

## Chapter 4

# Exploring Cogenerativity in Initial Teacher Education School-University Partnerships Using the Methodology of Metalogue

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**Abstract** This chapter explores the concept of ‘cogenerativity’ by providing three different examples of initial teacher education school-university partnership projects in Australia. The first of these professional experience projects drew on the use of participatory approaches in a new Master of Teaching program; the second involved a project of co-teaching triads; and the third concerned the development of university, school and system partnerships. The authors used the methodology of metalogue to engage in dialogical exchange about the notion of cogenerativity in relation to the literature and through the lens of each project to examine the nature of the concept for developing and sustaining professional experience partnerships. The chapter concludes that cogenerativity may be useful for conceptualising why and how initial teacher education school-university partnerships flourish. The knowledge developed may assist educators and researchers not only to create supportive conditions for the development of initial teacher education school-university partnerships but also to [re]imagine the possibilities of such partnerships to realise continual expansive transformative learning for all involved. The use of metalogue offered a unique research methodology for the authors who each explored their experience of school-university partnerships. At the same time, the use of metalogue illustrated cogenerativity in practice. The approach also enabled the authors to highlight possible challenges and limitations for creating and sustaining cogenerativity in the context of initial teacher education school-university partnerships.

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## Background

The genesis for this chapter emerged when we, Linda, Helen and Debbie (authors), met for the first time at an Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Special Interest Group (SIG) workshop. Here Linda shared how she had contemplated the philosophical and theoretical notion of ‘cogenerativity’ to describe and explain how educators and researchers might create the conditions for initial teacher education (ITE) school-university partnerships to develop and flourish. Linda’s contemplations of her recent work as program director of a new graduate-entry teacher education program that involved school-university partnerships resonated with both Helen and Debbie. Helen recognised parallels with her work that involved co-teaching triads, and Debbie saw resemblances to her work in developing university, school and system partnerships that support professional experience. Developing and sustaining school-university partnerships have become recent additions to the accreditation and reaccreditation processes for initial teacher education programs in Australia (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2015, 2016).

In this chapter, we use the methodology of ‘metalogue’ – used previously by Linda (see Willis & Exley, 2016; Willis, Kretschmann, Lewis, & Montes, 2014; Willis & Menzie, 2012) – to explore our growing understanding of cogenerativity and its potential to inform initial teacher education (ITE) school-university partnerships. Originally coined by Bateson (1972, 1987), the term, *metalogue*, is defined as ‘a conversation about some problematic subject [where ideally] the structure of the conversation as a whole is also relevant to the same subject’ (p. 12). Bateson’s example of a conversation with his daughter about ‘muddles’ is therefore deliberately muddled in its structure. Likewise, in our case, the structure of our conversation works to actually cogenerate a shared understanding of the concept of cogenerativity. Readers should be aware that as the *form* of the conversation contributes as much as the *content* to both developing and presenting our understanding of the concept, it requires a different level of reading in which attention is paid simultaneously to both the process and product of the dialogue. A *metalogue* resembles a metanarrative where information, ideas and even emotions that emerge in conversation fold back into the conversation to enable the participants to reflexively consider the problem. Calling on Bateson’s (1980) work, Roth and Tobin (2002) elaborated that:

Metalogues are conversations that take previous texts or conversations and analyse them at a new, meta-level. Metalogues therefore are a means to represent analyses that move through several levels of complexity (or logical order/type as Gregory Bateson called it). Metalogues ... [enable] previous analyses to become the topic of reflection and/or discussion. That is, metalogues constitute a practice of reflexivity. (p. xxiii)

These conversations not only enable potentially new and different perspectives about, and solutions to, the problem being considered but also allow the participants to gain new knowledge and insights about the problem, one another, the world in general and themselves personally. In this case, we were interested in discussing

ways to develop effective initial teacher education school-university partnerships and at the same time to explore whether cogenerativity offered a way to conceptualise why and how such partnerships develop and continue operating. Our metalogue comprised three group conversations on Skype over several weeks which were initially transcribed and then revisited, reworked and added to, to improve clarity of meaning and strengthen ideas by including supporting literature.

These reworked conversations are presented here as a metalogue in three parts. The first part involves our discussion of the possible meaning and nature of cogenerativity in relation to the literature. Second, we each provide a snapshot from our different professional experience partnership projects in order to describe and analyse the role of cogenerativity and to gain deeper knowledge and understanding of the concept and its nature. In part three, we reflect together on the potential as well as the challenges and limitations of using cogenerativity to conceptualise the development and continuation of initial teacher education school-university partnerships. The three sections thus work together to help develop new understanding of cogenerativity as a useful concept for informing collaborative research and practice transformations. Recommendations and implications for future research and practice conclude the chapter.

