

Simulation

A Language Learning Tactic



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Contents

What is Simulation?	3
Benefits	6
Drawbacks	7
Solutions	8
Getting started	9
Formation of Groups	11
Preparing for a Simulation	13
Conducting a Simulation	15
Evaluating and Assessing a Simulation	16
Sample Lesson Plan: Short-term Simulation	18
Bibliography.	26
Appendices	27

What is Simulation

Simulations as a language learning approach/tactic have been interpreted in different resources and/or by different authors in different ways. The terms used in the role playing/simulation literature are often used interchangeably as well, such as: "simulation", "game", "simulation game", "role-playing game", "role-play simulation". Though the word "simulation" and its definition in a dictionary may imply that in simulations the participants simulate (act, play, pretend), the simulations in language teaching and learning presented in this guide are not the same as a role-play or game. They are based on Jones's definition of a simulation "as reality of function in a simulated and structured environment". In other words, rather than a role to play, students have a real-life task to achieve.

Difference between Simulations and Role Plays

As Simulations are most frequently mixed up with Role plays, the main differences between these two language learning activities are shown in the table below.

Simulations	Role Plays
The (simulated) environment is provided, using text, audio or video input.	Participants have to create (imagine) the key aspects of the environment.
Key facts are provided for the background (sex, age, job etc.) No script.	Participants invent key facts or have to act according to a specific script or descriptions provided. "You are angry because your friend broke your watch."
Participants take on a role. (accept duties/ responsibilities and perform task according to their own personalities)	Participants play/act out a pre-defined role. (pretend to be someone else according to the provided role-card)
Imagination may be involved. Invention is not allowed.	Participants are encouraged to invent/create whatever is necessary to play the role.
Real communication in a controlled realistic situation.	Dialogues in a fixed context or improvisational speech in an imaginary one.

In a Role Play, one student might be told that she is a supermarket checkout assistant whilst another is a customer. Students might also be given fairly tight guidelines outlining the nature of their exchange or the language points they are expected to cover. Role Play involves participants to 'act' in a given role which is clearly defined on a role-card. It is very much akin to acting in a play. Simulations, however, allow students to express themselves to their peers in a group setting (3 or 4 students in a group) where they retain their own personalities and are not required to pretend to be someone else. Or, as Kate Wong says:

"... simulations, where simple or complex, do not specify the role a person has to play. On the contrary, a task is given which requires participants to resolve a problem of some kind using their own life experience and character. Simulation mimics real life situation

as closely as possible. For example, if you have a group of doctors learning English as a second language and they need to practice in a “real life” context, you would set up a simulated situation in a hospital or health centre in which doctors have to meet ‘patients’ and diagnose their problem, and give treatment or prescriptions. The ‘patients’ may be given (or create themselves) their symptoms, and the doctors have to find out the cause of the illness (using their own experience) by interacting with the patients. The problem is resolved when the doctor diagnoses the problem, and prescribes therapy.”

Terminology

It is also important to understand the terminology used in some literature and resources dealing with simulations because according to Jones: “The wrong words lead to the wrong expectations and the wrong expectations lead to the wrong behavior”. The terms used in simulations reflect the main distinctions between simulations and other interactive activities, particularly as regards the nature of the event, the roles of the teacher and the students, their behavior and the goal of the activity. The following table gives a short overview on recommended terminology which should be used for Simulations. There is a loose but no exact correspondence between pairs of items.

