

EDU009 - Cultural explanations of class differences

Objective: Evaluate language and parental-knowledge explanations without deficit assumptions.

Enquiry question: When does a cultural explanation become a deficit assumption?

Teacher delivery guidance

This lesson is designed for 90 minutes and follows Connect & Check, Share, Present, Apply, Recall & Review.

The key pedagogy is to prevent learners from moving too quickly from a visible pattern to a causal explanation. Require mechanism language in spoken and written responses.

Sociological background

Culture is not a simple cause. Family practices can influence school navigation, but they are interpreted through school expectations and power.

Bernstein is often oversimplified. Restricted code is not inferior everyday speech. The issue is whether schools reward one code more strongly.

Deficit thinking blames families. A deficit claim turns difference into failure and ignores how institutions define success.

Ask what evidence would test the claim. A strong sociological explanation shows a mechanism and considers competing material or school-based explanations.

Questioning prompts

- What is the evidence actually showing?
- Which population is being compared?
- What mechanism connects the factor to achievement?
- What alternative explanation could fit the same pattern?
- How would this be expressed as AO1/AO2/AO3?

Expected responses

Strong responses use precise sociological language, avoid blaming groups, explain a pathway, and qualify conclusions using evidence and limitations.