

# **BETWEEN MARGINALISATION AND AGENCY.**

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**Dr Federico Farini**

**Applied Social Sciences and Sociology  
Centre for Education and Research**

University of  
Northampton  
Research Conference  
June 16, 2021

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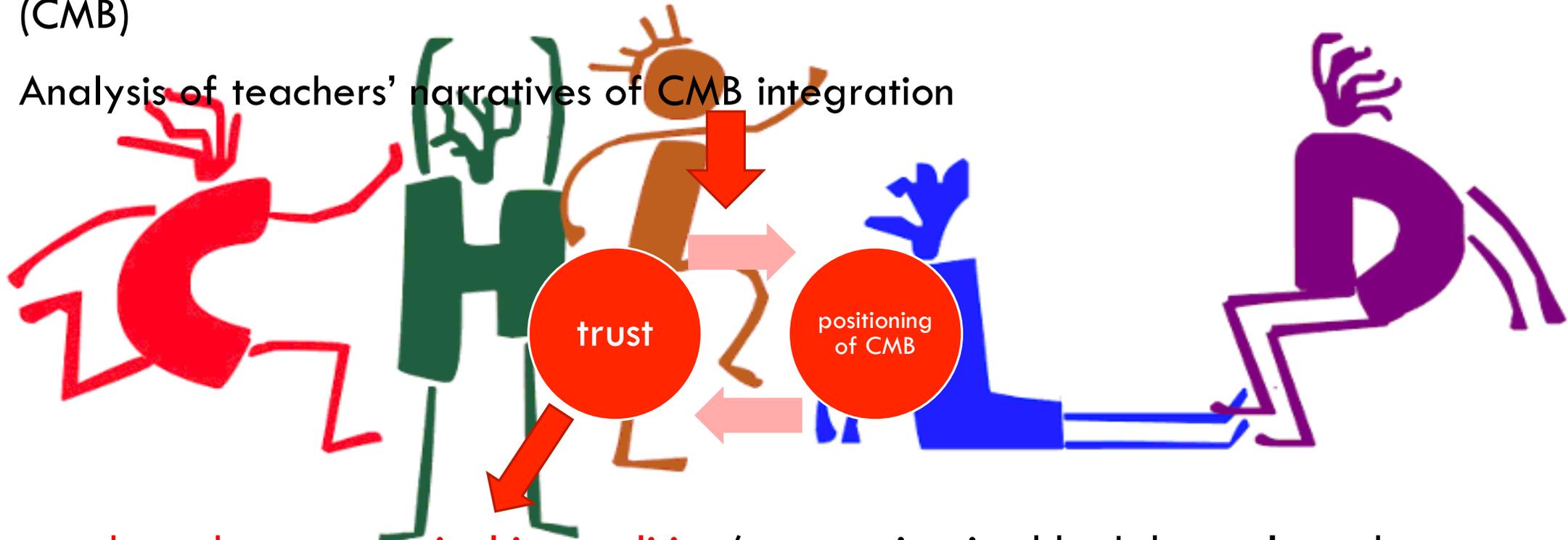


# INTRODUCTION

## Horizon 2020 Child-UP (Work Package 5)

25 Interviews with teachers focused on the integration of Children with Migrant Background (CMB)

Analysis of teachers' narratives of CMB integration



**trust based on categorical inequalities** (concept inspired by Luhmann's work on trust and Tilly's work on categorisations)

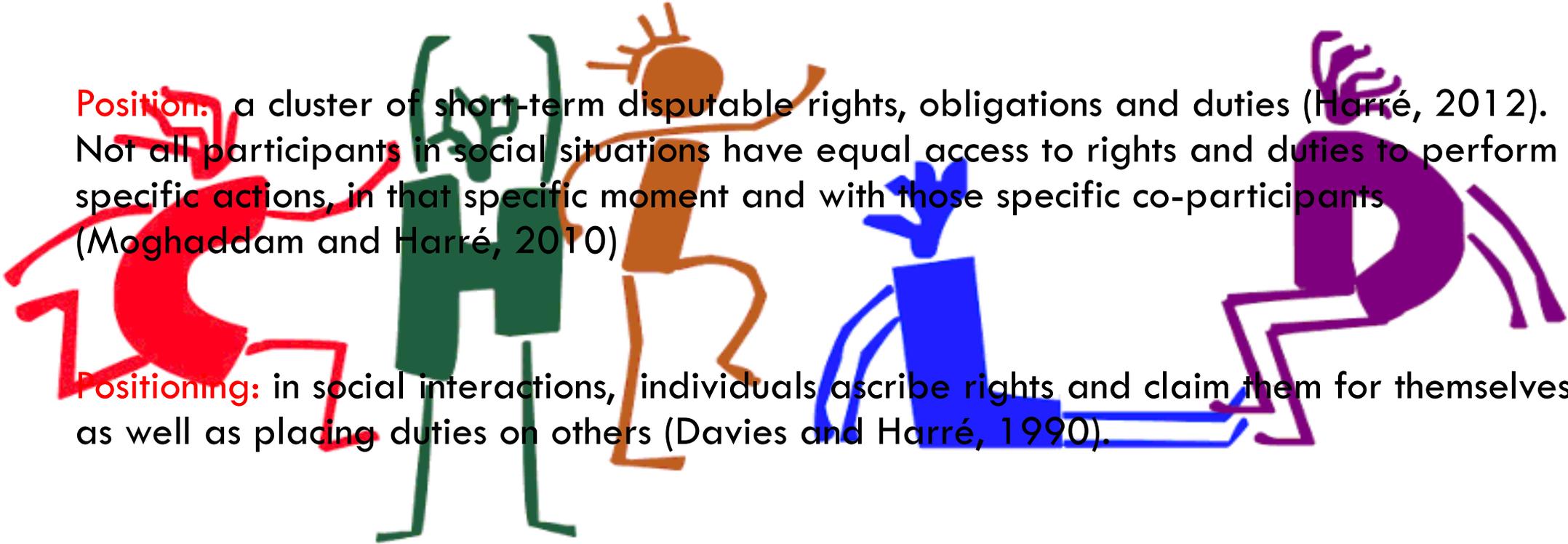
- **personal trust** (concept inspired by Giddens's theory of interpersonal communication)

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## Positioning

**Position:** a cluster of short-term disputable rights, obligations and duties (Harré, 2012).  
Not all participants in social situations have equal access to rights and duties to perform specific actions, in that specific moment and with those specific co-participants (Moghaddam and Harré, 2010)

**Positioning:** in social interactions, individuals ascribe rights and claim them for themselves as well as placing duties on others (Davies and Harré, 1990).



