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Why we need an Equalities Literacy Framework

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Why educational inequality is an issue, particularly in the UK

11.2% of all 16-24 years olds are NEET (House of Commons Library, 2019)



18% of students do not complete upper secondary education and are drop outs / ESL's (OECD, 2017)



4.5% of children have absences from school
10% of those miss 10% of school (DfE, 2019)



54% of school pupils report being bullied (UK Annual Bullying Survey, 2019)

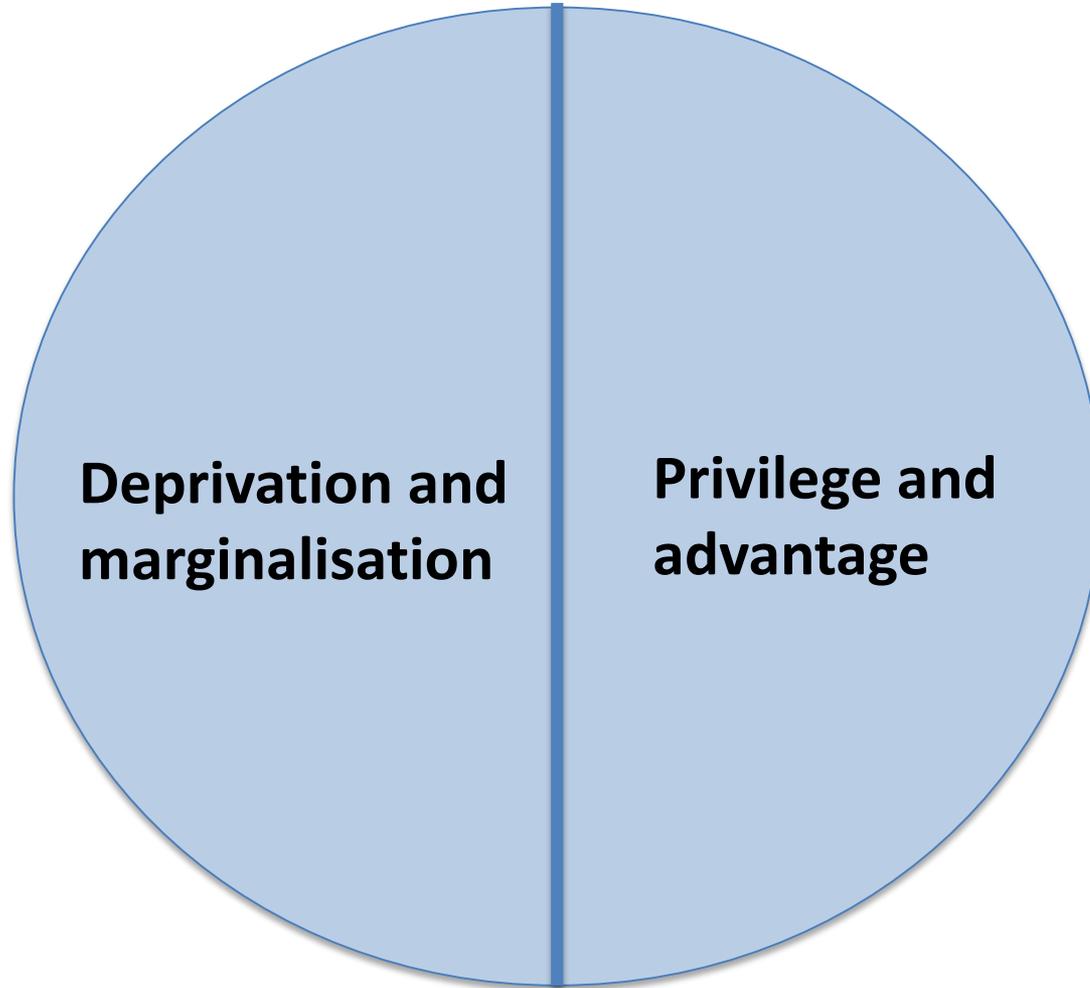


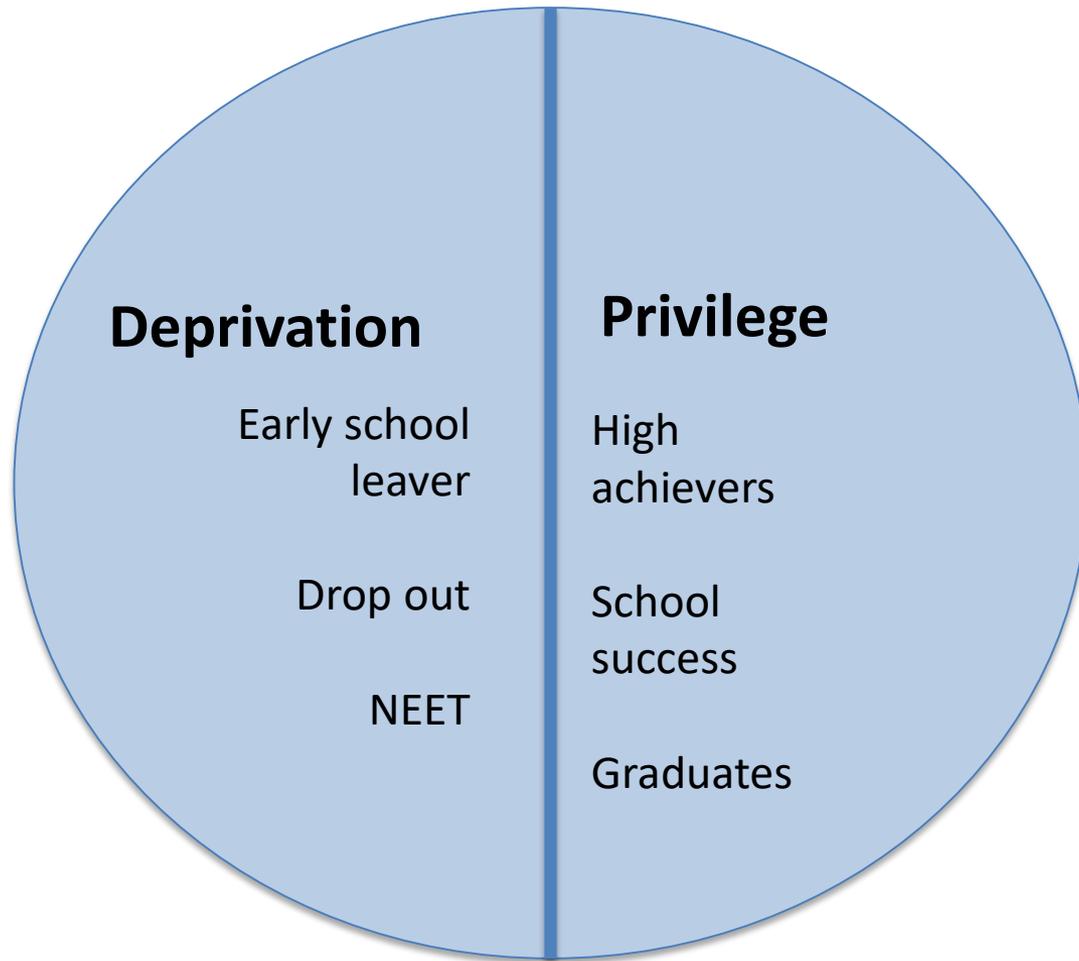
10% of children under 16 experience a mental health issue. Only 30% of them receive treatment (NHS England, 2019)