## **Metalogue Part One**

### ***Cogenerativity and the Literature***

#### **Linda**

When we came together for the workshop, I'd been attempting to define cogenerativity using what I'd learnt during my PhD research. My research had used 'co-teaching' and 'cogenerative dialoguing' to investigate parent-teacher engagement in a co-teaching community of practice in which a teacher, two parents and I (researcher and co-teacher) participated (see Willis, 2013). Co-teaching is described when two or more teachers purposefully decide to pool their knowledge, skills, experience and expertise in order to learn with and from one another about how best to teach a group of students. Cogenerative dialoguing describes the interactive social spaces – actual and virtual – set up by participants to enable dialogic exchange about a particular co-teaching enterprise. These spaces are characterised by respectful and inclusive practices such as listening actively, inviting equitable contributions from each participant, weighing ideas and arguments deliberatively, reaching shared understandings, making mutual decisions and acting in ways throughout co-teaching that reflect these shared understandings and decisions (see Willis, 2013). Since my initial research, I've continued to ponder on the idea of cogenerativity and was particularly encouraged to explore the concept further through discussions with those who attended the workshop. This has led to an article in the *International Journal of Educational Research* (IJER) in which I explore cogenerativity in my

parent-teacher engagement research using ideas about the topic of power that emerged during one-on-one cogenerative dialogues between the case teacher and myself (Willis, 2016). By tracing threads of ideas from these conversations, I showed how understandings about power emerged and contributed to the co-teaching community's initial learning and ongoing operations (Willis, 2016). In coming to this metalogue, I also bring an understanding of cogenerativity that draws on the derivation of the word where 'co' as in co-teaching emphasises the collaboration possible among individual participants and groups as they contribute their varied expertise in a community of practice. I understand the meaning of 'generativity' from similar future-focused words such as 'generation' and 'generative'. It refers to the processes that enable the successful formation, continuation, expansion and transformation of a community of practice as members work together towards common goals to mutually benefit all involved (Willis, 2016). These processes benefit from dialogic exchange possible during cogenerative dialogues and were certainly what I found during my previous research into parent-teacher engagement. These findings form the basis of my current work to investigate how initial teacher education (ITE) school-university partnerships can be developed and sustained.

### **Debbie**

In listening to you at the workshop and later reading your publication (see Willis, 2016), it was your description of cogenerativity as a transformative process that influenced me in terms of thinking about the kinds of things that I was trying to do in my work in initial teacher education (ITE) school-university partnerships. In particular, it was the way you spoke about the interactions and transactions regarding how participants think, speak and act that caused me to consider the terminology of cogenerativity as actually giving a name to what I was trying to achieve. I hadn't encountered the term before but creating cogenerativity was what I was aiming to do. I think being able to identify the components of that process and how these were negotiated was important. I am particularly thinking of the idea of power. In your research, you looked at how parents have traditionally been positioned as having little or no power in terms of the roles they can play in formal education (see Willis, 2013). In the context of ITE, preservice teachers have typically played roles that operate from a deficit perspective compared to those of mentor teachers in schools and teacher educators in universities. In my work, the aim for the school-university partnership process was to establish a different power dynamic among the participants. Participants in the project included personnel from Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), teachers and administrators from schools, teacher educators from universities and preservice teachers. At the level of ISQ there was an acknowledgement that partnerships which included ISQ, schools and a university needed to be negotiated to support the development of quality mentoring in schools. The literature clearly supports the notion that coordinated school-university partnerships contribute to the development of quality teaching (Allen, 2011; Ronfeldt &

Reininger, 2012; Yan & He, 2010) and the development of quality teacher education (Allen, Howells, & Radford, 2013). The improvement of teacher quality was identified as important in the development of the ISQ School Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Preservice Teaching program (ISQ, 2011–2016). The program aimed to establish a regional professional learning community focusing on excellence in professional experience for preservice teachers. The inclusion of universities as part of the process was incorporated into the program in 2014. Hence, one focus of the development of the partnership was to reduce the power differentials among the different participants while improving the quality of teaching.

The partnership in which I was involved began as a discussion between Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) as a peak body and the University of the Sunshine Coast where I worked. Starting with one school, the partnership extended to include two schools, forming the Sunshine Coast ISQ School Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Preservice Teaching program (ISQ, 2011–2016). It was important that the partnership did not just focus on the development of quality teaching for the preservice teachers; the partnership needed to focus on the learning that would occur for all participants. Professional development for teachers who undertake mentor roles was paramount in considerations about the program. Hudson (2013) acknowledges that teachers who undertake mentor teacher roles develop communication and leadership skills as well as enhance their own pedagogical knowledge. The challenge for those involved in setting up the partnership was how to meaningfully connect the learning of all participants while simultaneously removing the vertical hierarchies that traditionally separate initial teacher education (ITE) players. Our solution was to develop communities of practice in which teachers and administrators, teacher educators, preservice teachers and ISQ staff participated.