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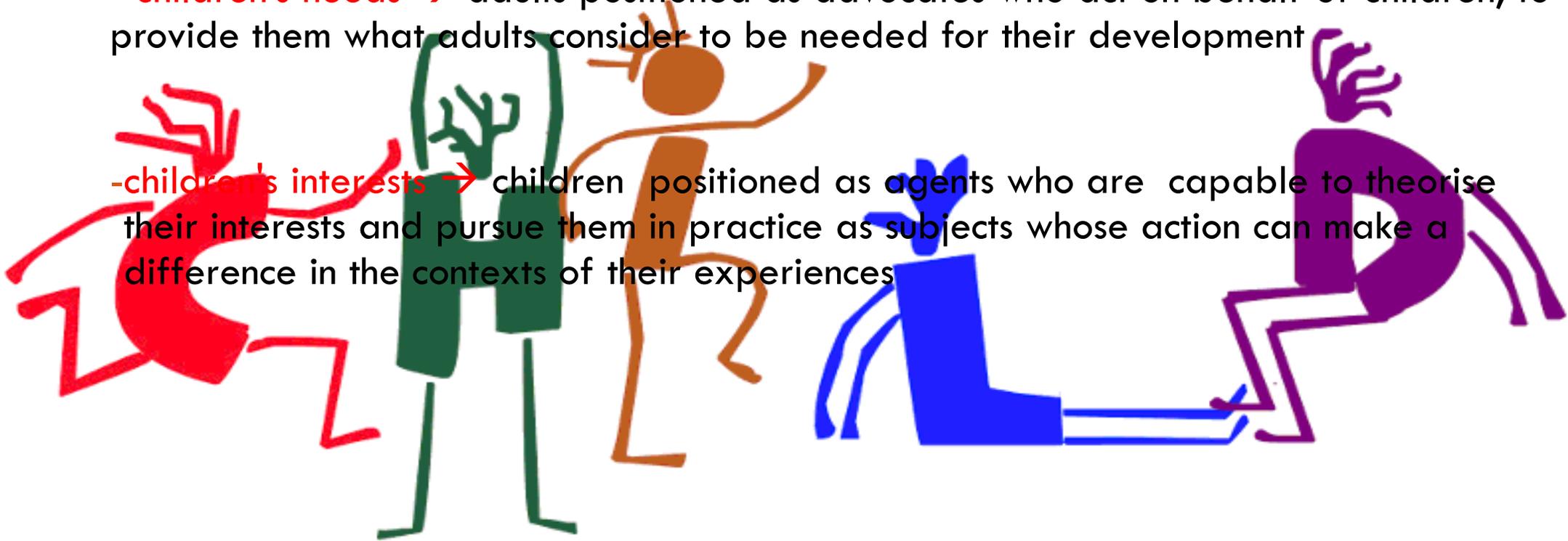


Wehmeyer et al. 2017: positioning in intergenerational relationships:

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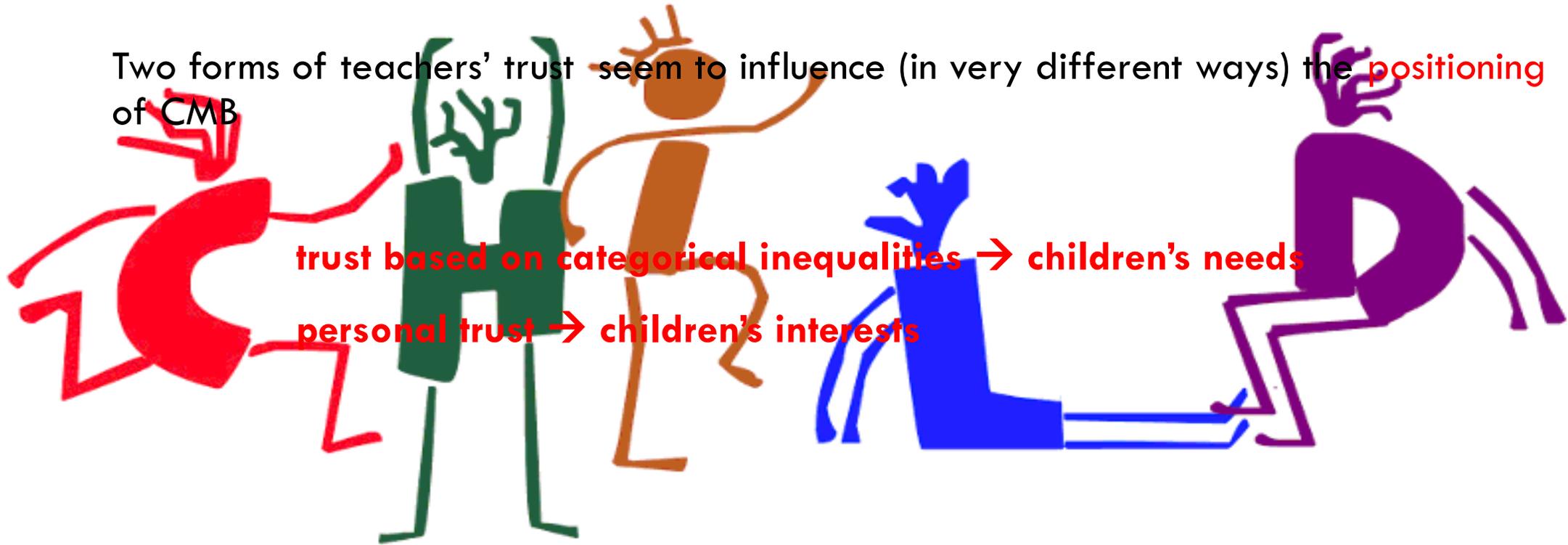
- **children's needs** → adults positioned as advocates who act on behalf of children, to provide them what adults consider to be needed for their development

- **children's interests** → children positioned as agents who are capable to theorise their interests and pursue them in practice as subjects whose action can make a difference in the contexts of their experiences



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Two forms of teachers' trust seem to influence (in very different ways) the positioning of CMB



