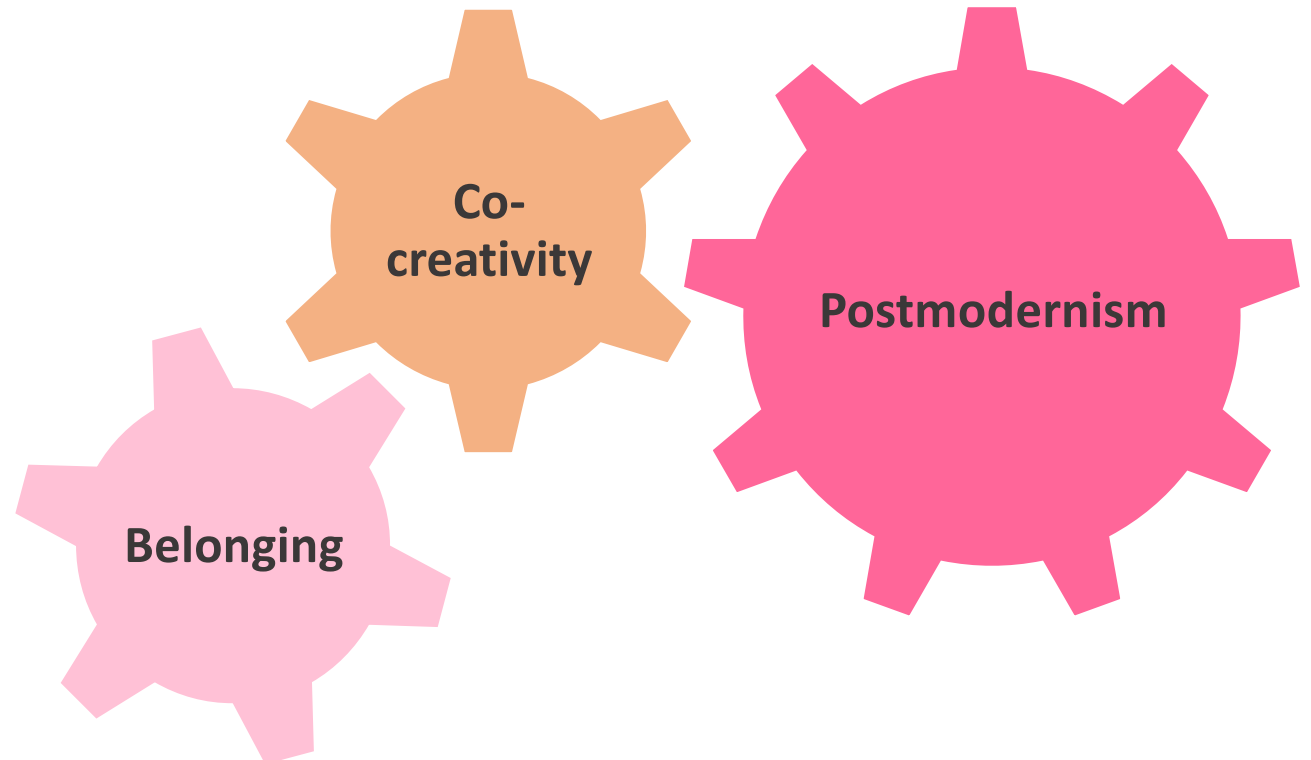


# Making Space to Belong: Postmodern Co-creativity

developing as a unique learner and thinker in the EAP classroom



# Overview

- Is there space to belong in EAP?
- What is postmodernism?
- What is a postmodern curriculum (in EAP)?
- An example of postmodern EAP (did it help students belong?)



What drives EAP decisions?

1. Measuring (CEFR)
2. Skills + familiarity with discipline genres
3. Allowing space to develop as a unique learner and thinker/ someone who feels they belong here



# What is postmodernism?

“incredulity towards metanarratives” Lyotard, 1984

E.g. bounded disciplines, progress, rationalism, scientific truth

1. aesthetic – reaction to modern art
2. philosophical – names a shift in values/practices of the modern period (crisis of narratives as legitimating devices)



Which metanarratives underpin EAP?