### **Linda**

Debbie, I do recall you talking that way about your work in ITE school-university partnerships and saying, ‘Yes, now I have a name for what I was doing’. Helen, I’m wondering whether cogenerativity was at work in your context, or if you might have used a different name for the same idea, or have a different understanding of cogenerativity.

### **Helen**

My professional experience project involved ‘co-teaching triads’, and like you, Linda, the project was an expansion of my own PhD research (see Grimmett, 2012) in which I drew extensively on the co-teaching and cogenerative dialogue literature (e.g. Roth & Tobin, 2002; Murphy & Scantlebury, 2010). I wouldn’t say though that I had used the term cogenerativity as a concept in its own right before. In setting up

the new project, I certainly came to it with knowledge of those ideas you talked about such as dialogic exchange, and of purposefully using the principles of mutual respect and inclusivity, and the language associated with what we're describing now as cogenerativity, even if I wasn't using that actual word.

### **Linda**

In my professional experience project, when I took on the role in 2014 as coordinator of a new Master of Teaching (Primary) (MTeach) program, my then head of school encouraged me to use cogenerativity to build effective partnerships between partner schools and the university. He knew about my parent-teacher engagement research and indicated that I should use similar ideas and principles in the new context. To his surprise, I commented that I didn't think the term cogenerativity was prevalent in the literature. I later conducted a thorough literature search and could find the term used in the title of only one article by Stetsenko (2008). Stetsenko's article drew on the sociocultural work of Vygotsky (1987) and Bakhtin (1986) to show how an individual's learning is connected not only to the roles immediate others play in their lives but also to society and culture which embodies and represents others. Stetsenko wrote that knowledge emerges from interacting with others as exchanges of information and ideas are by nature dialectical and relational. Hence, cogenerativity relies on the process of dialogical exchange as participants enter into relational spaces with others in a 'continuing and expansive collaborative quest for knowledge and the practical pursuits associated with this quest' (Stetsenko, 2008, p. 524). So, we can never 'arrive' in this quest as we're always comprehending and engaging with others in ways that are new, and information and ideas that emerge are inevitably taken up by others in new and different ways (Stetsenko, 2008; Willis, 2016).

### **Helen**

I agree with what you've just said. I think even in trying to understand the nature of cogenerativity itself, there is never any point of 'arrival' because the concept will continue to change and develop and build constantly – in every new project. I think this makes it hard to come to a conclusive definition of cogenerativity, because the nature of the concept is that it is constantly changing.

### **Linda**

I'm wondering what literature each of you drew on for your professional experience projects and how this compares to our developing understanding of cogenerativity.

## Debbie

For me, the main literature was communities of practice as a means of supporting the development of learning across the lifespan of teachers' careers that includes the context of teacher education (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Lynch & Smith, 2012). A community of practice is defined as 'groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis' (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). The approach is based on the notion of situated learning that highlights the importance of the social aspect of learning within professional contexts (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In my project, a community of practice provided the space for situated learning to take place focused on the development or change in professional practice. It also provided opportunities for processing ideas and collaboratively developing new knowledge (Golden, 2016; Herbers, Antelo, Ettling, & Buck, 2011; Kennelly & McCormack, 2015). Communities of practice have been identified as mechanisms for impact, mediating change and driving curriculum development (Parker, Patton, Madden, & Sinclair, 2010). In the context of professional development, communities of practice provide an approach that supports the development of the connection between theory and practice for mentor teachers, administrators, teacher educators and preservice teachers. Adopting a community of practice approach in the system partnership project provided a process and time for collaboration. The meetings developed trust among the membership, allowing members to engage in 'deprivatising' practice and to develop shared understandings about expectations. Although Levine (2011) initially identified these features as important for effective professional communities for mentor teachers, they guided the development of the community of practice process in the project and proved important for all participants. One reason was how these features connected with the notion of the importance of building relationships that subsequently allows teachers to change their practice based on reflection on their work (Morgan, Brown, Heck, Pendergast, & Kanasa, 2013).

## Helen

Apart from the co-teaching and cogenerative dialogue literature that we've already mentioned, I drew particularly on Anne Edwards' (2005, 2007, 2010) idea of 'relational agency' and also on the idea of 'mutual appropriation' (Downing-Wilson, Lecusay, & Cole, 2011). If I can read from Edwards' (2010) work, she defines relational agency as:

In brief, it involves a capacity for working with others to strengthen purposeful responses to complex problems. It is helpful to see it (relational agency) arising from a two-stage process within a constant dynamic which consists of:

- (i) working with others to expand the 'object of activity' or task being work[ed] on by recognising the motives and the resources that others bring to bear as they, too, interpret it; and

(ii) aligning one's own responses to the newly enhanced interpretations with the responses being made by the other professionals while acting on the expanded object. (p. 14)

Edwards (2010) goes on to argue that relational agency is a capacity that can be learned and is crucial in the types of multidisciplinary teams that function across several professions. For example, you might have a speech therapist, a physiotherapist, a teacher and several other participants all working together on meeting the particular needs of a child. They're not just bringing their different individual expertise to the group but also working relationally to understand and respond to others' interpretations of the complex situation, so that the solutions they jointly create are beyond what any of them might have been able to do for the child individually. Likewise, Downing-Wilson et al. (2011) use the term mutual appropriation in a particular way to emphasise the hybrid activities that are created when different participants work together. During this work, the participants 'mutually appropriate' each other's practices while striving to act in 'mutually appropriate' ways that allow all partners to achieve not only their own unique goals but also new mutually shared goals.