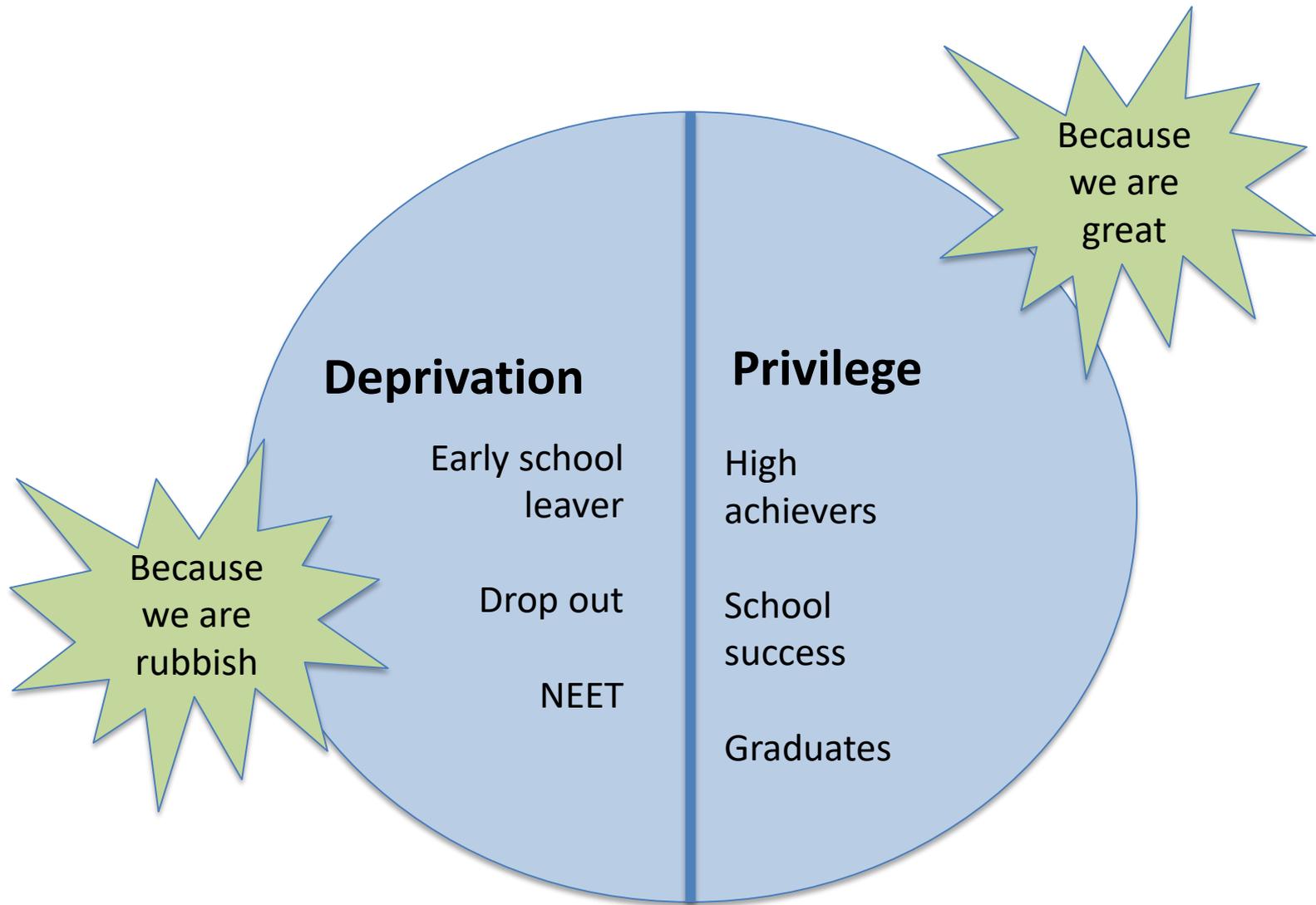


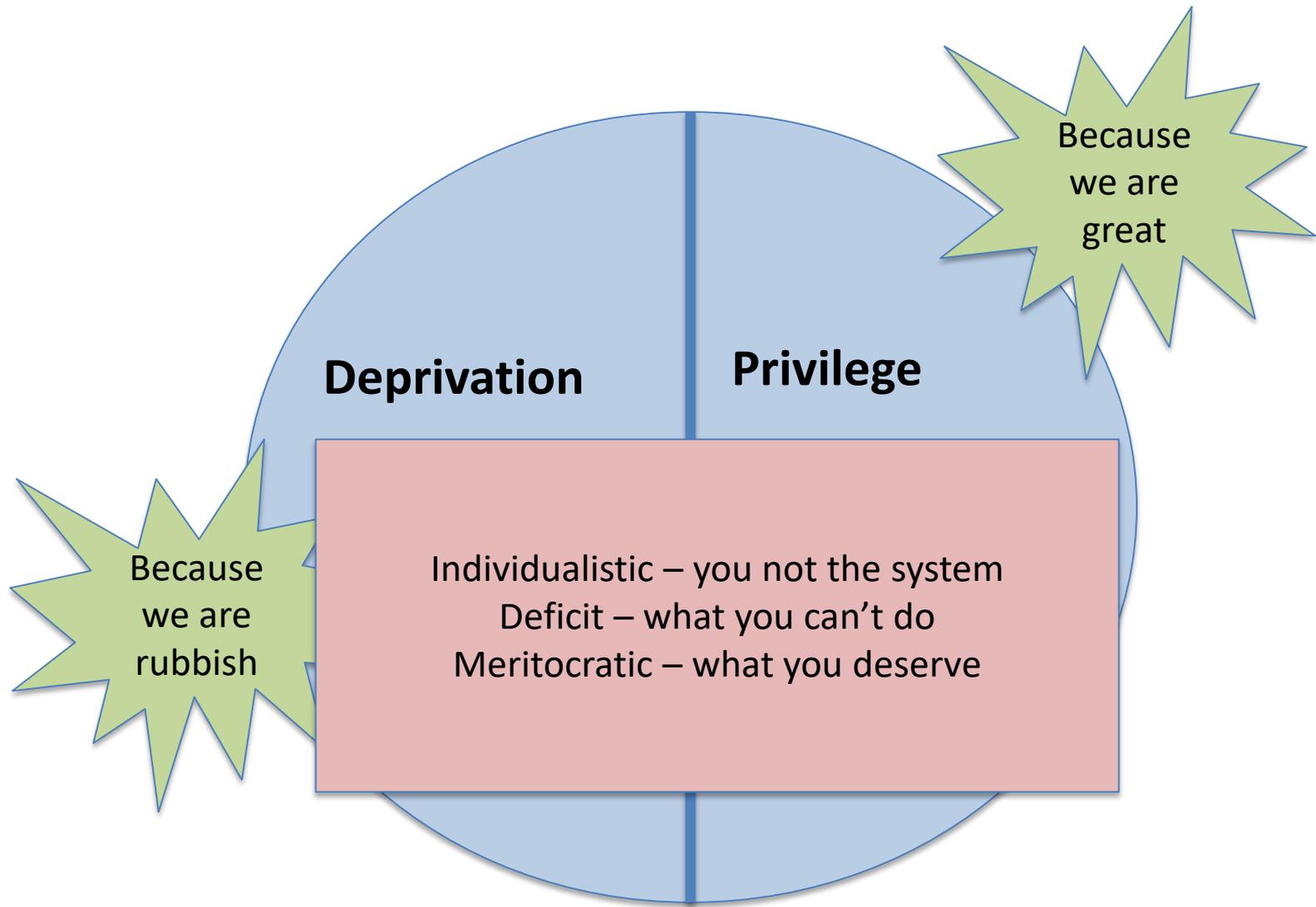
Many UK youth have bad experiences of education - so what?

- Are young people broken? Failing? Weak?
- Are some young people naturally better than others?
- Do some young people deserve to have a bad experience of school?
- Are our schools and education system broken? Failing? Weak?









How do we understand what is happening?

Context is king

- Anthropology / sociology / education / youth work perspectives state context matters, we are socio-culturally shaped.
- Inequalities have always existed (Dorling, 2010)
- Social and cultural production and reproduction, through habitus and hegemonic structures (Bourdieu)
- Humans are socially and culturally embedded (Thompson, 1997; Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Context and
lived
experiences

