

Differentiating Instruction for English Language Learners: Second Language Simulation

The majority of ESOL students spend most of their school day in the mainstream classroom with their non-ESOL peers and with non-ESOL teachers. In these times of increased school accountability for student progress, it is important that all members of the school community share ownership for the success of ESOL students.

In this module, we will look at a repertoire of approaches and strategies that mainstream teachers can use to meet the academic needs specifically of ESOL students, and all English language learners in general.

Developing a repertoire of teaching skills to work successfully with ESOL students may seem like a big task. However, even a few common sense adjustments to instruction can make a big difference to your students.

The first activity for this module involves spending a few moments in the shoes of a second language learner. It's very difficult to fully understand the academic, social, and emotional challenges faced by a second language learner if you have never experienced being one yourself—immersed all day and every day. This "Second Language Simulation" video activity will not only provide insight into the challenges facing second language learners, but it will also provide a few simple ideas about how you can make your instruction more accessible to a second language learner.

Let's begin!

To simulate the experience of a second language student in a mainstream classroom, we will participate as students in Mrs. Amin's classroom.

The first presentation of Mrs. Amin's lesson will be WITHOUT differentiation for second language learners. This lesson video is found by clicking the button on the content page labeled "Part I: Simulation Without Differentiation". You will need to answer some basic questions about the content and vocabulary as you watch to check your understanding.

To do this, print a copy of the capture sheet found at the bottom of the "Second Language Simulation" column on the content page.

After you have viewed part one and taken notes, Mrs. Amin will present the same lesson, but this time including differentiation for second language learners. This video can be found by clicking the button on the content page labeled

“Part II: Simulation With Differentiation”. Again you should use your capture sheet to check your understanding of the content. You will be surprised to see the difference a few simple strategies can make.

Once you have taken notes on both part one and part two of the second language simulation, you will view a lesson analysis by clicking the button on the content page labeled “Part III: Lesson Analysis”.

You are now ready to begin the Second Language Simulation. As you watch, keep your students in mind and think about what their classroom experience is like each day, all day long.