## Trust based on categorical inequalities

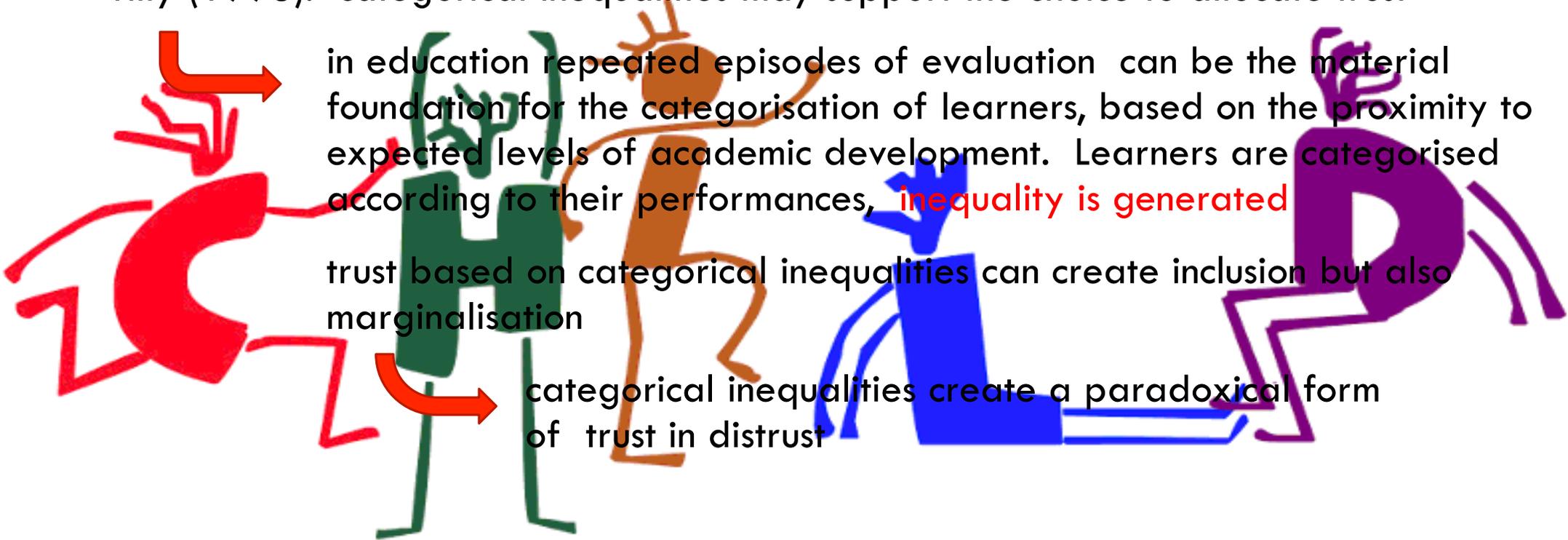
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Tilly (1998): categorical inequalities may support the choice to allocate trust

in education repeated episodes of evaluation can be the material foundation for the categorisation of learners, based on the proximity to expected levels of academic development. Learners are categorised according to their performances, **inequality is generated**

trust based on categorical inequalities can create inclusion but also marginalisation

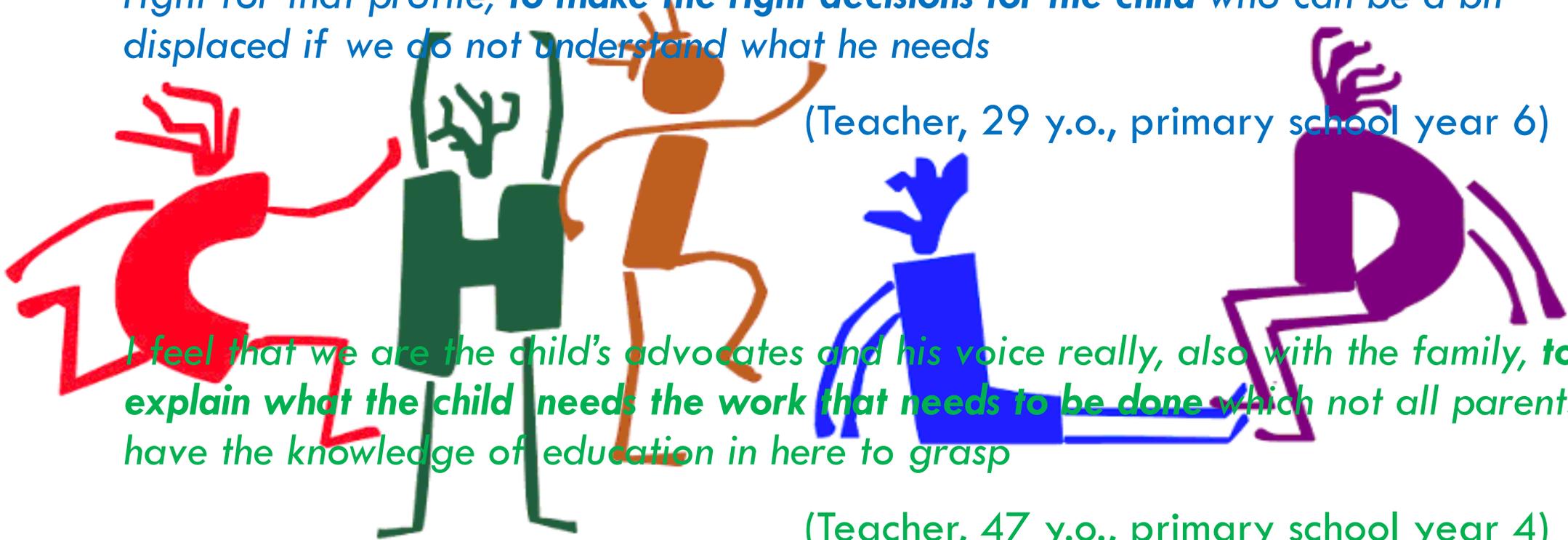
categorical inequalities create a paradoxical form of trust in distrust



The question is to have a clear picture of what each child needs. It is important to understand what realistic expectations are at one moment in time and move from there. If a child comes with language needs, we have got to have plans that are right for that profile, **to make the right decisions for the child** who can be a bit displaced if we do not understand what he needs

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(Teacher, 29 y.o., primary school year 6)



I feel that we are the child's advocates and his voice really, also with the family, **to explain what the child needs the work that needs to be done** which not all parents have the knowledge of education in here to grasp