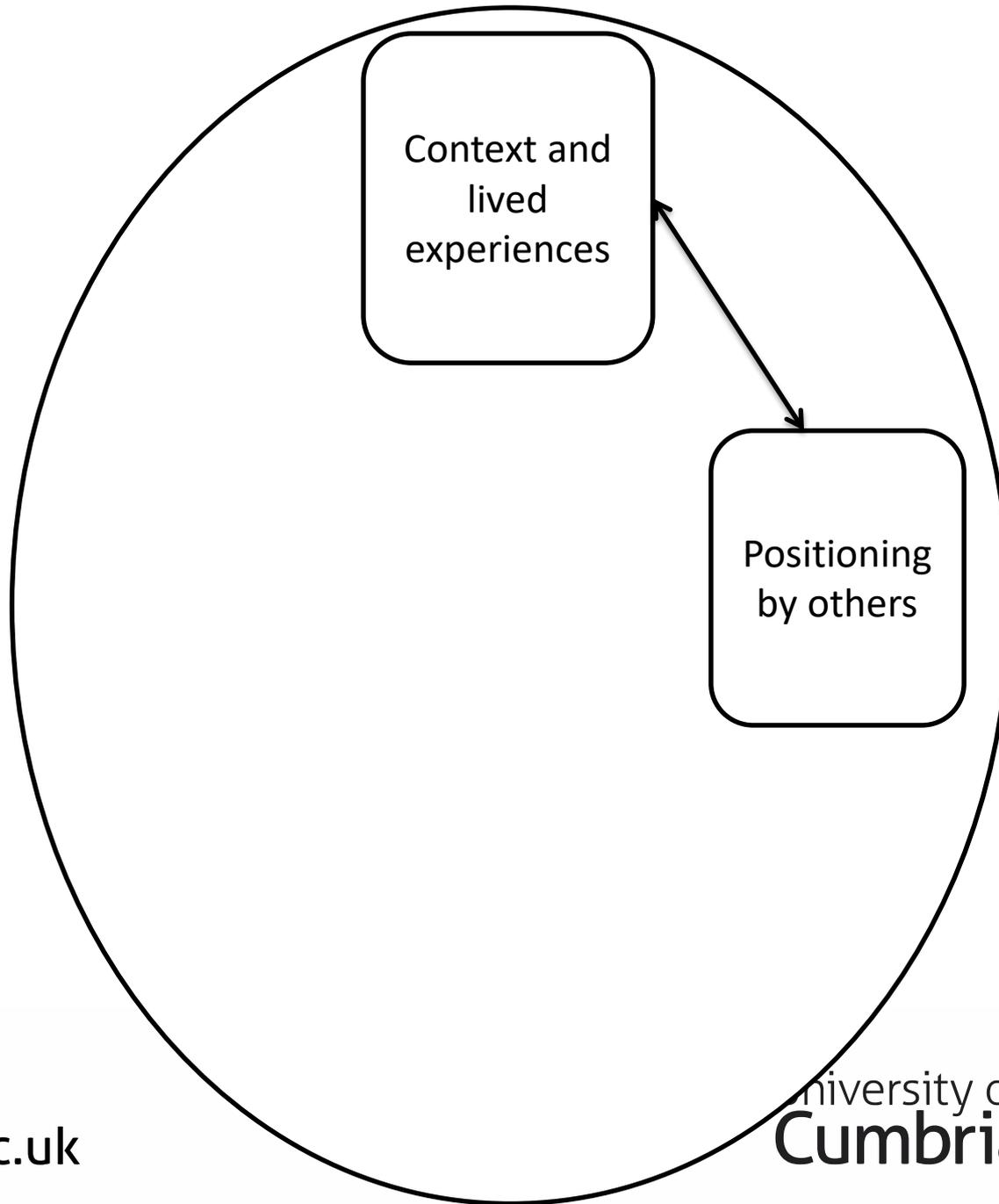


Contextual facts questions

- Where did you live, what sort of house?
- How stable is your household?
- Who do you live with?
- How wealthy are you?
- Where was that, what sort of community?
- Who did you hang out with?
- Who was around to support you learn?
- What sort of school did you go to?
- What rules were there in the school?
- What was your experience of those places?
- How happy were you?
- How was your wellbeing?

Positioning by others

- People in society position 'other' individuals and groups in relation to themselves – it is a psychological defence
- Positions also created by the state, media and society (Jones, 2015; Bourdieu, 1999)
- People then produce, reproduce and protect a given status quo (Dorling, 2010; Fox, Piven and Cloward, 2015)
- It is often hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971; Ledwith, 2005; Wearing, 1998)
- This positioning protects the interests of the haves against the have not's (Tyler, 2013; Dorling, 2010, Blackman and Rogers, 2017)