### **Linda**

So, from what we've talked about, what are we feeling about the concept of cogenerativity that's novel or different from the existing literature?

### **Helen**

That's a good question.

### **Debbie**

That *is* a good question because I suppose what I'm drawn to with cogenerativity is the focus on transformation. Cogenerativity seems to be about creating a space for transformation. I'm not saying that the idea of creating a space for transformation is not also featured in the literature we've discussed, just that with cogenerativity it is accentuated more.

### **Helen**

I suppose that's the nature of 'generativity' – that you'll generate something new – and 'co', that we're doing it together. What I think is really important, and I'm not sure that this isn't also in the existing literature, is that because of what each

participant brings to the interactive space in which the dialogue takes place, you end up with something that actually none of those participants could have individually thought of. It's like someone comes in with an idea but because of some other idea that's added by someone else, actually something completely different from either of those two different ideas ends up being created, which, I suppose, is what relational agency and mutual appropriation are about: the idea that 'the whole is more than the sum of its parts'.

### **Debbie**

I think the literature on communities of practice talks about the community creating products or artefacts that can be shared. The development of products is a process that is identified as occurring as the community of practice begins to mature (Wenger et al., 2002). I wonder whether this notion of product or artefact development has similarities to what you're saying Helen – that notion of actually capturing the process or the dialogue that different participants bring together to create products that no one person could actually achieve on their own. I think there is an undertone in the community of practice literature focused around the time when the community seeks to organise their knowledge. I feel that there is strength in the term cogenerativity because it really encompasses the collective work of the participants that might occur at any point rather than during the maturing phase of the community of practice. I also feel the term has a more everyday meaning that would connect with teachers and preservice teachers. Although we are mostly exploring conceptual ideas in this chapter, I wonder whether cogenerativity offers a term that is much more easily understood by participants in all different parts of the initial teacher education world. I know that teachers and preservice teachers were challenged by the meaning of community of practice during my project.

### **Helen**

I'm also thinking that the difference is about the dialectical idea of process *and* product. Relational agency is perhaps more about the participants' capacity to contribute to the process, while the idea of communities of practice focuses more on the product or artefact. Cogenerativity might be conceived dialectically as process *and* product since, in thinking about the concept, these two aspects are inseparable: you're creating a product through the course of creating the process. So maybe rather than it necessarily being different from the concepts in the other literature, it's a more encompassing term that incorporates those other ideas as elements or aspects of what we're coming to see as cogenerativity. As a concept itself, it too is more than the sum of those other parts.

## Linda

Yes, you gain a sense that together the participants are creating something completely different as process and product; so their joint work continues to unfold rather than there being an end point. In other words, cogenerativity refers to ongoing dialectical ways of thinking and operating with a focus on the future in that, for as long as those involved want to cogenerate, their work as a community will continue to expand and transform – potentially indefinitely. At this point in our metalogue, it might be worthwhile to provide a specific example from our professional experience projects to further probe the notion of cogenerativity and to illustrate its nature and potential in initial teacher education school-university partnerships.

## Metalogue Part Two

### *The Role of Cogenerativity in Initial Teacher Education Partnerships*

#### Example 1: Linda

I spoke earlier about my professional experience project example to explore cogenerativity beginning 3 years ago when I was coordinator, teacher educator and researcher in the first year of a new MTeach program at an Australian university. My various roles afforded me different opportunities to investigate cogenerativity as a conceptual lens for developing a new school-university partnership. The MTeach was an intense four-semester program that comprised 17 courses offered over 18 months. When thinking about it, the seeds for cogenerativity were probably sown initially by the program's existing structure which saw aspects of the first semester professional experience course delivered in situ by the principal, head of curriculum and mentor teachers at what was then the sole MTeach partner school. This contrasted with the usual arrangement where professional experience courses were delivered at the university by teacher educators. However, I recognised a possible opportunity to purposefully enable the work of cogenerativity in the context of a second semester social education course that I coordinated. The course had been co-taught since 2011, and I invited the head of curriculum at the partner school, Estelle, to join the co-teaching team (see Willis et al., 2014).