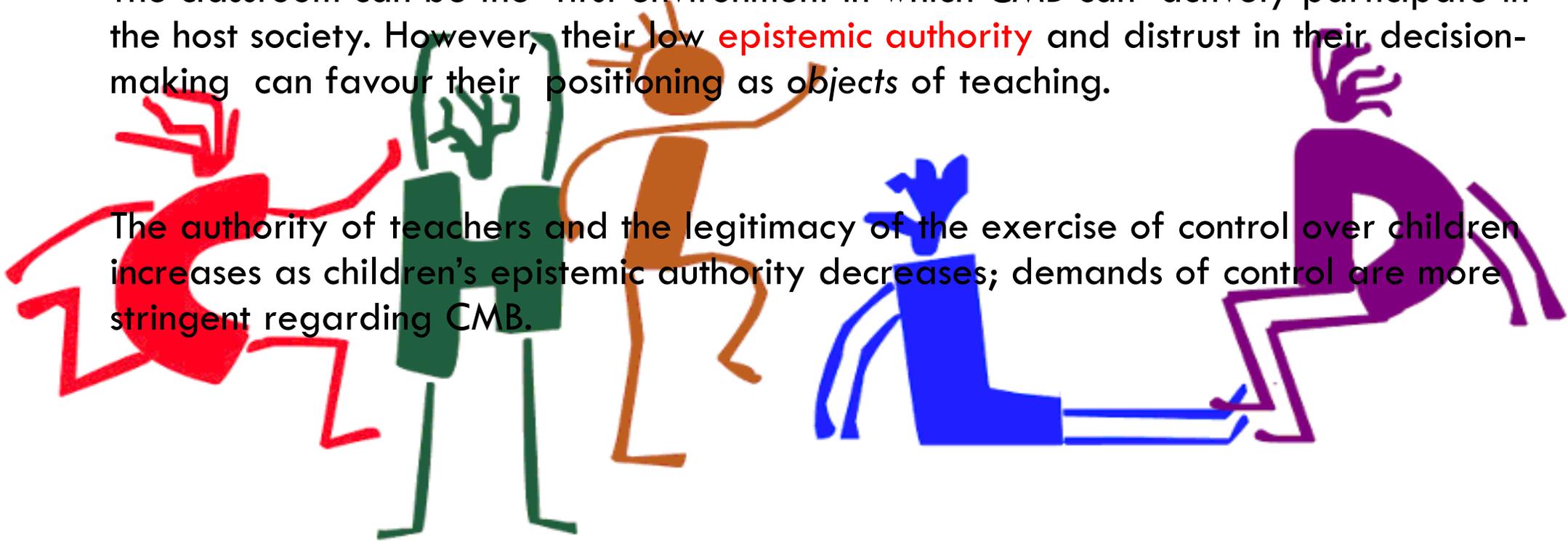
(Teacher, 47 y.o., primary school year 4)

## Trust based on categorical inequalities and epistemic status

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The classroom can be the first environment in which CMB can actively participate in the host society. However, their low **epistemic authority** and distrust in their decision-making can favour their positioning as *objects* of teaching.

The authority of teachers and the legitimacy of the exercise of control over children increases as children's epistemic authority decreases; demands of control are more stringent regarding CMB.



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*...that freedom, who can be given that, who would be at risk because he has shown not to be ready, or maybe not to be so confident in the interaction with other, it don't do them any favour to give the same space as others*

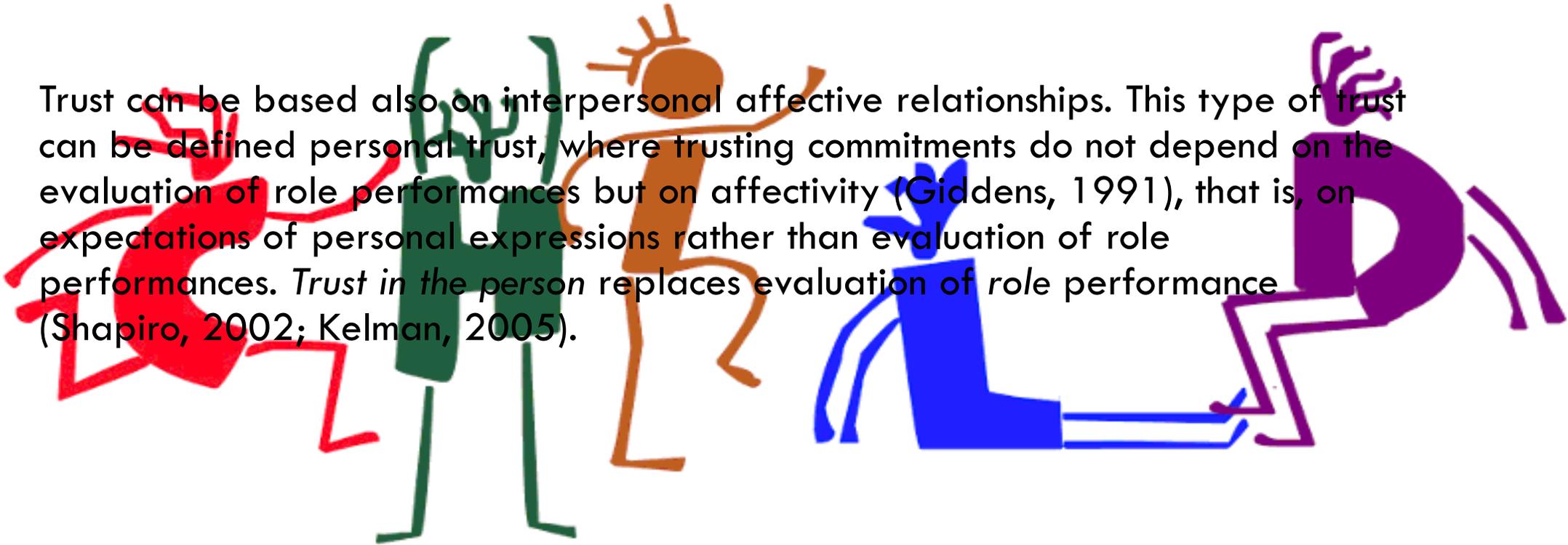


(Teacher, 31 y.o., primary school year 5)

