



Educators on the 'edge': flight, resistance and the politics of possibility amongst teachers in managed neoliberal regimes

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The narrative

- Reflecting on research as analysis, critique, and/towards ‘possibility’
- Connecting with the ‘politics of possibility – a new global political imaginary
- Confronting crisis in education – the problem (with the problem) of ‘how much longer can I go on?’
- Opening to alternative epistemologies of reality, necessity and possibility
- Using critical philosophy (ontology and epistemology) as analytical method
- Transcending ‘research’ and ‘practice’: co-creating conditions for the ‘possibility of hope’

**‘FROM TRUTH IN STRENGTH TO STRENGTH IN TRUTH’:
SOCIOLOGY, KNOWLEDGE AND POWER
IN KYRGYZSTAN, 1966–2003**

A thesis presented by

Sarah Suzann Amsler

Theory as analysis and critique

The critical sociology of social scientific knowledge is an alternative to the main theory of scientific knowledge production now prevailing in Kyrgyzstan. It is also partly a critique of this dominant discourse. The Kyrgyzstani discourse on the institutionalisation of sociology is based on a positivist theory of knowledge which maintains that there is a clear and ascertainable distinction between ideologies (distorted or mystified knowledges and false consciousness) and true, realistic and objective knowledge (Gieryn 1983: 783; Lincoln and Guba 2003); in other words, an unambiguous separation between knowledge and power. Social science—indeed, all science—is seen to belong rather unproblematically to the latter category. It is thus presumed that a ‘good’ social scientist can and must be free from all interested thinking, bias, and subjectivity. In this context, by dispensing with all ideologies, we can

‘we have so much theory, so much critique, and often feel so trapped...’ (Antliff 2012)

Reflecting on Research
**Towards a Methodology of
Absent & Emergent Possibility**



‘The world as it exists is not true. There exists a second concept of truth, which is not positivistic, which is not founded on a declaration of facticity, on "verification" through the "facts" but which is instead loaded with value.... And if that doesn't correspond to the facts—and for us Marxists, facts are only reified moments of a process—in that case, *too bad for the facts (um so schlimmer fur die Tatsachen)*, as Hegel said in his late period. (Ernst Bloch in interview with Michael Lowy, 1976, pp. 37–38)

The 'politics of possibility'

'Is it possible to think of other ways of producing concrete wealth, forms not fully subjugated to the mandates of capital?

Is it possible to have other ways of organising and reproducing social life, which are more satisfactory than the modes of existence imposed by the modern capitalist world?

To what extent is the use value of life forced upon us by capitalist modernity, the only one imaginable?