The course took place at the university for 9 weeks and involved a 2-h co-taught workshop followed by 1-h tutorials with individual teacher educators. There were 102 preservice teachers in the course – 7 from the MTeach and 95 from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) (BEd) programs – as the workshops for the MTeach and BEd equivalent course were taught together. During the semester, Estelle co-taught with me and another teacher educator four times. However, cogenerative dialoguing about what happened during co-teaching, co-planning and discussing the preservice teachers' coursework occurred throughout the 9 weeks during face-to-face and

online meetings. The course was interrupted between weeks 4 and 5 by a scheduled 4-week professional experience block which the MTeach preservice teachers undertook at the partner school.

Co-teaching on-campus allowed Estelle to experience the MTeach program and social education course together with the preservice teachers. In one cogenerative dialogue, Estelle indicated that co-teaching assisted her not only to make connections with what the preservice teachers were learning but also to ask, 'What does this mean in the real world?' (Cogenerative dialogue, 18 September 2014). She described the impact of her thinking on what she did during their professional experience:

I think the work with the MTeach preservice teachers has given me scope, permission; yeah, you feel a responsibility in everything. It's like I approach them and say, "Look, I'm having this staff meeting". I never say that to a preservice teacher! And what I've found is that I'm doing things differently with these preservice teachers. For example, I sat down with one of them to talk about a lesson, I modelled it, and then we co-taught a small group together. I gave him the theory behind what I was doing. (Cogenerative dialogue, 18 September, 2014)

Estelle also invited the preservice teachers to year-level planning sessions, reflecting that:

Some of them now have been to two planning sessions and they are more confident to have a say. A lot of what we do is digging into the curriculum and having a say about what we do and "what does that look like", and they're being included, but they are saying things, and I'll acknowledge it and say, "That's great that you're picking that up" and that builds their confidence. That's a scary thing to do as a beginning teacher. (Cogenerative dialogue, 18 September 2014)

Cogenerativity is evident in the transformed ways Estelle thought, spoke and acted during the MTeach preservice teachers' professional experience; she not only did things differently, she did different things. In later speaking about the planning sessions which involved looking at data in numeracy, Estelle indicated that she considered it would benefit the preservice teachers to participate in substantive conversations with teachers about interpretations of data and implications for future teaching. She elaborated that they 'got to see some of the real business of teaching' as they engaged in open professional discussions and that 'it wasn't everybody sitting around being told what to do' (Informal discussion, 16 October, 2014). Estelle also indicated that she distributed a research article at one planning session and gave the preservice teachers a copy, explaining that 'taking on board new findings and information from research was part of the role of teachers' (Informal discussion, 16 October, 2014). These examples show that Estelle shifted her view of the preservice teachers as being 'not really teachers' to seeing them more as 'professional colleagues' (Willis et al., 2014, p. 7).

Co-teaching and cogenerative dialoguing saw information and ideas exchanged among the co-teachers that were continued and expanded whenever Estelle and the preservice teachers engaged in conversations and activities. This exchange and engagement enabled ongoing dialectical possibilities between processes and products as Estelle adopted inclusive, responsive and reflexive practices and created opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills and dispositions throughout their

professional experience and later when the preservice teachers resumed their co-taught course at the university. These processes and products continually unfolded in new, different and previously unimagined ways, illustrating the work of cogenerativity and its power as a concept to simultaneously encourage the development and learning of the MTeach preservice teachers and to facilitate the school-university partnership.

### **Example 2: Helen**

As I mentioned earlier, my example is the piloting of a co-teaching triads model of professional experience, where two preservice teachers are placed with one mentor teacher so that all three of them co-plan, co-teach and co-evaluate together. I was able to introduce this approach under the umbrella of the larger, Victorian government-funded, Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPP) partnership project involving six primary schools, three secondary schools and a university. This partnership structure provided time and space to cogenerate new ways of doing professional experience that were beyond any of our previous expectations.

The co-teaching triads were an extension of the ‘WITHIN practice PD’ model developed as part of my PhD research on in-service teachers’ professional development (PD) (see Grimmett, 2012). The premise of this model is that co-teaching and cogenerative dialoguing WITH teachers, IN their own practice, provide shared experiences for developing teachers’ conscious awareness of unified concepts (intertwining of theoretical and practical aspects) of teaching and learning and support deliberate and thoughtful expansions of their professional practice (Grimmett, 2014). I considered that the same principles that made this such an effective approach for in-service teachers would also apply to preservice teachers’ development, so set about working with two of the Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPP) schools to pilot this approach with second-year preservice teachers in an undergraduate early years and primary specialisation initial teacher education program.

