he interacted with the curriculum, classmates, and the teacher. Cameron went beyond his responsibility as a student and now straddled the lines of multiple, complex roles and fluently enacted them. Although his excellent verbal skills set the stage for his participation, Cameron also interacted effectively in these roles because cogenerative dialogue had afforded the social space to discover these new classroom positions and the time to envision how he might enact these new roles.

Discussion: Understanding distributed classroom management

This paper demonstrates that when a student and his teacher share key resources notable progress occurs in academics and in classroom behavior. Specifically, this work underscores how a teacher and a student can collaboratively share classroom authority. This research is significant because many urban high schools struggle with the complex task of creating a culturally relevant, engaging learning environment that focuses on learning. This is no small matter. In many large urban centers, including New York City, teachers routinely fail to develop a suitable learning environment often due to classroom

management concerns. In this study, I learned that sharing classroom authority and allowing students opportunities to co-teach transformed a learning environment and created powerful learning opportunities. Cogenerative dialogue afforded a space where a student developed new learning practices that were specific to his class. These learning behaviors also contributed to observable progress in this student's attitude toward class and his classmates.

I examined 106 individually coded episodes of Cameron's enactments of co-teaching. Particular attention was paid to the effect of these actions on the distribution of classroom authority. By the second month of the study, Cameron showed signs of comfort with his participation in cogenerative dialogue and classroom discussions. His interactions enlarged and he was observed in the classroom successfully interacting with other students. By the third month of the research Cameron began engaging more actively in classroom discussions. Also during this time, the data shows how Cameron started to demonstrate micro-level enactments of co-teaching. He appeared to have relaxed even more and continued to have limited, yet successful interactions with his peers. It seemed like Cameron had gained more group acceptance and he continued to participate in cogenerative dialogue. As mentioned, he sat upright and listened respectfully to each group member's comments. He made eye contact and exhibited other behaviors associated with active learning. It is in this 3rd month, that the data shows limited co-teaching demonstrated by Cameron's participation in group discussion and his introduction of new ideas. He never spoke for extended periods of time but his interactions demonstrated his move toward more enactments of co-teaching and an increased discussion time focusing on social studies content knowledge.

This research demonstrates how shared classroom authority improved member participation, and often created a simulating learning environment. I focused on Cameron and watched him create and share his learning culture through his participation in cogenerative dialogue. In each of the coded patterns, Cameron fixed his attention on the class and his responsibilities. He created discussion about social studies practices and how the class could better align classroom conversation to support effective, engaging learning.

After one discussion, which usually lasted about thirty minutes, the group spontaneously started to rap. I was surprised and stayed with it as a teachable moment. Later, upon close analysis and reflection, I realized that the spontaneous song celebrated a sense of belonging, a sense of accomplishment and a sense of pride. The practices of cogenerative dialogue created, in no small part, this social space allowing the enactment of new student roles offering students possibilities that are not often explored in the classroom.

Summary

This case study examined Cameron's participation from that of a limitedly engaged student to one who initiated the distribution of classroom authority by co-teaching. His participation in cogenerative dialogue coexisted with his ability to co-teach as a way to share classroom authority. Over the course of the research 106 episodes of co-teaching were exhibited as seen in the video analysis of cogenerative dialogues and classroom instruction. During these demonstrations, Cameron utilized his knowledge of urban youth culture to align instruction between students and the teacher. He also influenced classroom by his suggestions in cogenerative dialogue and helped create a classroom where disruption was seen as counterproductive and not the norm.

It is worth noting at this point that the elusive credits that kept Cameron a freshman well into his teenage years started to earn more school credits and his leadership skills appeared to show in other aspects of his education. Liberty had a very energetic communications teacher who taught students the use of video and audio technology. Cameron soon became a leader in this class and his iPod soon contained music and work created by Liberty students. At the conclusion of the ninth month, Cameron had become a central figure in his 11th grade Social Studies class. This young man was accruing credits and taking responsibility for his classroom behavior and his demeanor. He accepted a role in the cogenerative process and allowed the process to shape him in positive ways.

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