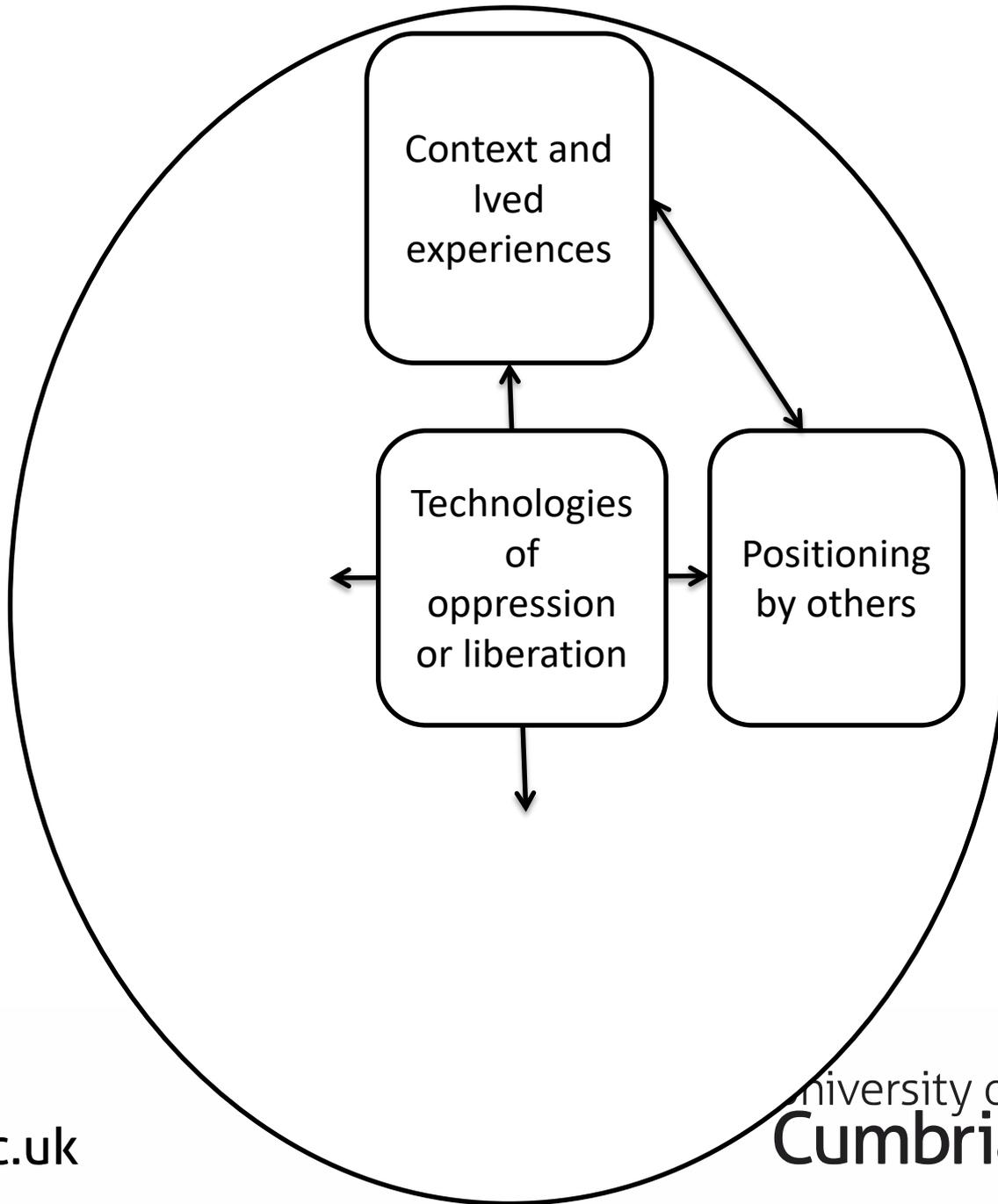


Positioning by others questions

- How did the people you come across treat you?
- Who treated you as an equal?
- Who looked down on you?
- Who put you on a pedestal?
- Who made you feel uncomfortable?
- What do you think other people said about you?
- What labels were you given?
- What stereotypes were applied to you?

Technologies oppression slides

- Stereotyping and labelling (Dorling, 2010)
- Objectification (Bourdieu, 2003)
- Othering (Foucault, 1979; 1982, Lacan, 1988; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Said, 1994)
- Social abjection (Tyler, 2013)
- Dehumanising, shame, stigma (Nussbaum, 2004| Brown, 2010)
- Willful blindness (Heffernan, 2011)
- Insecurity (Lorey, 2015; Butler, 2006),
- Fear (Furedi, 2005)
- Legislation (Bauman, 1989 and surveillance (Foucault, 1978, 1982) to keep people in their place.