After initially floating the idea of co-teaching triads with the two schools, the Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPP) leader and I organised a half-day planning session with representative mentor teachers and leaders from each school. I introduced some of the theory behind the proposed idea and then gave each school team time to discuss and plan what that might look like in their own particular context. One school had a play-based ‘discovery time’ session each day, so they were very excited about the possibility of extra teaching helpers in the classroom to assist with the numerous demands for assistance that the children make during this time. The other school was very data driven and started imagining how each preservice teacher could take responsibility for a small focus group in mathematics during their placement and measure the impact of their own teaching on the children’s growth in understanding of that topic through pre- and post-testing. These data would then be used as the focus for cogenerative dialogue sessions for the whole

cohort of preservice teachers at the school to share and compare the teaching strategies they had used.

Although neither of these plans were what my university colleague and I were expecting, or even imagining as possibilities for implementing co-teaching triads, we recognised that these were entirely appropriate instantiations for each particular context. What's more, in sharing their plans with the rest of the group, the plans started to cross-fertilise and inspire new ideas for each school team, so that the data-driven school also decided to involve the preservice teachers in establishing 'pop-up play' activities in lunch sessions, and the play-based school thought about ways they could create whole cohort cogenerative dialogues about the innovative teaching approaches used in the school.

The actual reality of how the co-teaching triads played out in each school was, of course, slightly different again, as unforeseen constraints *and* new possibilities appeared in each setting once the preservice teachers entered the picture and also negotiated their own ways of working with their partners and mentor teachers. However, each school was sufficiently pleased with the benefits they saw not only for the preservice teachers but also for their own teachers and their own students that they were willing to continue further iterations of the program in subsequent semesters with new preservice teacher cohorts. By looking at post-placement survey data from the preservice teachers and reflecting on their own experiences, the teacher mentors have continued to make modifications so that learning is enhanced for all participants. Importantly, they have also shared their successes and challenges with other schools in the TAPP cluster, showing how an initial idea can be developed, adapted and expanded to fit their own unique contexts. Several other TAPP schools have since implemented their own versions of co-teaching triads, continuing to build and expand our collective imagination about how professional experience can be enacted in a developmental environment.

### **Example 3: Debbie**

In my example, I worked as a representative of the Sunshine Coast University with Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) and two schools to develop a partnership agreement. The ISQ Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Preservice Teaching program sought to achieve four outcomes: developing effective partnerships, engaging in the analysis of teaching and mentoring as practice, developing the capacity to make judgements based on evidence and developing teacher and preservice teacher understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) (Australian Institute for Teaching & School Leadership [AITSL], 2011). Our first example of cogenerativity as both a process and product was the collaboration of all four partners to jointly create a formal agreement outlining the roles, responsibilities and outputs for our partnership. This process was iterative and generative, and the final partnership agreement was later de-identified by ISQ with agreement from all partners so it could be shared with others who might like to also develop similar agreements.

Another level of cogenerativity occurred at the site of each school where the partnership agreement was enacted in different ways in each context. In both contexts, after exploring different approaches, communities of practice were identified as an approach to professional learning. The development of communities of practice at each school site consisted of teachers, both those who mentor and those aspiring to mentor preservice teachers, preservice teachers allocated to the school for that particular calendar year, me (Debbie) as a teacher educator and the professional learning liaison allocated to the school for professional experience placements, the coordinators of professional experience at each school site and the project officer from Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) who attended some meetings. The specific way the communities of practice developed at each site was a cogenerative activity that occurred between me as the university partner and the school coordinator at each site. Each school worked in similar but unique ways to generate and sustain their community of practice within each school for the 2-year project timeframe.

In summary, both school sites invited current and aspiring mentor teachers to participate in the community of practice as part of the Independent Schools Queensland Centres of Excellence (ISQ CoE) in Preservice Teaching project. An initial meeting was held with mentor teachers, the school coordinator and teacher educators to establish a meeting agenda format and possible topics that the group might like to explore. Each P-12 school developed its own agenda format and agreed to meet for a period of 3 h once a term for 2 years. Hence, the communities of practice at each school site worked together to create or cogenerate their community of practice format and agenda. Funding provided by ISQ facilitated teacher release so that community of practice meetings could be held during school time. Preservice teachers joined while they were on professional experience and often returned to additional meetings following their professional experience. At the end of the first meeting, the topic for the next meeting was identified. The topic was then connected to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) at the various levels of graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teacher (see AITSL, 2011) to connect our conversation to the project outcomes: analysing practice, making judgements based on evidence and developing understanding of the APST.

At each meeting, all participants reflected on the identified topic and brought a positive example of their practice related to the theme to discuss how the example evidenced the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and at what level. Some examples of community of practice meeting topics included communicating with parents, assessing student learning and differentiating learning in the classroom context. In addition to the sharing of practice at each meeting, the agenda included time for community building, reflecting on the previous meeting and sharing any news or updates, an opportunity to build knowledge on the selected topic usually with some input from a guest speaker and time at the conclusion of the session to reflect and identify the topic for the next meeting. Hence, these school site meetings were an example of cogenerativity in action as each school generated a community of practice in their own context that included mentor teachers, administrators, teacher educators and preservice teachers. As the communities continued to

meet and share their ideas, public products were developed and shared outside of our community of practice, first within the school, then with other schools and later through national conferences that included teacher education practitioners and researchers.