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## Personal trust

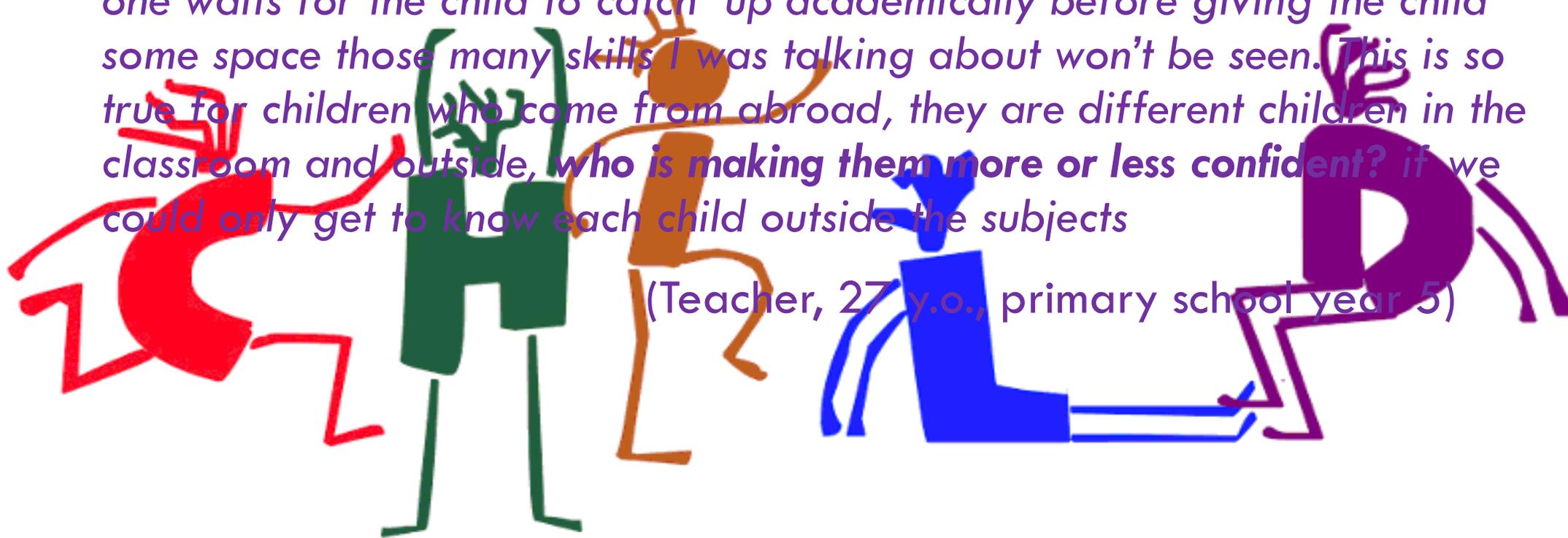
Trust can be based also on interpersonal affective relationships. This type of trust can be defined personal trust, where trusting commitments do not depend on the evaluation of role performances but on affectivity (Giddens, 1991), that is, on expectations of personal expressions rather than evaluation of role performances. *Trust in the person* replaces evaluation of role performance (Shapiro, 2002; Kelman, 2005).



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*...in order to see that talent it is necessary to trust the child to make decisions, to listen to the voices are they are. Not the other way, because if one waits for the child to catch up academically before giving the child some space those many skills I was talking about won't be seen. This is so true for children who come from abroad, they are different children in the classroom and outside, who is making them more or less confident? if we could only get to know each child outside the subjects*

(Teacher, 27 y.o., primary school year 5)



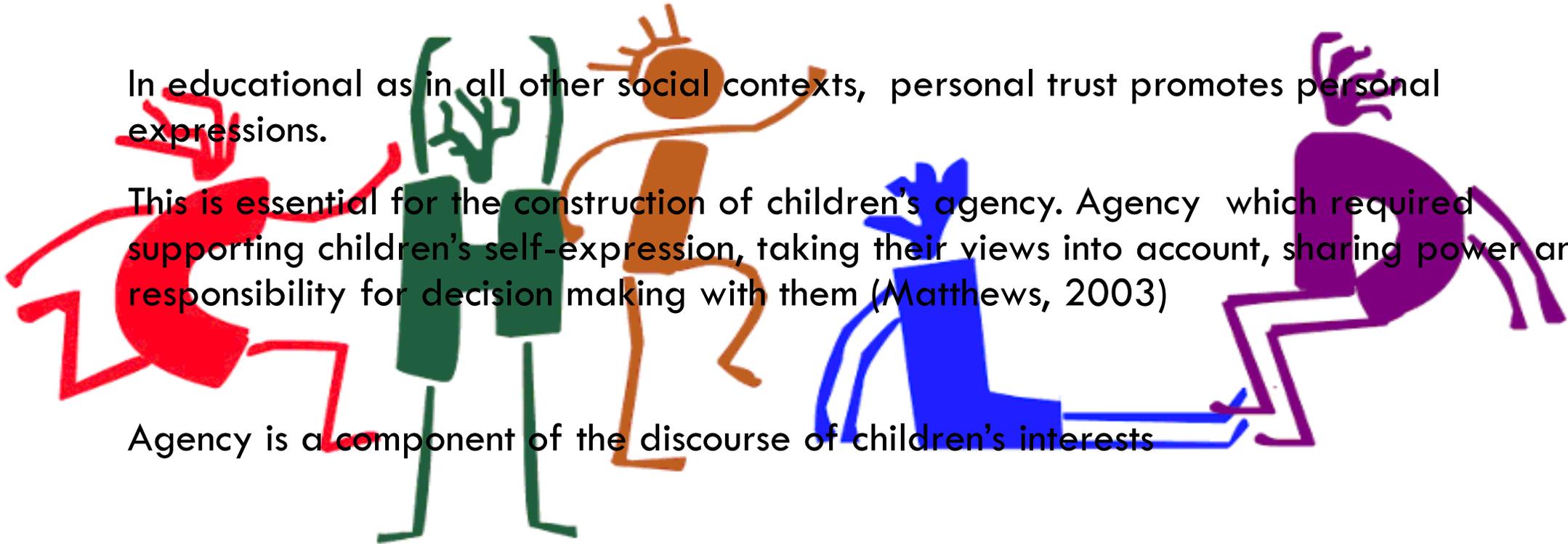
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## Children's agency

In educational as in all other social contexts, personal trust promotes personal expressions.