Which would you like to de-emphasise or even do away with?



Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* 1951 on display at the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

## Business as usual

How do we get students up to B2 (and very quickly)?  
How can we benchmark this across cohorts?

- literacy as a personal commodity with international currency
- grounded in a world view
- Homogeneous outcome, packages of language/study skills
- performed critique (de Alba et al., 2000)

## What is a postmodern curriculum?

What kinds of things should we be learning and teaching to prepare learners as well as possible for handling what come in the future, and to...act better now? (de Alba et al., 2000, p.12)

- Literacy as cooperative, socio-culturally informed
- proactively generating own world view 'charting a course' (Lyotard, 1984)
- Heterogeneous outcome, locally determined
- 3 interlocking dimensions: operational, cultural, critical = transforming + producing practice



# What does performed critique look like?

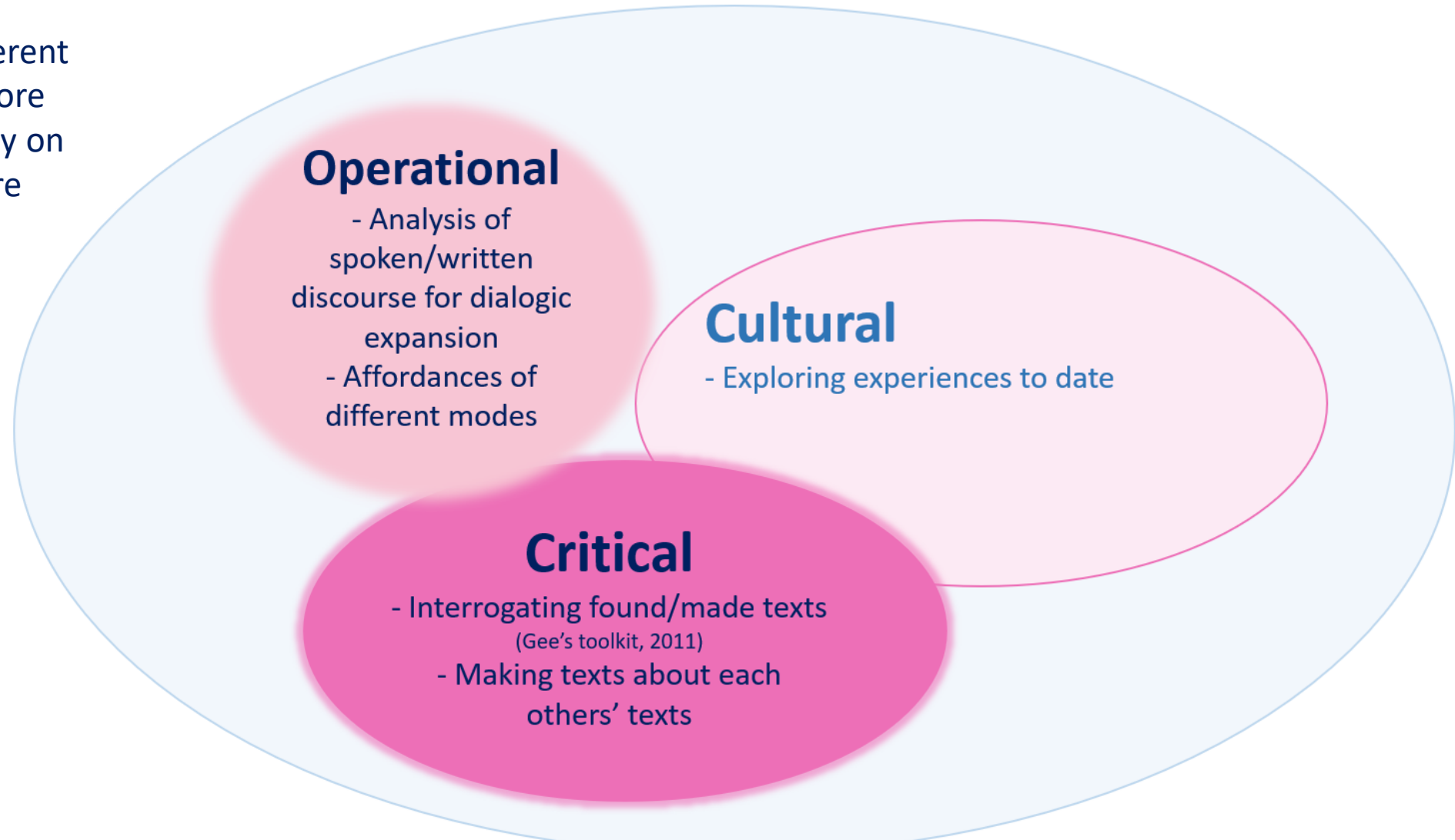
## Pre-listening Critical Thinking

**Look at the following list and decide which skills you think are most important for a graduate engineer.**

1. Being able to learn new information quickly
2. Having technical ability
3. Being creative
4. Being able to communicate well

# A postmodern approach to a project on education

AIM: To experiment with different modes and languages to explore experience, reflecting critically on how language components are organised and why



# What might co-creativity look like?

## Task Instructions

The term 2 group project should be based either on a topic related to the Term 2 theme: Education or a topic related to your academic discipline.

1. In your group, identify an area of research that you would like to investigate.
2. Find 3 academic sources to help you understand the topic better.
3. Narrow down the topic and decide on a question to answer in your research.
4. Meet weekly to share ideas and progress and to plan next steps.



1




2



3

# Critical = transforming + actively producing practice

29/01	Z	yq
	O	 <p><b>Poster ideas?</b></p>
	Z	<b>should university be free?</b>
	H	<b>Should University be free for everyone? (as some people do get it free)</b>
29/2	H	<p>Funding? University worth going? two ideas now Second idea source</p> <p><b>Is higher education worth it?</b></p> <p>Bit of both?</p>