## **Metalogue Part Three**

### ***Learnings and Insights About Cogenerativity in Initial Teacher Education Partnerships***

#### **Linda**

In light of our exploration of the literature and each of our specific examples, what learnings and insights about cogenerativity have we gained from our metalogue so far?

#### **Helen**

Thinking about our workshop discussions and the examples we've shared, it's quite clear that you, Linda, deliberately set out from the beginning to use the concept of cogenerativity in creating a school-university partnership. When Debbie heard us talking about the idea at the workshop, she thought, 'Oh yeah, I can see cogenerativity in the work I've done' without actually having used or heard the word before, whereas I was somewhere in between.

#### **Linda**

Helen, the ideas and example you described showed that you quite purposefully drew on your knowledge and understanding of cogenerativity as informed by your research, even if you weren't calling it that.

#### **Debbie**

I think that in each of your cases, Linda and Helen, knowing about cogenerativity was really empowering. Cogenerativity connects to notions of agency (i.e. the capacity to act in a particular sociocultural context [see Ahearn, 2001; Bateson, 1972, 1987; Sewell, 1992]). Within those spaces that were created among participants such as Estelle and the preservice teachers in the MTeach program (Linda) and in the co-teaching triads (Helen), and implicit in the concept of cogenerativity, was a sense of 'permission' to generate new things. Similarly, in my Independent

Schools Queensland Centres of Excellence (ISQ CoE) in Preservice Teaching program, permission to [re]imagine professional experience partnerships occurred within institutional frameworks that operate at schools and universities by opening up spaces where this potentially transformative work was 'allowed'.

### **Linda and Helen**

Yes (said together).

### **Linda**

That is actually a really good point about cogenerativity being able to occur within prevailing organisational frameworks, that is, it doesn't require a complete change in the way organisations are set up but can occur within already existing structures. The difference is that individuals are positioned to enter into new spaces with a cogenerative mindset and way of operating.

### **Debbie**

Cogenerativity also needs drivers, individuals who can imagine the usual participants involved in initial teacher education partnerships in new roles, part of which is giving the participants permission to think and act differently than they have in the past. I wonder whether adopting the lens of cogenerativity enables you to look at changing the usual ITE power structures and create the spaces where participants can do things differently, is that how you generate cultural change? Because in the system partnership example that I shared, there's been a definite shift in the way preservice teachers are engaged within the schools. They are treated in a totally different way now than before the project started: they are considered more like staff members; they are given a lot more time to develop and learn things; the mentor teachers are given a lot more time to work with the preservice teachers; and those involved in the partnership make time to have conversations. I think that's a big shift in the school context where the perception previously was, 'We're doing the university a favour by having these preservice teachers here'. Now the discourse is more 'We're collaboratively creating the next generation of teachers and there's something in this for everyone'. Hence, there has been a recognition that the mentor teachers stood to benefit personally and professionally and that the partnership had the potential to improve school culture in real and concrete ways. At the same time, the mentor teachers in this context felt a much stronger connection to the teacher education program as a whole and developed understandings about how university coursework connected with professional experience.

## **Helen**

That's definitely been the case in the co-teaching triad project as well. As our pilot schools talked to the other Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPP) schools, you could see each school team start to think about how the ideas could be applicable to them and what they would be able to get out of it in their own particular context. You're right about the sense of permission. It was not just those of us who work in universities coming in and saying, 'This is how you must do it', but us coming in and saying, 'Here are some things to think about and some tools for you to use as you go about doing what you need to do'. The drivers, as Debbie talked about, have got to be prepared to offer ideas to get the ball rolling but also prepared to hold those ideas very 'loosely' or flexibly so that the ideas can take off in different directions. I think this notion of permission is really important in creating a space to do things differently from how they've always been done before. It's not necessarily always explicitly stated. Rather we create the sense of permission in the conditions that we establish through respecting each individual's ideas and showing them that their ideas are valued and useful. It's the way we act that can demonstrate that we're giving permission, setting up the conditions for creating agency. It's not just what we say, but also what we do that's important.

## **Linda**

Another insight that I've taken from our metalogue is the versatility of the concept of cogenerativity for thinking about ITE school-university partnerships. Our different examples have not only illustrated the range of different situations and contexts in which the concept is useful but also highlighted levels of scale. Given its nature and size, the MTeach program, for example, showed cogenerativity at work on what could be considered a micro-scale. Helen's example in which participants from one school cogenerated with each other and then with a team from another school showed cogenerativity on a meso-level. Debbie's system partnership agreement example occurred on a much larger or macro-scale. However, in each case, similar principles and practices were adopted. The participants were invited to enter interactive social spaces for the purpose of dialogic exchange about topics of mutual interest and concern. These opportunities allowed the participants to ask questions about professional experience partnerships such as: 'What's really happening?', 'How are things working?', 'How might things work differently?' and 'What else might be possible?'. These conversations not only enabled ideas to be pooled but also to be purposefully connected continually (processes), leading to cogenerated decision-making (products) such that enhanced participant agency manifested in new and different ways of thinking, speaking and acting – individually and collectively.

