

Mock ELL Case Studies

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1) Ami is an ELL student in your second-grade class. She is from Japan, but has lived in the U.S. the past two years, and her grasp on English is steadily improving, but she rarely speaks in class, and when she does, her voice is very soft. You have noticed that she will never make eye contact with you or with other teachers, or if she does, it is only for a brief moment before she looks away. Lately, Ami has not been doing very well in math class, but you are having difficulty working with her one-on-one, because she is very quiet and nods her head in agreement with everything you say, and she rarely shows facial expressions.

2) Ben is a first grade ELL student. He is shy, but seems to have made a few friends in the short time he has been in your class. He only speaks a little English, but is learning quickly as he interacts with other students. You've noticed that although he brings his own lunch every day, he rarely eats much, or even opens his lunch container. Some days he will eat, but he is sitting far away from the other students in his class, and it seems like he is trying to hide his food. Yesterday, he didn't eat anything at lunchtime, but you saw him grab something out of his lunch container when he was packing up and eat it, and you heard his stomach growling when you stood beside him in line at the end of the day.

3) Dani is a kindergarten ELL student who has grown up in the U.S. but was mostly exposed to her native language until she started school. She seems very sweet and likes to play with her peers, and you have noticed that her English has gotten better as she has spent more time with her classmates. She seems to try hard in class sometimes, but other times she appears uninterested in the lesson, and on more than one occasion, you have found her curled on the carpet, asleep, after storytime. You are confused, because some days she is energetic, but other days she stares off into space and seems to have difficulty engaging.

4) Sam, a first grade refugee from Africa, has been in your class for about three months, and you are concerned about his language skills. Although he is an ELL student with little experience in English, you had hoped that he would have begun to speak a few words in English, but you have yet to hear him use more than a few words of English at a time. Sam tries to play with his classmates on the playground some days, but other days he sits alone all the time and won't even look at you.

ELL Case Study Notes for Class Discussion

Ami:

- *No eye contact*
- *Quiet voice*
- *Nods at everything*
- *Few facial expressions*
- No eye contact = sign of respect in Asian culture
- Find another Japanese student to talk to her
 - Explain culture
 - Explain math class
- Give clear expectations
- Tell her that it is okay to not know
- Continue to work with her, even if she seems to not understand

Ben

- *Won't eat with others*
- *Hides his lunch*
- Not used to eating with anyone
- Worried that others may make fun of his food
- Worried that someone may take his food after home culture – food hoarding

Dani

- *Tries hard sometimes, uninterested other times*
- *Falls asleep in class*
- *Some days energetic, others stares off into space, not engaging*
- Sets own bedtime
- Learning language is hard work!
- Religious services/holidays may keep her up (e.g., Ramadan keeps families up eating after sundown)
- May not feel some lessons apply to her, or may check out when she is frustrated and doesn't understand
- May have some kind of sickness

Sam

- *Will not speak more than a few words after 3 months*
- *Plays with others some days but not others*
- Language delays – could need SPED help

- Difficult to learn – English is hard, native language structure is very different, every child learns at own pace
- Culture shock
- Bad experiences in home country – haunting memories
- Feels alienated, homesick