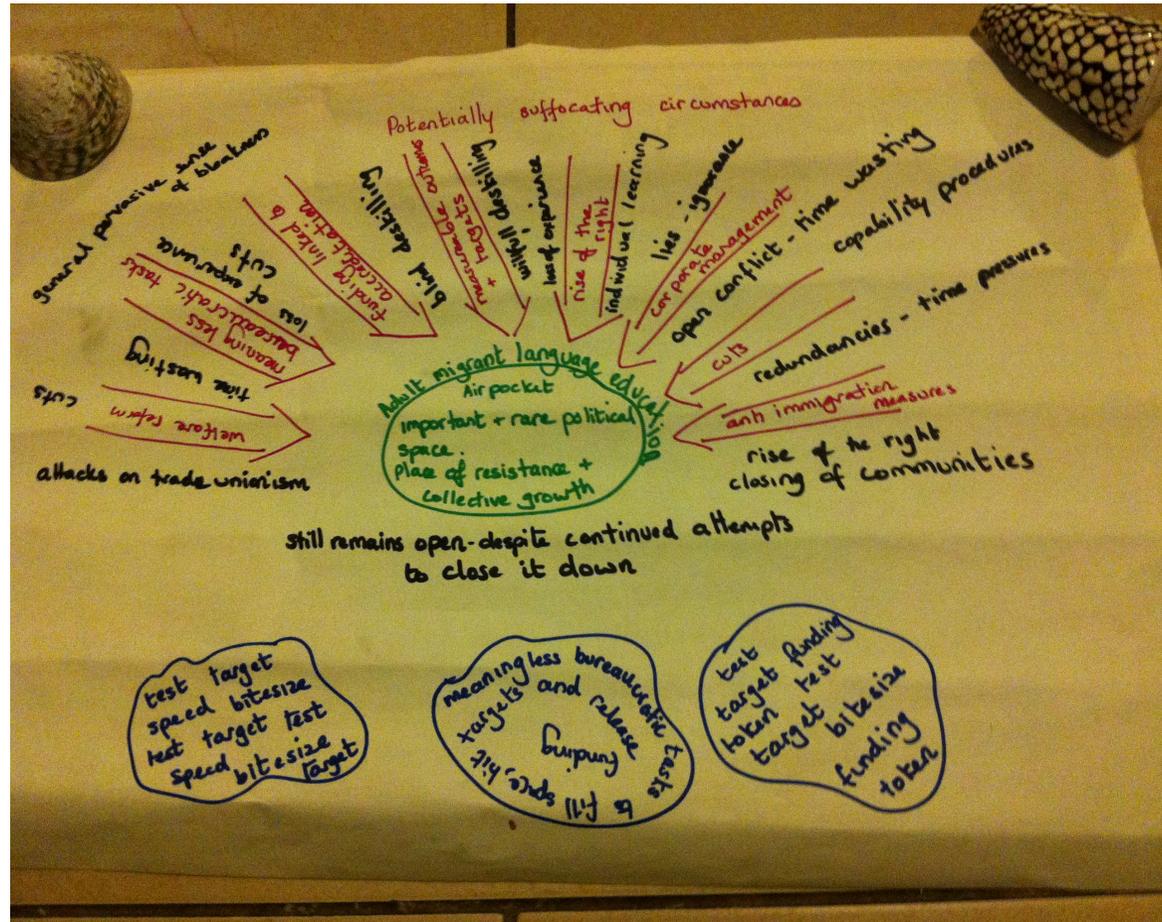
Can we recover our capacity to self-determine the goals, rhythms and forms of our everyday life?

Where does this possibility lie? How is it produced and nurtured?'

Raquel Gutiérrez Aguillar, Lucia Linsalata & Mina Navarro Trujillo,

'Producing the common and reproducing life: notes towards rethinking *the political*', 2017, p. 80

The problem with (the problem of) 'how much longer can I go on?'



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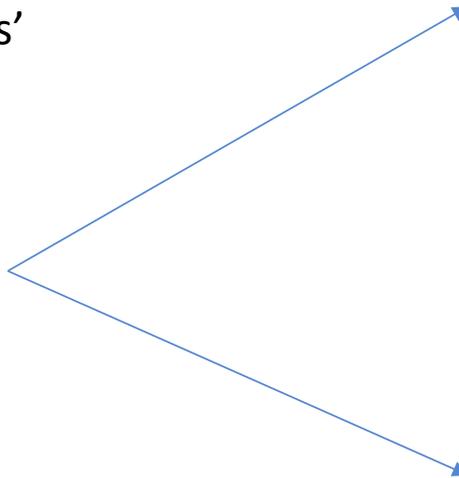
- 'Inadequate school leadership results in the management and workload issues that blight teachers' lives' 1st November 2015 at 17:16
- 'I have been through 25 separate inspections': An Ofsted survivor on why something has to be done about the Inspectorate 24th November 2015 at 18:46
- The question must be asked: where have all the SEND children gone? 17th November 2015 at 18:24
- 'The education secretary is wrong. Barack Obama is right. More testing diminishes teachers and will damage our children' 2nd November 2015 at 16:42
- 'How many perfectly good teaching careers are in ruins because we treat pupils as data not individuals?' 27th October 2015 at 16:08
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- Why seek new fixes? Consistency works 19th June 2015 at 01:00
- 'I hear of teachers crying on their kitchen floor because of the stress' 20th October 2015 at 17:37