This is essential for the construction of children's agency. Agency which required supporting children's self-expression, taking their views into account, sharing power and responsibility for decision making with them (Matthews, 2003)

Agency is a component of the discourse of children's interests



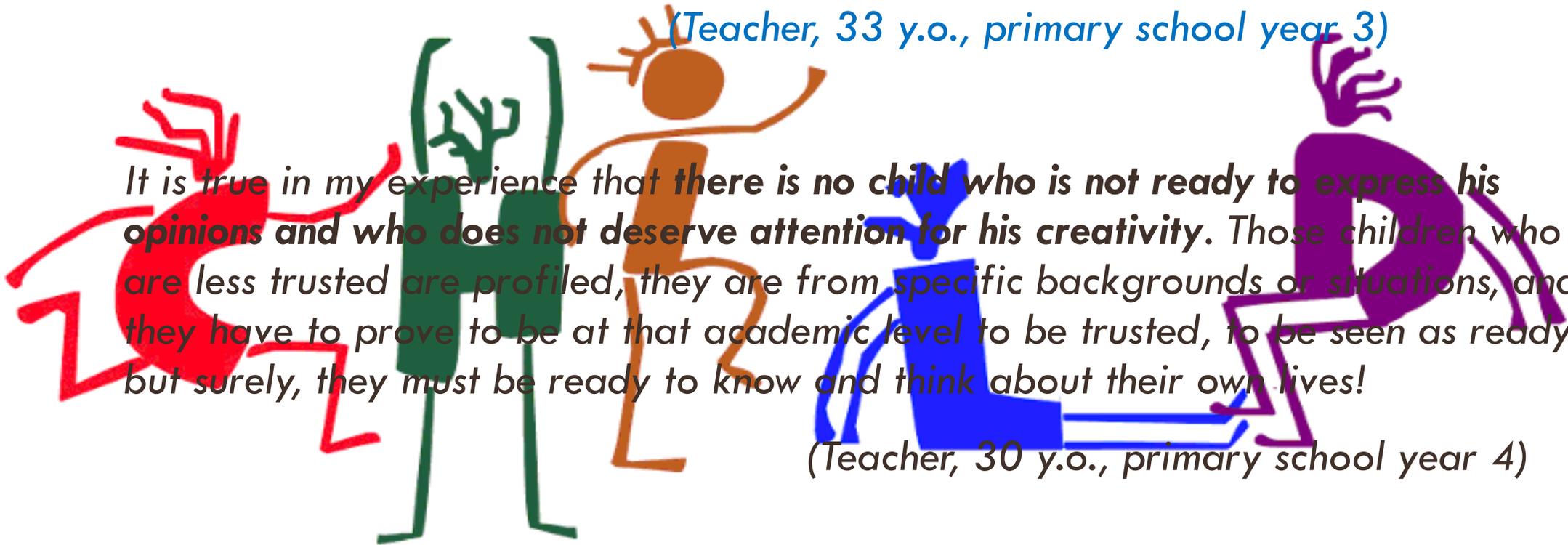
*I trust all children in their uniqueness as much as I know that each child deserves to be trusted and all children deserve to have their voices heard. **Without trust no voice is heard***

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*(Teacher, 33 y.o., primary school year 3)*

*It is true in my experience that **there is no child who is not ready to express his opinions and who does not deserve attention for his creativity.** Those children who are less trusted are profiled, they are from specific backgrounds or situations, and they have to prove to be at that academic level to be trusted, to be seen as ready but surely, they must be ready to know and think about their own lives!*

*(Teacher, 30 y.o., primary school year 4)*



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*If we are concerned with measuring how a child speaks, we measure what we them to say and how, but the truth is that children use the language that they have to do things with others. The many languages and ways of expression. This is how we see that children with little English maybe, that hey do engage actively even before developing the language*

(Teacher, 27 y.o., primary school year 4)



## Personal trust: from citizenship education to citizenship IN education

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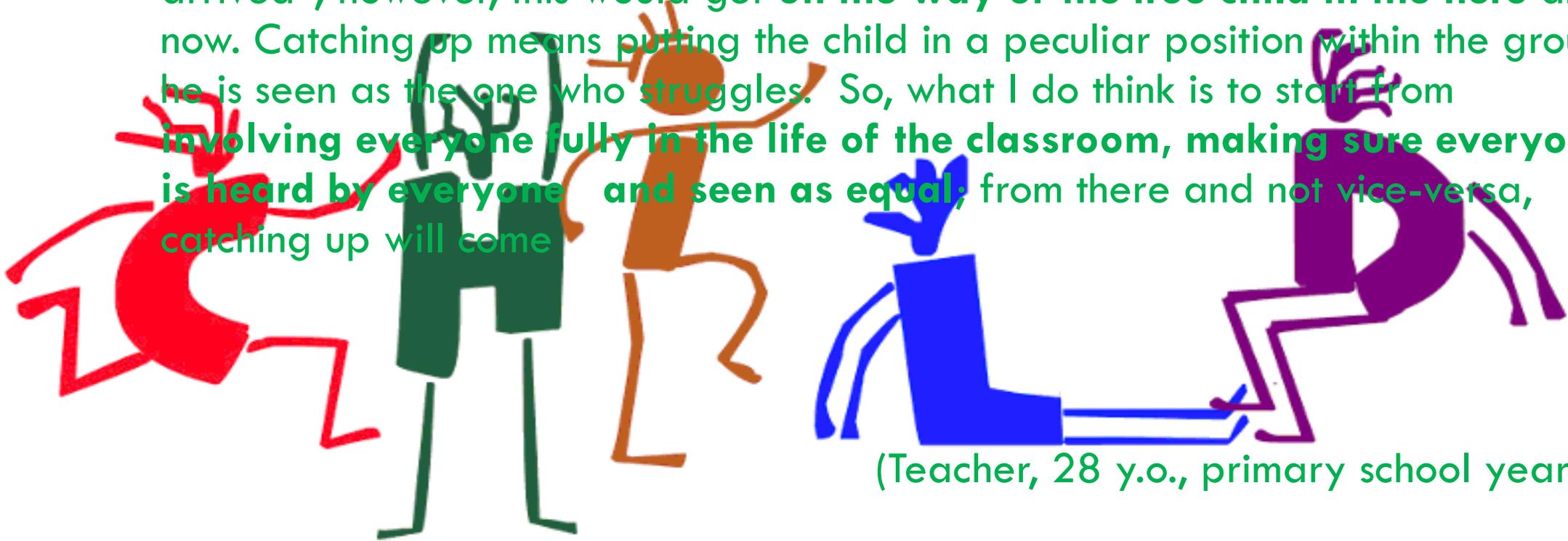
CMB, who are often positioned in a children's needs paradigm as a consequence of categorically-based withdrawal of trust (Seele, 2012).

