

Populism: a possible future for democratic education?

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Presentation overview

The problem with 'contemporary
pedagogy'



Populism as political
method/Discourse.



Populism as a mechanism to realign
pedagogy.



Conclusion.

Education Systems and Practice: Pedagogy as Ritual (Adams, 2011)

Education Systems

- Closed, organisational components of officially sanctioned methods and practices.
- Defined by uni-directional P/political perspectives covering: institutional matters; outcomes; funding; purpose; etc.

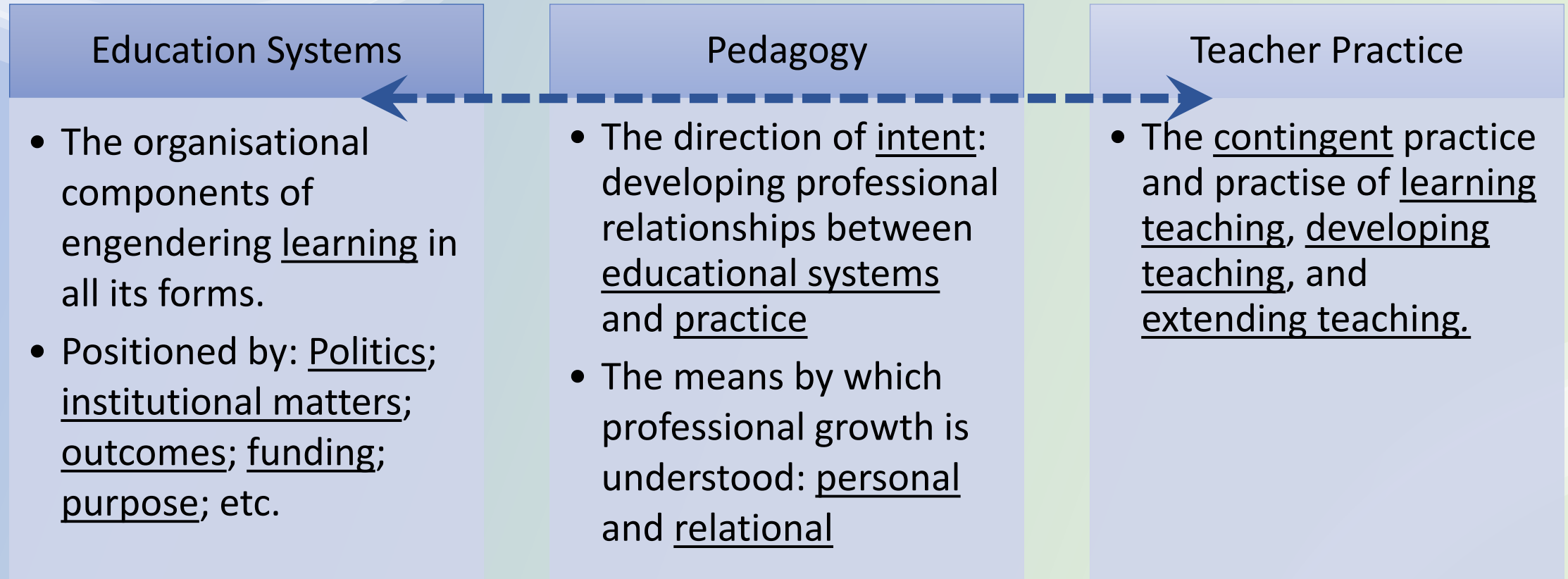
Education Practice

- Non-negotiable elements of teaching and its relationship to learning.

Populism

- Long and varied history
- Left- and right-wing variants
- Inextricably linked to democracy and shifts from the periphery
- Relies on myths and '(re)representation' of 'truth'
 - Central here is difference: increase participation or note existential threats
- Various built around twin-axes of 'elites' and 'the people'
- Utilises 'common-sense' as the prevailing doctrine
- For education: 'give voice to the ordinary teacher' (Watson, 2021)
 - Hence, populism at a micro-level.
- Knowledge is thus implicated: 'versions of the truth'
- Pedagogy is thus a site for contest

Education Systems to Practice: Pedagogy as Mindfulness (Adams, 2011)



Pedagogy: 'Being in and acting on the world with and for others'



