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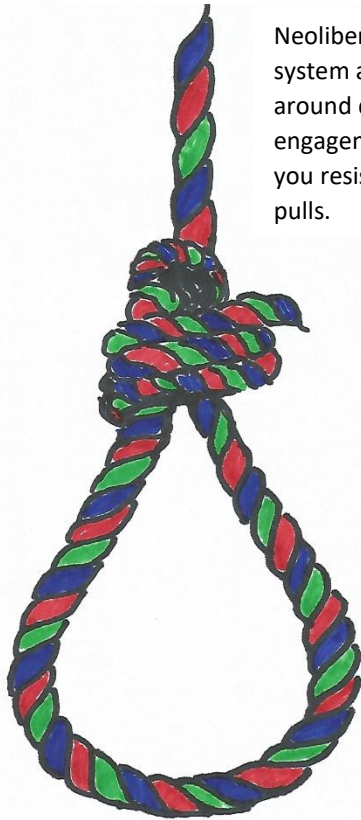
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# Democratic Parent Engagement

Charlotte Haines Lyon, School of Education, York St John University



Neoliberal education system acts as a noose around democratic engagement. The more you resist the tighter it pulls.

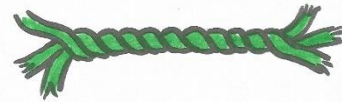
3 strands twist together to make a rope



Lack of agency



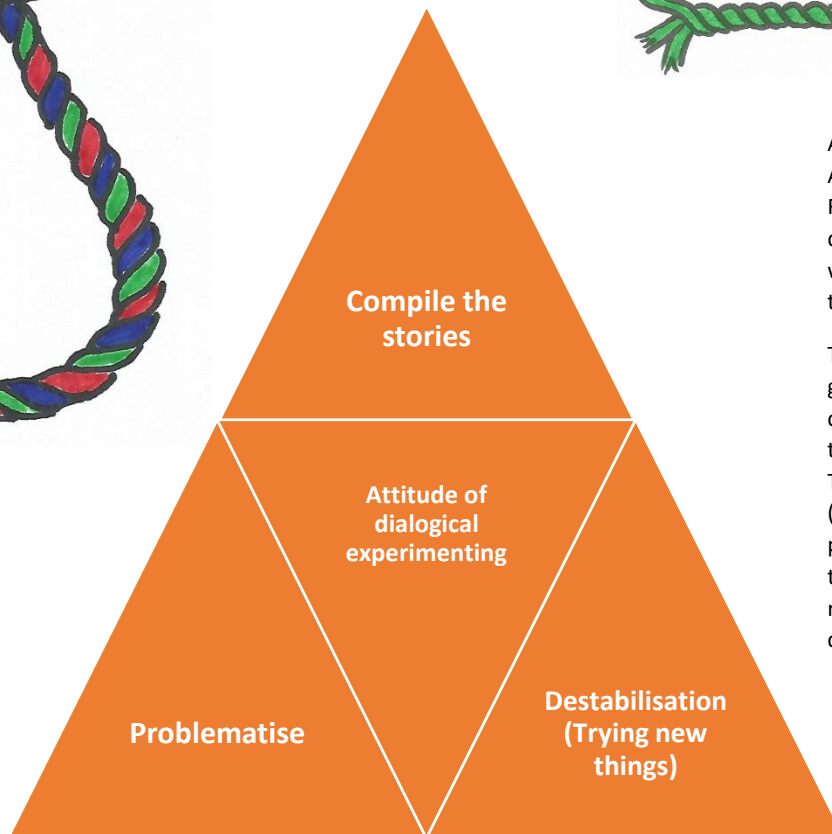
Lack of space - hegemony



Individualisation

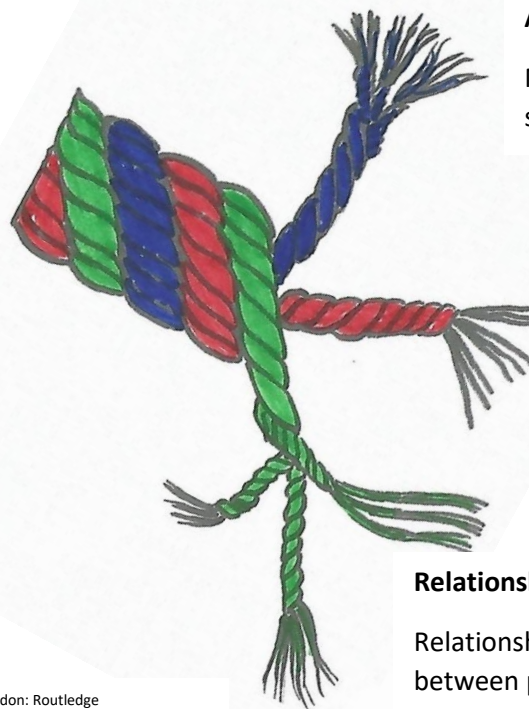
A conflation of Critical Discourse Analysis and Participatory Action Research acts as a splicing tool to deconstruct rope and try new ways of engagement to counter the neoliberal model.

Through Community Philosophy a group of primary school parents compile their stories, problematise them, try new ways of working. The Critical Discourse Analysis (Glynos and Howarth 2007) provides new insights as part of the problematisation. The group responds, experiments and compiles new stories.



After 2 years this small group has worked with the school in different ways. Ground rules for democratic engagement have been established which form strands to a lifeline for parent engagement.

All three strands must be present and hold each other in tension.



**Agency**

Not led by government or school.

**Space**

For dissent but also physical space is important (e.g. off-site meetings)

**Relationship**

Relationships between parents and between parents and staff are key.