Whilst permeated by the commitment to protect and support CMB, the children's needs paradigm may contribute to marginalise them, based on categorisation as members of a deficit-group.



It is up to us to make sure that we do not miss the child because we are not tuned in to him. So many times, I could have thought “you know, this is just arrived”; however, this would get **on the way of the true child in the here and now**. Catching up means putting the child in a peculiar position within the group, he is seen as the one who struggles. So, what I do think is to start from **involving everyone fully in the life of the classroom, making sure everyone is heard by everyone and seen as equal**; from there and not vice-versa, catching up will come

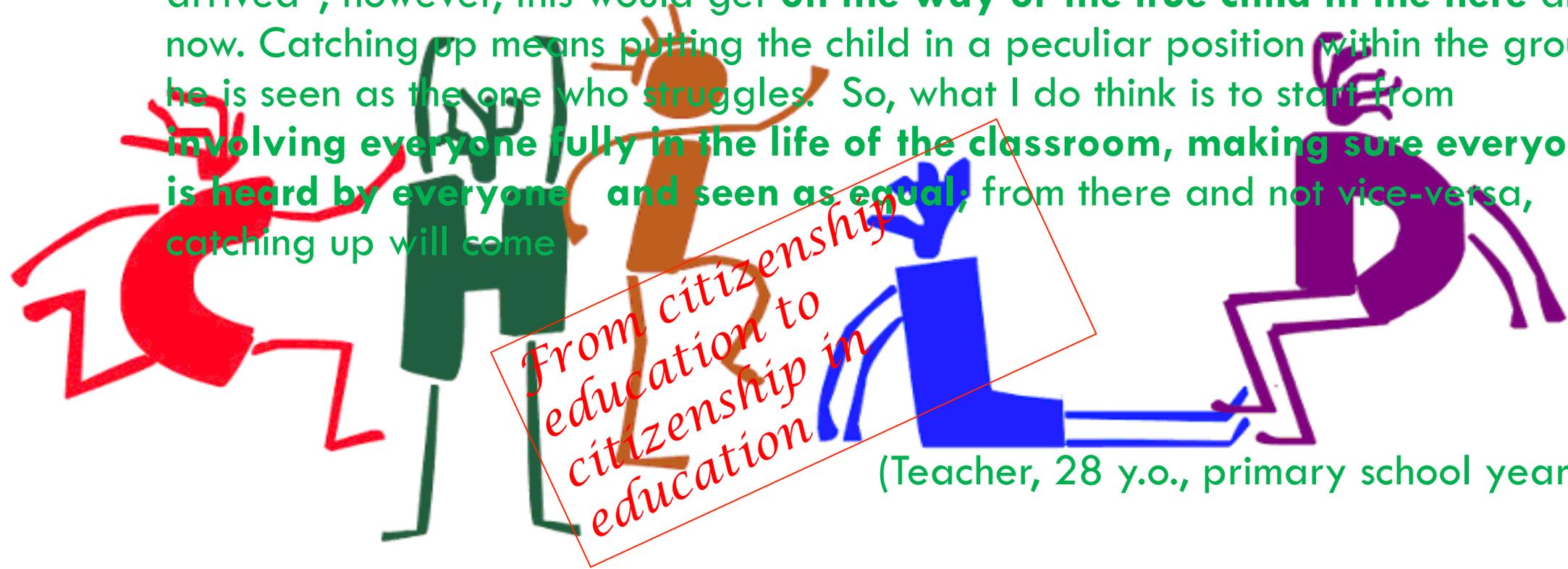
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(Teacher, 28 y.o., primary school year 5)

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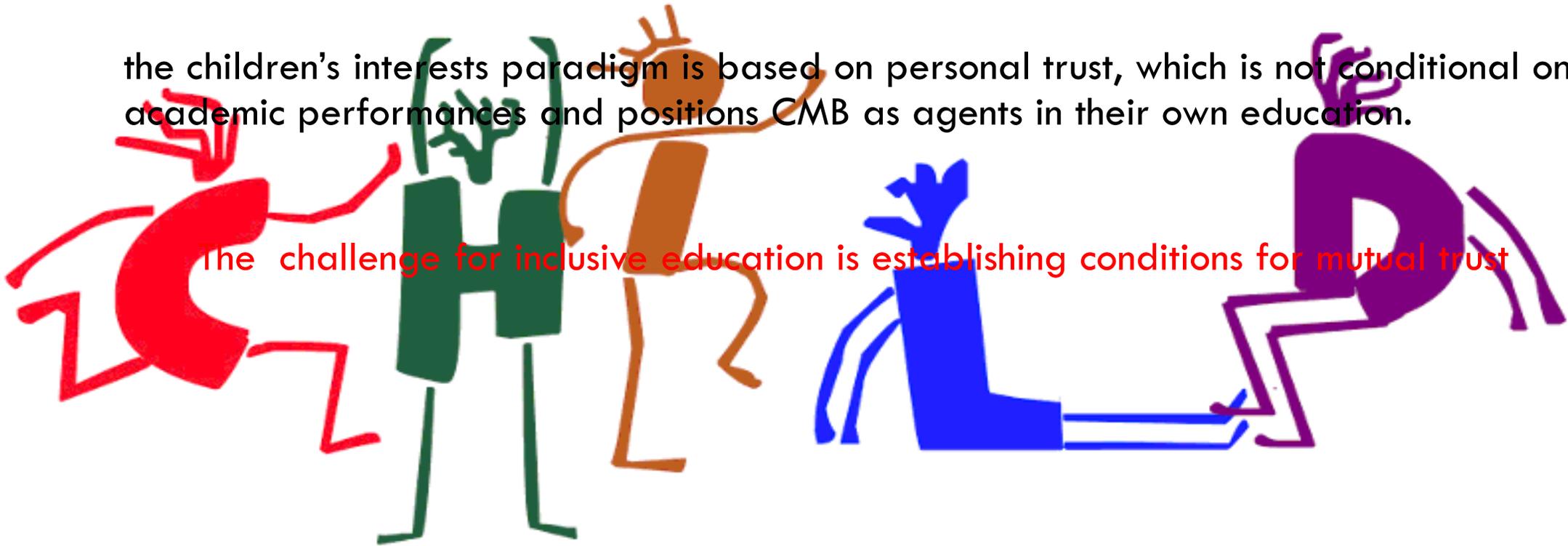
*From citizenship education to citizenship in education*

(Teacher, 28 y.o., primary school year 5)

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the children's interests paradigm is based on personal trust, which is not conditional on academic performances and positions CMB as agents in their own education.