- 21 November 2015 **Secret Teacher: schools turn a blind eye to bad managers as long as they hit targets**
Outstanding teachers don't always make good managers - there's more to leading a team than making sure Ofsted is happy
7:00 AM 228
- 11 December 2015 **Bad PhD supervisors can ruin research. So why aren't they accountable?**
A demoralising and sarcastic professor left me wondering if I should be doing a PhD at all - and I'm not alone
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- 14 November 2015 **Secret Teacher: I can't bear Ofsted so I'm going back to teach in Australia**
I knew moving to the UK wouldn't be easy, but never imagined it could be so exhausting. I leave with my spirit and confidence crushed
7:00 AM 240
- 4 December 2015 **Teaching at a university means constant pressure - for about £5 an hour**
I care about my students, but poor pay, discrimination and unrealistic workloads are making me want to quit
7:00 AM 58
- 7 November 2015 **Secret TA: we're poorly paid, poorly trained yet we still save your bacon**
Teachers shouldn't dismiss TAs as 'out of their depth'. We're not incompetent, tell us what you need and we can help you
7:00 AM 58
- 27 November 2015 **Our obsession with metrics turns academics into data drones**
University's growing addiction to tracking progress will destroy the very things we are supposed to nurture
7:00 AM 58

Produced in a workshop with ESOL and popular education teachers, *The Politics of Transformative Culture in Popular Education and Art* (2012)

Reframing 'crisis' through an alternative epistemology of possibility

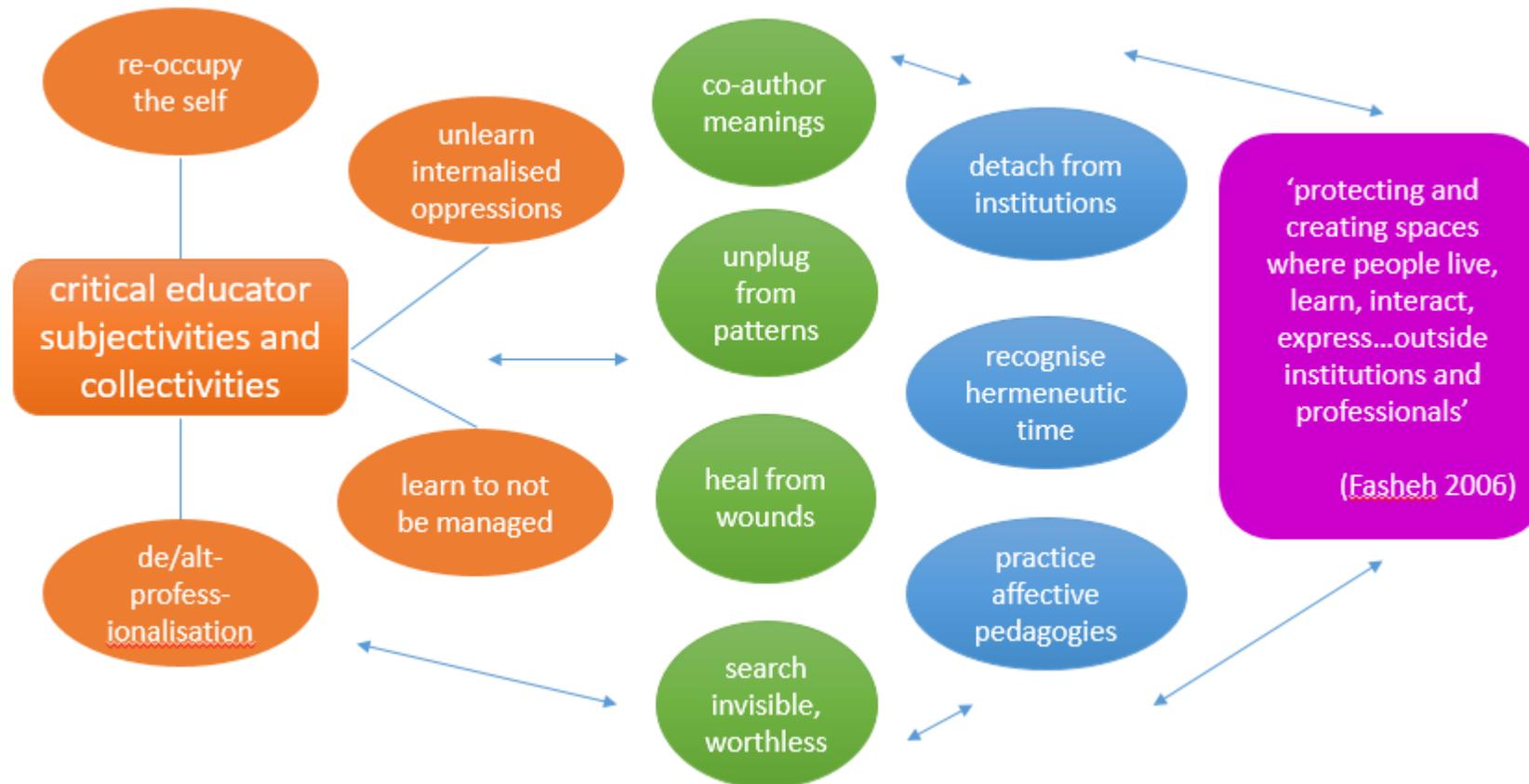
- being aware of the ['monocultures of capitalist modernity'](#) and the 'ecologies of knowledge' they 'make non-existent'
- understanding of reality as (1) process, (2) multiple, (3) 'spatialised' with 'fronts'
- distinguishing between 'Nothing', the 'Not' and the 'Not-Yet' in history and experience
- understanding that we can hope in different (more and less critical) ways