The 'Teacher' is in and acts on the world



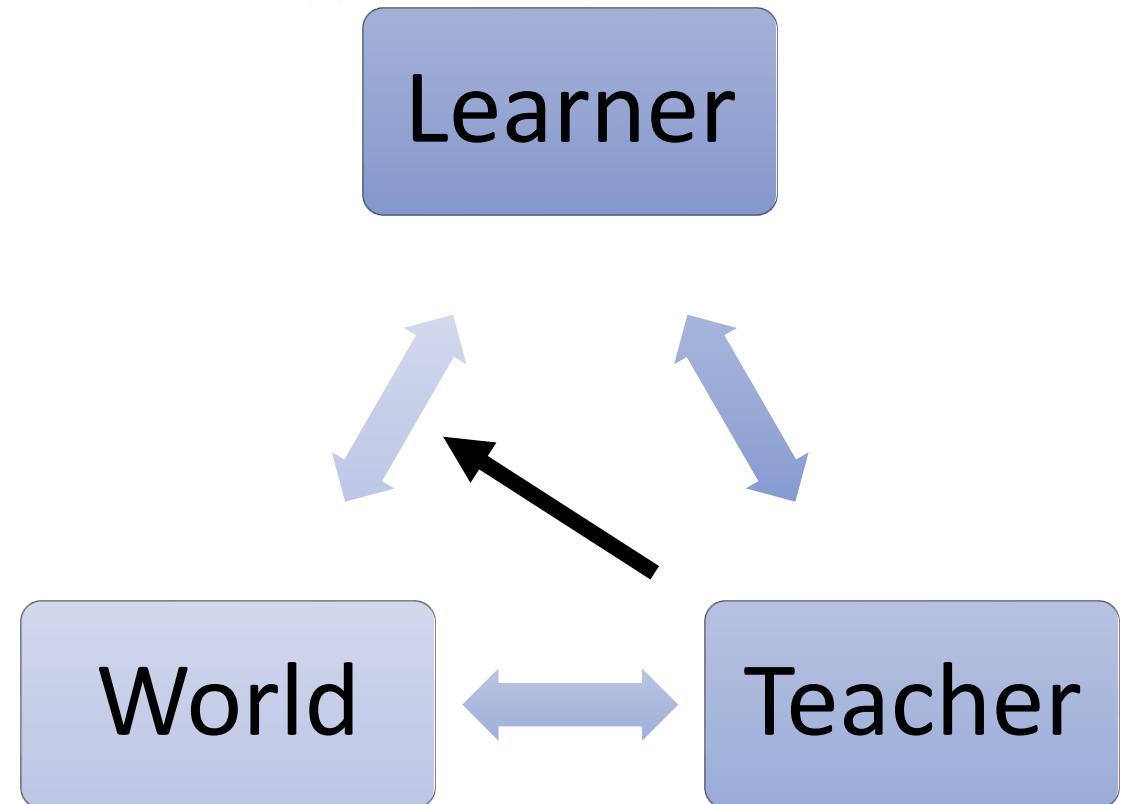
Perhaps alone, to alter their relationship with/to professional practice?



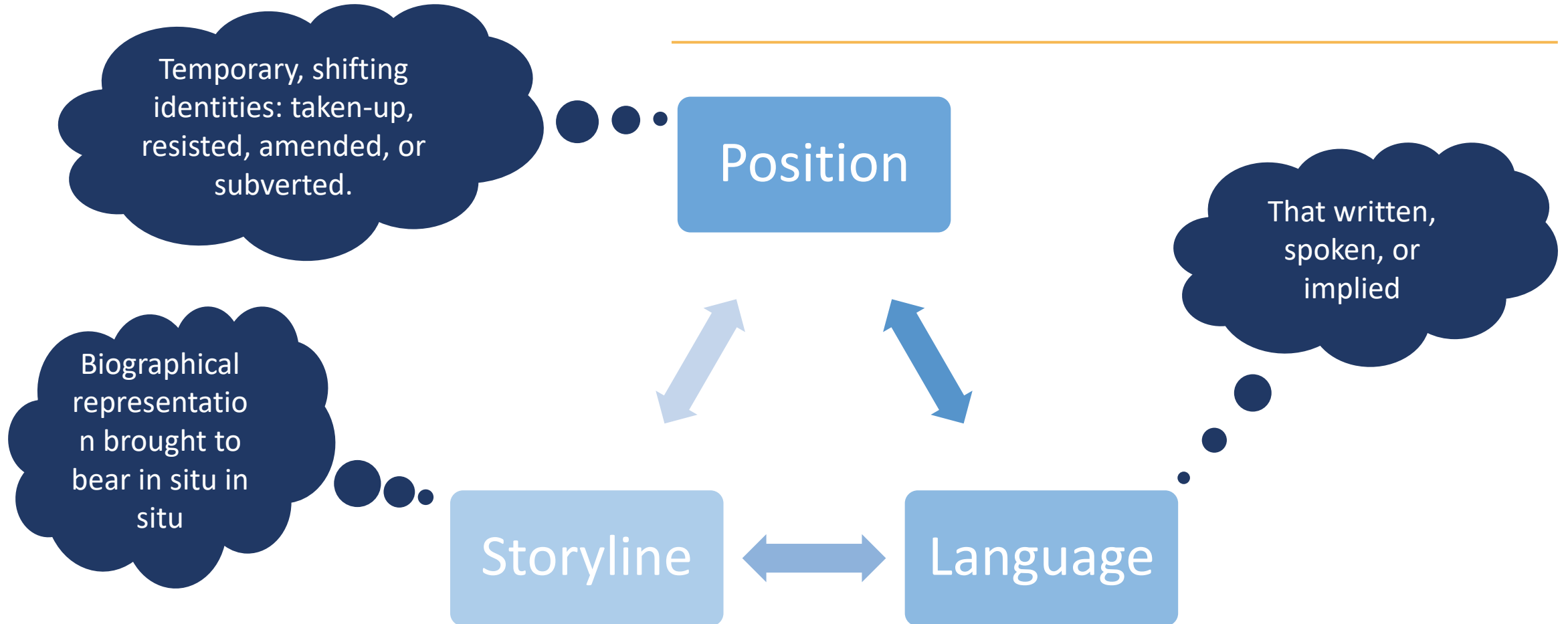
Specifically, though, they influence the relationship the learner has with the world