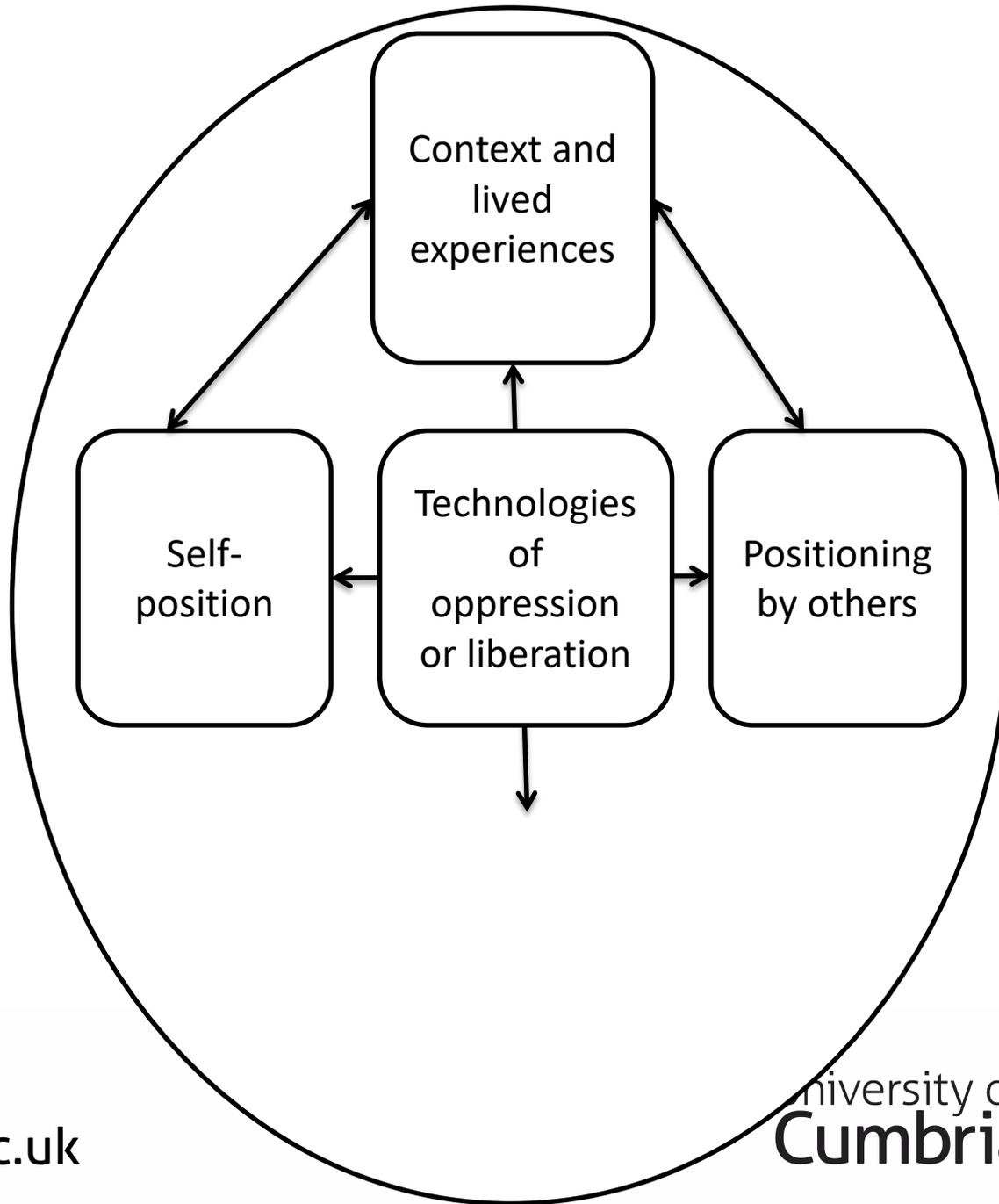


Technologies questions

- How did people put you down?
- How did people make you feel powerful?
- When / why were you ignored or silenced?
- How did other people make you do what they wanted you to do?
- How did people make you feel bad?
- What did other teachers and parents say to you?
- What did people do to make you feel good?
- How were you given recognition and esteem?

Self position

- Status is socially inscribed and self-ascribed
- We sometimes adopt a position from a childhood 'script' (Berne, 1966)
- These can be positions of compliance and acceptance, victimhood, rebellion, deviance etcetera.
- This has a major impact on our identity, agency and social mobility (Cote and Levine, 2002; Lawler, 2008)