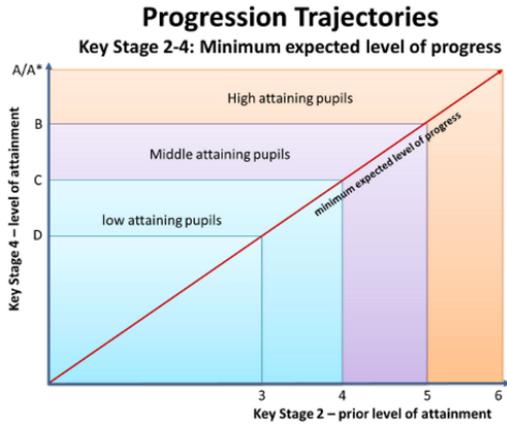


'Keys of hope' (Dinerstein)
Negation (No!)
Creation (This Instead)
Contradiction/Disappointment
Excess (What Remains?)

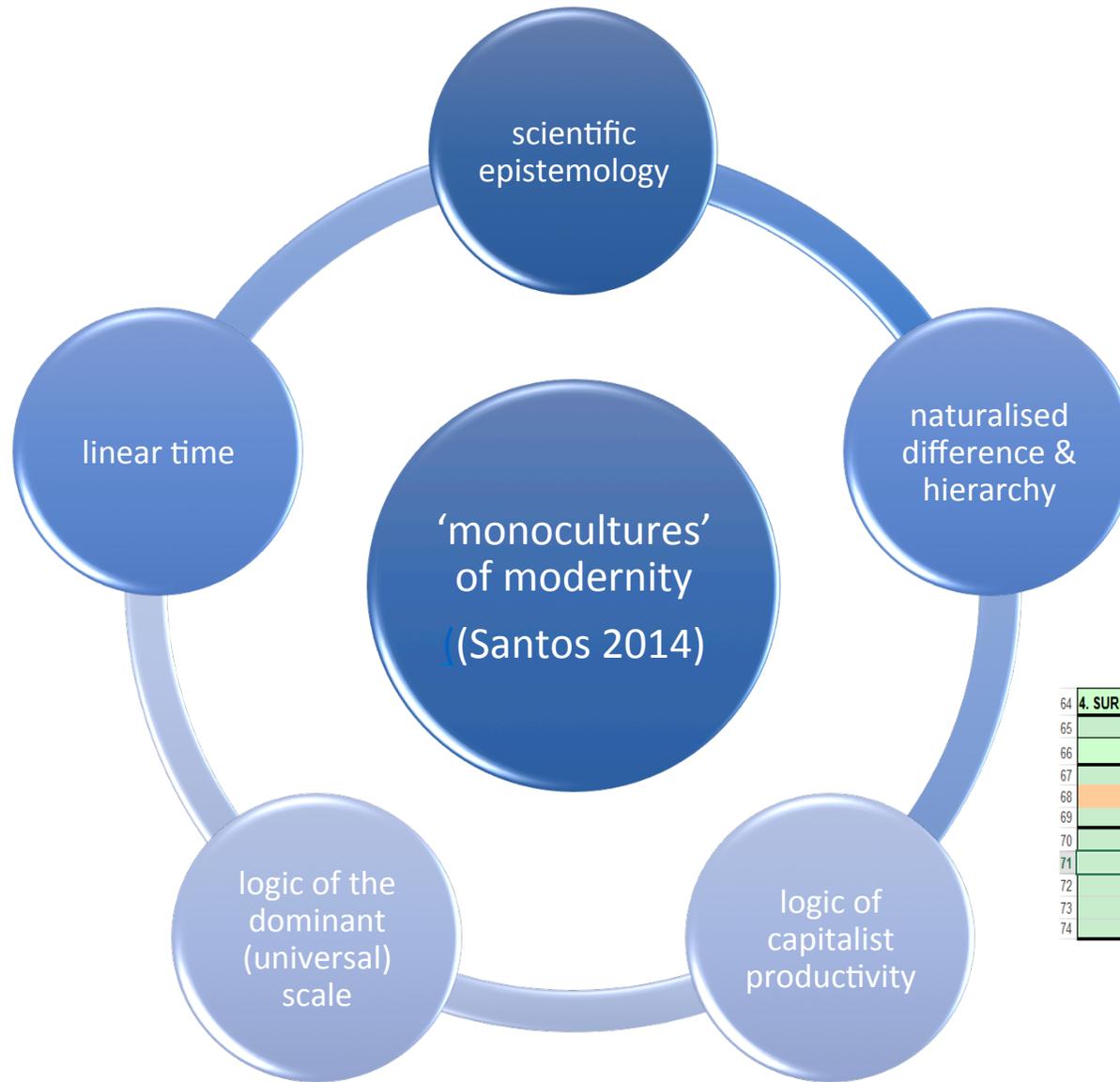
'Layers of possibility' (me)
Formal (unicorns)
Factually objective (probable)
Fact-based, object-suited (potency/potentiality)
Objectively real (praxis)