Pedagogy is relational, theoretically and practically: with and for 'The Other'



Positioning Theory



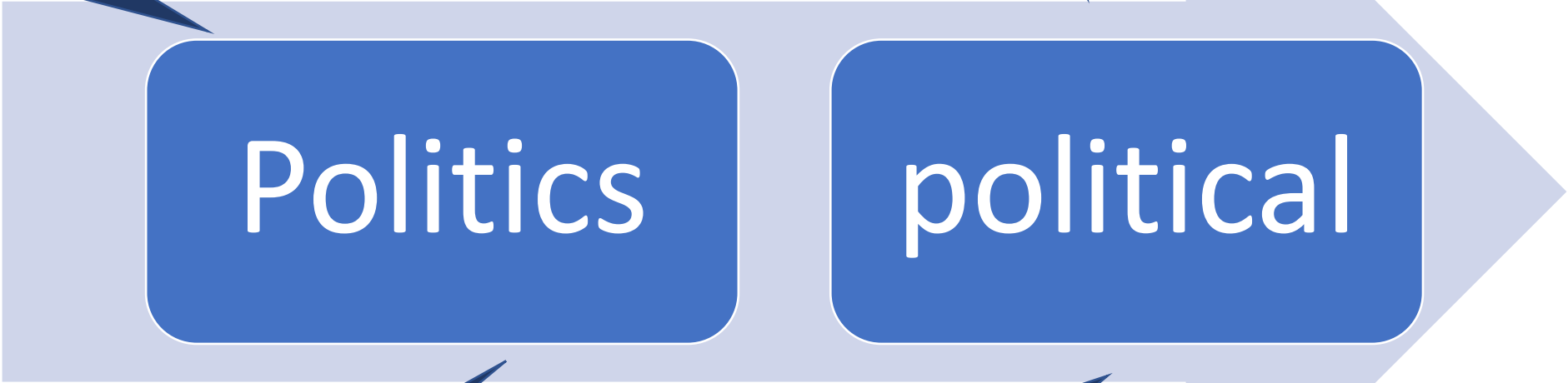
Populism, democracy, and pedagogy

- For populism and democracy: agonistic democracy ‘is based on the ontological proposition that social identities and practices (at any scale) are radically contingent, only secured through the precarious exclusion of other possibilities’ (Petrie et al., 2019: 491).
- Politics ‘as normal’ to identify the ‘acceptable Other/alternative’.
- For Gough (2012: 46) this ‘...invites us to understand our physical and social worlds as open, recursive, organic, nonlinear and emergent...’.
- The Scottish independence referendum raised ‘...essential questions about not only the durability and elasticity of liberal, representative democracy and civic engagement, but also how people learn to live with this contemporary antagonism and, importantly, *with and for each other*’ Robbins & Bishop (2019: iii *emphasis added*).
- Pedagogy, then, is ‘...not just ‘being in a relationship with a child’– it is also insisting on keeping alive the discussion of what counts as valuable and desirable, even if at times such judgements may seem obvious and self-evident (or perhaps particularly when this is the case)’ (Klitmøller, 2018: 846).

Self to 'selves'

Non/Membership
as personal
position

Non/Realised
positioning as life



Non/Expressed
desire to 'belong'

Non/Realisation of
self also as 'Other'

(Democratic?) Pedagogy and populism...

More about?

Why things are said

The context in which they are
said

Realisation, appreciation, and
challenge of positioned selves

Less about?

What is said

Relationship 'with and to the
truth'

Affirmation/rupture of self



Position?

- Concentrating on ‘the what’ leads to counter narratives vying for space.
- Concentrating on ‘the why’ requires consideration of intent.
 - Seeking to demonstrate falsity leads to entrenched positions.
- Concentrating on context necessitates consideration of audience, tone, etc. for positional effect.

Pedagogy as *being in and acting on the world with and for others*



‘How do we go forward in mutual understanding?’