

# Teaching with Purpose: Responsive Practice for All Learners

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## 2. Critique: When Materials Create Barriers



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*“Language does not simply reflect reality;  
it constructs it.”*

– Norman Fairclough



female doctor and male nurse



Pricing

female doctor and male nurse 16.1k results

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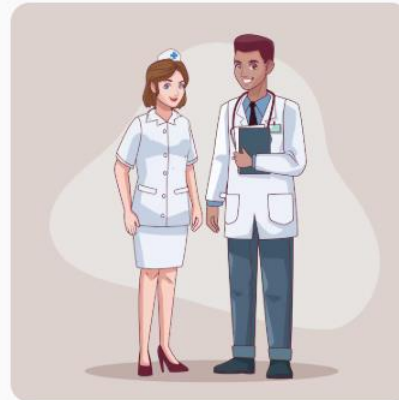
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# Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in English Language Teaching (ELT) is an approach that examines how language is used to construct **social realities**, shape **power relations**, and influence **ideologies**.

It involves analyzing imagery, texts, spoken or written, to uncover **hidden meanings, assumptions, and power dynamics** within them.

# What Inclusion Looks Like

-  Disability / Physical Needs
-  Neurodiversity / SEN (e.g. Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD)
-  Multilingualism / EAL learners
-  Gender Identity
-  LGBTQ Spectrum
-  Race / Ethnicity
-  Socioeconomic background
-  Inclusive Participation (every voice counts)
-  Learning preferences
-  Accessibility to Resources

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

### Group Work **B2 Texts** (x4): 10 minutes

- Actual ELT materials or online texts
- Each text contains at least 4 embedded biases
- Every group must discover 4 biases and share their findings.

*Tip: Each teacher can present one bias*



# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text1, Title: Choosing the Right Career

Many people believe that choosing a career depends on your personality. For example, men are often more suited to technical jobs such as engineering or IT because they are naturally better at problem-solving. Women, on the other hand, are usually more patient and caring, which makes them excellent teachers or nurses.

In most companies, men tend to take leadership roles, as they are more confident and decisive. Women often prefer jobs that allow them to balance work and family life, which is why part-time positions are more popular among them.

Although society is changing, these natural differences still influence the types of careers people choose today.

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text1, Title: Choosing the Right Career

 Embedded issues

- Biological determinism (“naturally better”)
- Leadership bias
- Care roles assigned to women
- “Choice” presented as neutral but shaped by stereotypes

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text2, Title: A Typical Family Lifestyle

In many countries, a typical family consists of a mother, a father, and two children. The father usually works full-time, while the mother takes care of the home and the children. In the evenings, families often have dinner together and discuss their day.

During holidays like Christmas, families gather, exchange gifts, and enjoy traditional meals. These moments are important because they strengthen family bonds and create lasting memories.

Although modern life has changed some habits, this traditional family model remains the ideal for a stable and happy society.

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text2, Title: A Typical Family Lifestyle

 Embedded issues

- Heteronormativity
- Single “ideal” family model
- Cultural bias (Christmas assumed universal)
- Implied moral judgment (“ideal”)

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text3, Title: The Importance of Travel

Travelling abroad is one of the best ways to learn about the world. Visiting different countries allows people to experience new cultures, try international cuisine, and stay in comfortable hotels.

Most families today try to travel at least once a year, often choosing destinations in Europe or other popular tourist locations. These experiences are essential for personal development and help individuals become more open-minded.

People who do not travel may find it harder to understand other cultures and perspectives.

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text3, Title: The Importance of Travel

 Embedded issues

- Assumes financial privilege
- “Most families” generalisation
- Travel = moral/intellectual superiority
- Ignores alternative experiences

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text4, Title: Learning English Successfully

To succeed in learning English, students must speak clearly and avoid strong accents. A good English speaker sounds natural and uses correct grammar at all times.

Students who speak with a strong accent may find it difficult to communicate effectively, especially in professional environments. For this reason, learners should try to imitate native speakers as much as possible.

By following these steps, anyone can become a successful English speaker.

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text4, Title: Learning English Successfully

 Embedded issues

- Native-speakerism
- Accent discrimination
- Unrealistic standards (“correct at all times”)
- Deficit framing



# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text5, Title: The Ideal Student

A good student is always active in class, participates in discussions, and answers questions quickly. Students who remain quiet or avoid speaking may not be interested in learning or may lack motivation.