Beyond 'research' and 'practice' (co-creating conditions for the possibility of hope)





'Progress 8' learning measure
UK Department for Education



Sutton Trust - EEF Toolkit

Approaches

APPROACH	COST ESTIMATE	EVIDENCE ESTIMATE	AVERAGE IMPACT	SUMMARY
After school programmes	E E E E	★ ★	+2 Months	Low impact for high cost, based on limited evidence.
Arts participation	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+2 Months	Low impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.
Aspiration interventions	E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	0 Months	Very low or no impact for moderate cost, based on very limited evidence.
Behaviour interventions	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+4 Months	Moderate impact for very high cost, based on extensive evidence.
Block scheduling	E E E E	★ ★	0 Months	Very low or no impact for very low or no cost, based on limited evidence.
Collaborative learning	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+5 Months	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.
Digital technology	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+4 Months	Moderate impact for high cost, based on extensive evidence.
Early years intervention	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+8 Months	High impact for very high costs, based on extensive evidence.
Extended school time	E E E	★ ★	+2 Months	Low impact for moderate cost, based on limited evidence.
Feedback	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+8 Months	High impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.
Homework (Primary)	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+1 Month	Low impact for very low or no cost, based on moderate evidence.
Homework (Secondary)	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+5 Months	Moderate impact for very low or no cost, based on moderate evidence.
Individualised instruction	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+2 Months	Low impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.
Learning styles	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+2 Months	Low impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence.
Mastery learning	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+5 Months	Moderate impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.
Mentoring	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+1 Month	Low impact for moderate cost, based on moderate evidence.
Meta-cognition and self-regulation	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+8 Months	High impact for low cost, based on extensive evidence.
One to one tuition	E E E E	★ ★ ★ ★	+5 Months	Moderate impact for high cost, based on extensive evidence.

Teaching and Learning Toolkit
Sutton Trust/EEF

Welcome to the **QS World University Rankings® 2015/16**. Use the interactive ranking table to explore the world's top universities, with options to sort the results by country, region and subject area. You can also sort the ranking results based on the six individual indicators used (see the full methodology [here](#)). For alerts about the latest rankings releases, [sign up to our newsletter](#).

RANK	UNIVERSITY	LOCATION	QS STARS
3	94.7	University of Oxford	★★★★★
4	94.2	University of Cambridge	★★★★★
12	86.7	London Business School	★★★★

Global University Rankings
QS World University Ranking

64	4. SURPLUS				
65	Centre Margin to secure 40% contribution	0.00			£1,407.37
66	4. SURPLUS				£1,407.37
67					
68	5. GRAND TOTAL COSTS				£14,390.55
69					
70	Cohort size	10			10
71	Unit Cost				£1,440
72	Total Contribution (O/head & Surplus)				£5,754.06
73					40%
74					

Unit Cost ('Learner')
University budget spreadsheet