02/2	Z	<b>Students' expectations of debt in UK higher education</b>

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	What did your research show you?
2	anonymous	How does it compare to International Students

# What they said

“I was pretty adamant I wasn’t going to come to university and now I’m here ... I’d just come through that kind of transition phase of deciding whether or not to go. So talking about attending higher education made sense.”

“Building up to the poster really took us away from the mindset of I just want a good result to actually let’s do something that we’re interested in...I didn’t really do it with the results in mind ...because we were focused on having fun. I guess being more engaged in the specific projects.”



# Which metanarratives underpin EAP?

ideas

- grades
- CEFR
- Knowledge building as an individual endeavour
- Knowledge as a universal canon
- EAP knowledge as largely operational
- English-only
- International students taught separately

# References

- de Alba, A., Gonzalez Gaudiano, E., Lankshear, C. and Peters, M. (2000) *Curriculum in the Postmodern Condition*, New York, Peter Lang Publishing.
- De Chazal, E. and McCarter, S. (2012) *Oxford EAP: a course in English for Academic Purposes upper-intermediate/B2*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Duchamp, M. (1951) *Bicycle Wheel [readymade]*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The United States, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81631> (last accessed 14/01/2024).
- Gee, J.P. (2011) *How to do Discourse Analysis: A Toolkit*, London: Routledge.
- Green, B. and Beavis, C. (2012) *Literacy in 3D: an integrated perspective in theory and practice* Victoria, Australia, ACER.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (trans.), Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Meehan, C. and Howells, K. (2019) In search of the feeling of 'belonging' in higher education: Undergraduate students transition into higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43(10), pp.1376-1390.
- Stenning, K, Schmoelz, A, Wren, H, Stouraitis, E, Scaltsas, T, Alexopoulos, K & Aichhorn, A 2016, 'Socratic dialogue as a teaching and research method for co-creativity?', *Digital Culture and Education*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 154-168.
- Wingate, U., 2006. Doing away with 'study skills'. *Teaching in higher education*, 11(4), pp.457-469.