Teachers should encourage all students to speak as much as possible, as this shows confidence and engagement. Group work is especially useful because it allows everyone to share ideas openly.

In general, successful learners are those who are outgoing and willing to express themselves.

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text5, Title: The Ideal Student

 Embedded issues

- Introversion = deficiency
- Participation narrowly defined
- Cultural bias (communication styles)
- One model of “good learner”

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text6, Title: Success Depends on Effort

Success in learning a language mainly ~~depends~~ on how hard a student works. Students who are truly motivated will always find time to study, complete their homework, and practise regularly. Even if they have other responsibilities, dedicated learners manage to stay focused on their goals.

On the other hand, students who do not perform well often lack discipline or do not try hard enough. In most cases, improving results is ~~simply~~ a matter of putting in more effort and having a positive attitude.

Teachers can support students, but ultimately, success or failure depends on the learner.

# Exercise 1: Investigation

## *Searching for Bias*

Text6, Title: Success Depends on Effort

 Embedded issues

- “Effort = success” oversimplification
- Ignores: learning differences, socio-economic constraints, emotional/mental factors
- Deficit framing of struggling learners
- Removes responsibility from systems/materials/teaching
- “Equal conditions” assumption

# Scan & Download!

Or visit:

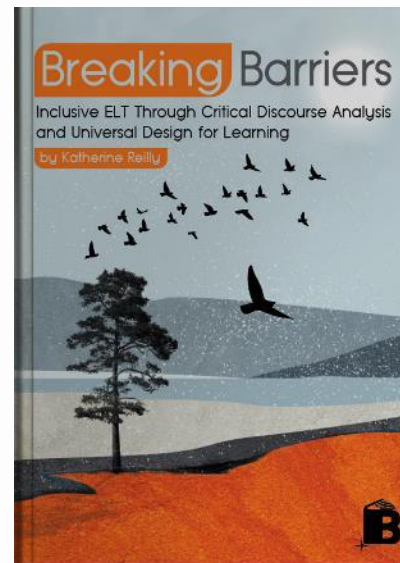
EDUCATIONAL BLOG:

<https://katherinereilly.blog/>



**FREE Sample**

- Understanding Learner Identities
- Developing Inclusive Materials
- Fostering the Classroom Environment
- Integrating Diversity in ELT



# Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that creates **flexible learning environments** designed to **accommodate the diverse needs** of all learners.

It promotes providing multiple ways for students to **access information, engage with material,** and **demonstrate their knowledge,** ensuring equal opportunities for success.

# Putting it all together...

What's wrong with the writing task?

## B1 Level Writing Task:

*"A school magazine has asked students to share their experiences of travelling. Write an article about a recent trip you had abroad." words (120-180)*

*"A school magazine has asked students to write about their **dream travel destination**. Write an article about an **imaginary trip** you had abroad." words (120-180)*



Source: Airplane flying travel  
illustration icon by  
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## Surface Reading vs Critical Reading (quick reality check)

Surface Reading = accepting the text at face value  
*(fixed meaning, unchallenged, often invisible bias)*

Critical Reading = examining what the text assumes  
*(grounded in evidence, multiple perspectives, open to revision)*

**Critical reading:** observation → questioning → evidence → reinterpretation



“We don’t just teach what is in the text, we teach what the text makes seem normal.”

## Exercise 2: Accessibility

### *Adapting the Materials*

#### Group Work **B2 Texts** (x4): 20 minutes

- Discuss your approach and strategy
- Rewrite the text to make it accessible
- Remove all biases
- Don't worry if the text is not the one you worked on previously

*Note: Collaboration is going to be a challenge*

# Resources for Inclusion & Empowerment

## *Using Inclusive Practices*

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/inclusive-practices>

## *Understanding My Learners*

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/understanding-learners>

## *New Lesson Plans: Listening & Empathy*

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/community/top-stories/new-lesson-plans-listening-and-empathy>



Image by rawpixel.com on freepik

# Resources for Inclusion & Empowerment



*Ai futuristic technology background  
Image by rawpixel.com on freepik*

## *AI & Inclusion*

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# THANKS!

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