The challenge for inclusive education is establishing conditions for mutual trust



THANK YOU!

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[federico.farini@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:federico.farini@northampton.ac.uk)

[www.child-up.eu](http://www.child-up.eu)

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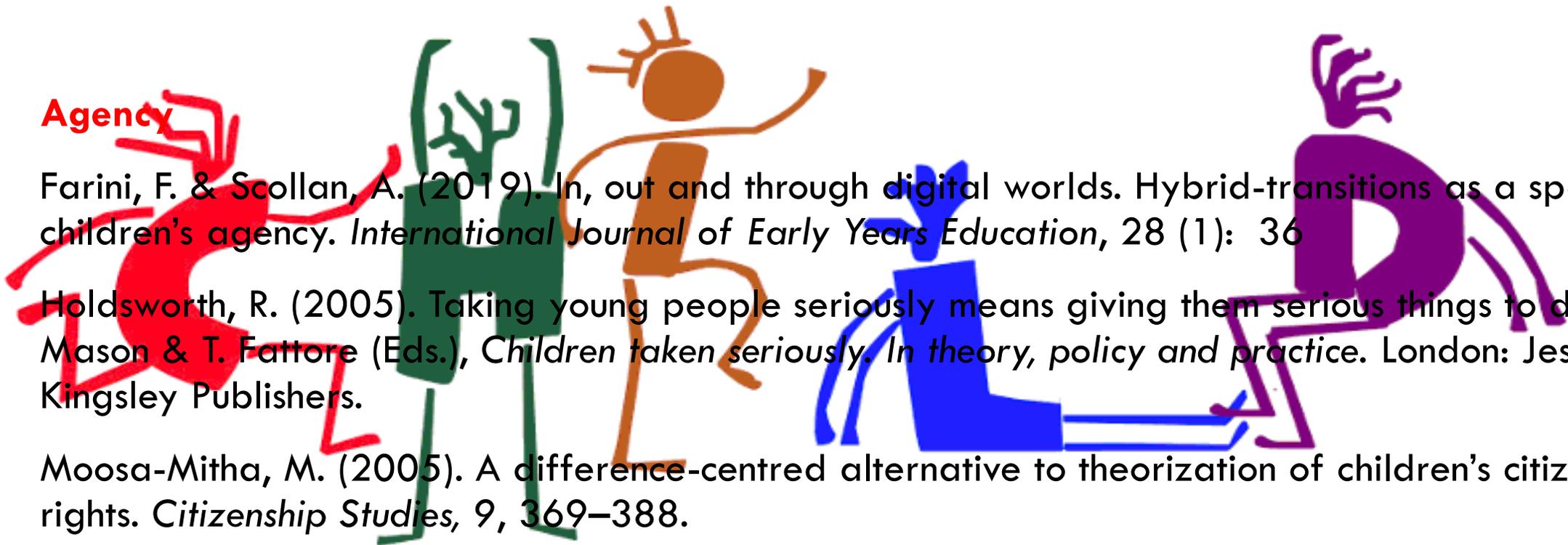
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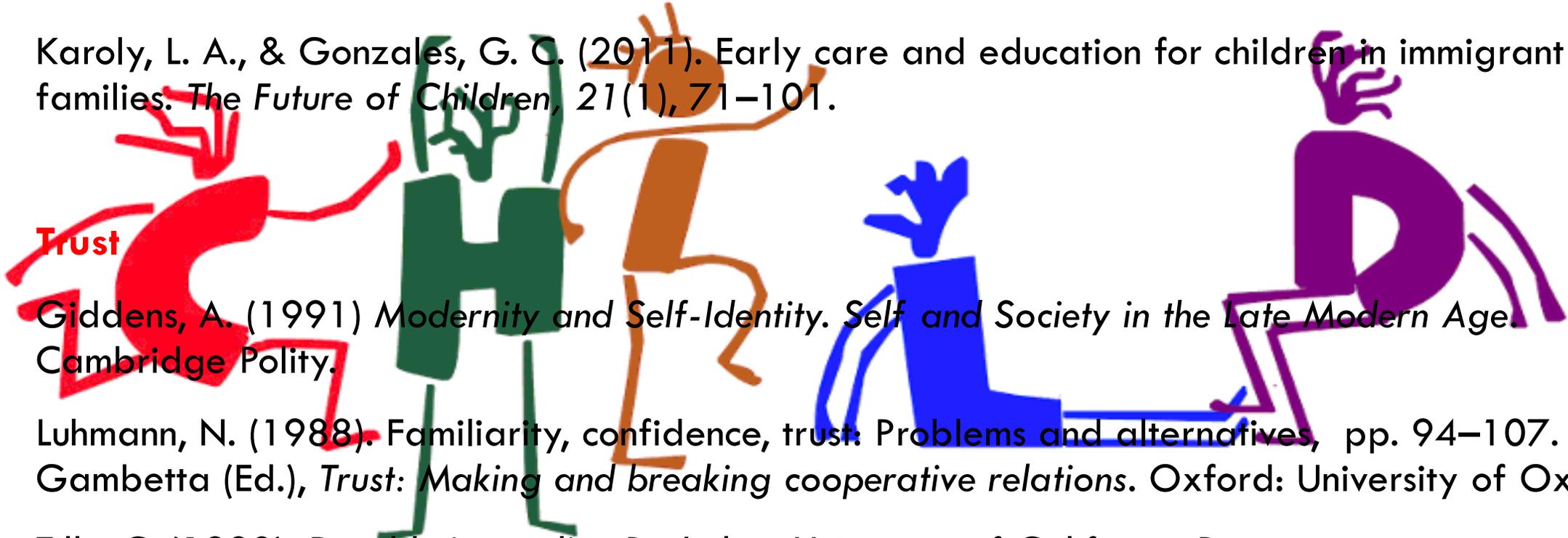
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Trust