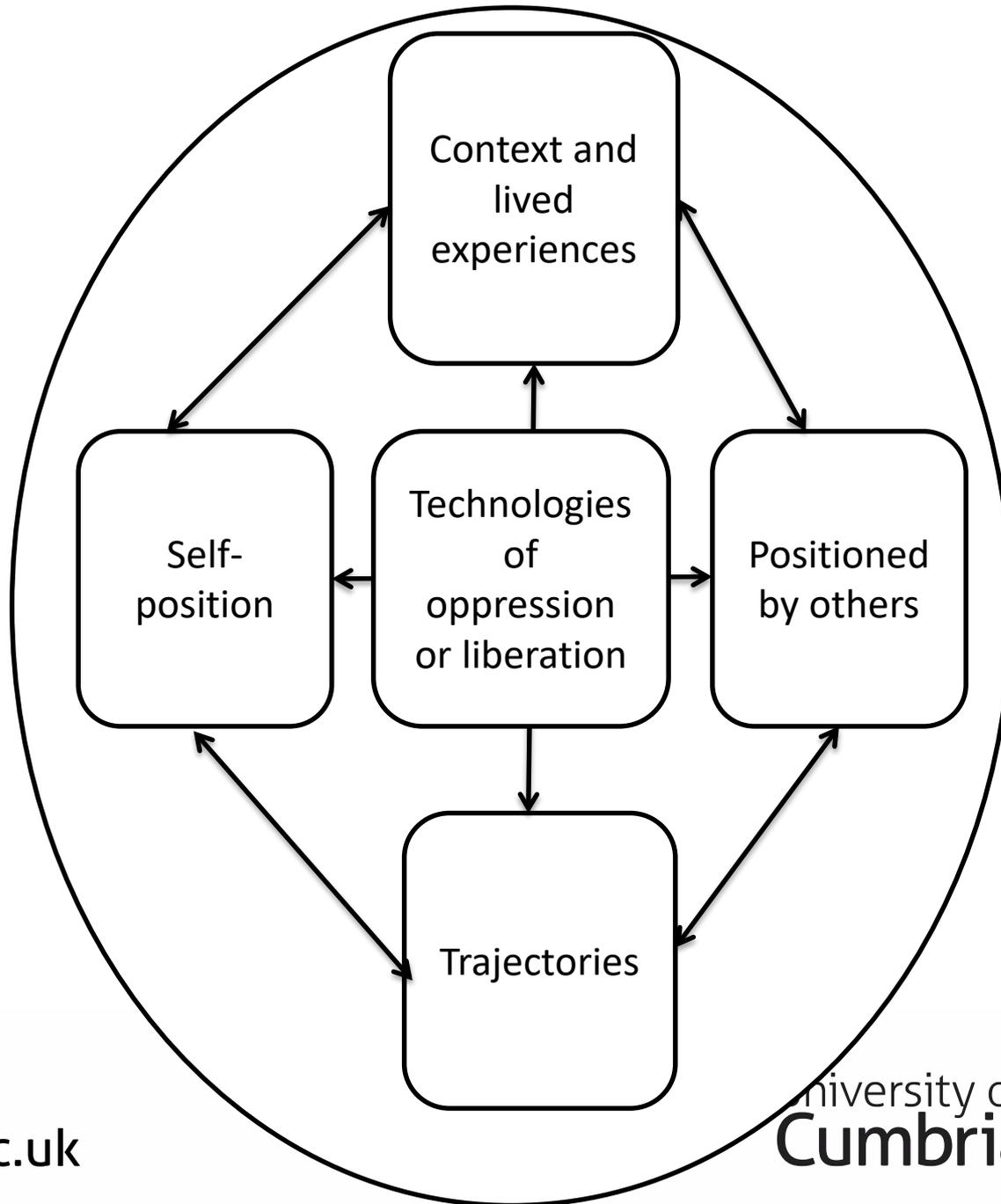


Self-position questions

- How did you respond?
- How did you feel about yourself?
- What did you think about yourself?
- What were your self-beliefs?
- What were the critical messages about yourself?
- How did you behave?
- Did you rebel? Act the victim? Comply with what they say?

Trajectory

- Intrapersonal impact of these technologies e.g. low self-esteem, self-efficacy, identity, agency etc. (Bandura, 1997; Giddens, 1993; Archer, 2005)
- Interpersonal impact e.g. low trust, fear, insecure, shame, stigma (Nussbaum, 2004)
- Supporting further self-positioning and further positioning by others in on-going cycles (Bourdieu, 1995)
- Nested poor outcomes intergenerationally.



Trajectory questions

- What impact did all this have?
- Where did you think you were heading educationally?
- Was that where you wanted to go?
- What could you change to make it different?
- What did you need to do to keep it on track?
- To what extent is your outcome the same as that of other people in your family or community?

Without an equalities literacy framework people may:

- Make faulty assumptions / work from biases
- Disempower and disable
- Blame, label and individualise ('it's their fault mentality')
- Unconsciously reinforce existing power relations and therefore positions of inequality

Towards a solution?

Equality: the same rights, freedom, opportunity.

Benefit from society on the basis of equal terms.

Equity: different rights, freedom, opportunity.

Benefit from outcomes of society on the basis of fairness and need.

Social Justice: deliberate interventions to ensure equality and equity.

Critical Pedagogy

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