**Helen**

We've also noticed in our metalogue that to set cogenerativity in motion is not easy. It's difficult for mentor teachers, for example, to create something different especially when they might think 'This is the way professional experience has always been done'. It's hard for participants in initial teacher education to see that just because things may have worked in the past doesn't mean that they're going to keep working in the future. Building the kind of knowledge and skills needed to work collaboratively to create positive change to support future generations of teachers is a complex work. It presents a constant challenge for those involved in initial teacher education in schools and universities.

**Debbie**

I think if we reflect on each of our examples, we also see the importance of time and how much time it takes to set things up. That's a particular challenge in the current higher education context when there are so many things to do.

**Linda**

Your point Debbie links to a particular challenge that I've experienced as the driver in the school-university partnerships in the MTeach program. I found the concept of cogenerativity valuable in assisting me initially to envisage and create a unique initial teacher education school-university partnership. However, given its nature, it is difficult to take advantage of all the opportunities and possibilities that cogenerativity might afford as has been the case for me given the rapid growth in the MTeach program over the last 3 years – the number of school-university partnerships has increased from one to seven, and preservice teacher numbers have increased from 7 to 50. At the same time, human (e.g. school and university personnel) and physical (e.g. financial support) resources have mostly stayed the same. The challenge for me has been to look at how I might harness the resources available to [re]imagine school-university partnerships beyond what began as a small program. Yet, I don't see this challenge diminishing the value of cogenerativity. Indeed, the concept is powerful, refreshing and even tantalising given its promise and hope that through more meaningful and sustained cooperation and collaboration among educational partners, the quality of preservice teacher mentoring and teaching in schools generally can continually be improved. However, to ensure the continuing, expanding and transformative work of cogenerativity into the future, I have realised not only the importance of beginning but also of continuing to begin. This will be especially important for those of us who work in ITE with its world of competing priorities and rapidly changing landscape.

## Recommendations and Implications for Future Research and Practice

This chapter explored our evolving understanding of the meaning and nature of cogenerativity in the context of professional experience in initial teacher education school-university partnerships. Each of our examples provided insights and learnings into how knowledge and understanding of cogenerativity may assist to create the conditions for such partnerships to develop and flourish. These examples also highlighted the promise and hope of cogenerativity for assisting to [re]imagine possible futures for ITE partnerships in which all participants benefit from continual expansive transformative learning. As such, the findings from this chapter open a window to future research possibilities. These include probing the work of cogenerativity in other examples of ITE school-university partnerships and the idea of 'hope', implicit in cogenerativity, which we have only begun to consider here. More research on the role and important characteristics of those who act as drivers for cogenerativity is also necessary.

This chapter is significant for helping build knowledge about the little explored concept of cogenerativity. Of further significance is the unique context for this exploration, namely, ITE school-university partnerships. So too is our use of metalogue as an innovative methodology. By cogenerating new understanding of cogenerativity through our dialogical exchange, we have heeded Bateson's (1972, 1987) charge that the structure of the metalogue conversation should mirror the subject of the conversation. The metalogue enabled us to collectively develop our ideas of cogenerativity through discussion and analysis of the different ways cogenerativity worked in each of our initial teacher education (ITE) examples. This discussion generated insights about important aspects of cogenerativity as well as some challenges and limitations from which others can draw for future research and practice in their particular contexts and situations. Our discussion also spoke to gaps in the literature where the focus is often on individual small-scale cases. The metalogue provided a vehicle to draw our examples together to highlight the similarities and differences in the ways ITE school-university partnerships are developing.

At the same time, our use of metalogue to discuss cogenerativity provided an example of the concept's continuing expanding transformative work. The metalogue provided an interactive social space in which processes (e.g. respectful turn-taking in the conversation and building on ideas) and products (e.g. descriptions and explanations of our initial teacher education (ITE) examples) unfolded dialectically as together we explored and simultaneously demonstrated cogenerativity in practice. Hence, this chapter has made a contribution to research and scholarship by discussing what cogenerativity is, and through metalogue illustrated the work of cogenerativity, helping us to further advance knowledge and understanding of the concept and its potential. Indeed, our metalogue was a form of cogenerative action. Another value of metalogue was in the benefits of listening to and learning from one another. From our conversation, we developed solidarity and gained reassurance that we were not alone in striving for innovation in professional experience in ITE

school-university partnerships. It is our hope that our explorations of developing knowledge and understanding of cogenerativity will strengthen this work for all involved in this important enterprise.

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