Appropriate terms	Inappropriate terms
simulation, activity, event	game, drama, role play, exercise
participant	player, actor, trainee, student
facilitator (organizer), controller	teacher, trainer, instructor
behaviour, function, profession	playing, acting, staging
role (functional)	role (acting a part)
real-world responsible behaviour	winning (losing) the game
real-world ethics	point scoring, having fun
professional conduct	performing (the game, exercise etc)

To summarize, simulations provide a way of creating a rich communicative environment (a representation of reality) in which students take on **functional roles** - different duties and responsibilities and work together as members of a group to take decisions and find solutions in situations closely linked to real life. To achieve this goal they have to communicate in the target language, adapting to **real-world responsible (professional) behaviour** and respecting **real-world ethics**. The latter is also the key distinction between games and simulations (Jones 1995, p.13). For example, suppose there is a game called “Survivor”. On a player’s turn, s/he rolls a dice and gets to the zone where s/he can get a bonus card, so s/he gets a bonus card. The card says, “Take one of another player’s provisions.” The player chooses one of another player’s food items. As a result of that, the player whose food items were taken dies on the island and loses the game. In games, it is acceptable to take others’ food, even though it causes their death, because the player is just following the rule and fulfilling his/her role. In simulations, however, the action will not be appropriate because of the ethics issue. Therefore, Simulations in language learning can be referred to as “communication” simulations since they are designed to achieve communicative reality (Bambrough, 1994,

p. 16). However, the process of the exercise is of at least as great importance as the product in the sense that the linguistic interaction among the students will determine its effectiveness and success (Jones 1995). Namely, the group members would not be expected to place emphasis only on a given set of language points, and effective communication should be the outcome, rather than the strictly correct use of vocabulary and structures.

Benefits

Simulation...

- increases students' autonomy and motivation
- lowers their anxiety levels
(they are not performing for the teacher or the class)

- develops team building skills (life skills)
- strengthens cooperation and collaborative skills
(gives students the chance to carry out a task or solve a problem together)

- removes error correction from the equation at the time of the activity
- allows students to experiment with new vocabulary and structures
- gives students the freedom to make their own choices and decisions
- allows students to base their choices and decisions on their own experience
- helps students to confront and identify with the target culture
- gives the students "I've done it, so I can do it" confidence
(not the "I've read it, so now I know it" type of confidence)

- dismantles the normal teacher-student relationship
(students take control of their own destiny within the simulation)

- allows teachers to monitor progress and participation unobtrusively

**Tell me, I forget.
Show me, I remember.
Involve me, I understand.**

Chinese proverb

Drawbacks

Simulation...

- reinforces students' faulty pronunciation
- allows students to misunderstand and misuse new vocabulary and structures
- works best with already effective speakers of the target language
- requires preparation which detracts from target language contact time
- requires more time for the implementation (planning, preparatory stage, adaption of the classroom, materials with "facts" etc.)
- might allow less motivated students to withdraw from participation
- might leave teachers feeling ineffective or excluded

Solutions

Teachers should...

- conduct the preparation stage through the medium of the target language
- OR
- choose a simple topic familiar to most students, even as beginners

- ensure that the Simulation is of relevance and interest to the students

- construct groups containing mixed or differentiated levels of ability depending on their students' needs

- monitor the groups' language and participation levels during the simulation and take notes

- give constructive, but positive feedback

- get feedback from students through different techniques (surveys, debriefing...)

- base subsequent remedial work on observations taken during monitoring

- plan new simulations considering the interests of students and their feedback

Getting started

There are some important points to consider before starting with Simulations. This section gives short explanations of the key features of Simulations and some useful tips on how to make them work in a classroom.

1. Relevance to reality - “the reality of participation”

In order to succeed, a Simulation should be underpinned by a sense of reality or should create a brand new reality. Ideally, it should be relevant to the lives and interests of the students so that they can express themselves by using the target language for the communication during the simulation. Otherwise the exercise becomes role-play which, although useful, removes students from themselves, ie they assume another persona, and not act as themselves. When introducing simulations as a new language learning tactic the students may be asked to suggest real-life situations, based on their personal interests, experience or plans for the future, like going abroad to study, to do an internship or look for a job. This will raise their motivation and demonstrate the usefulness of foreign language skills in real life.

The most important thing is that the simulation must be a non-taught activity. Participants must step inside the function mentally and behaviorally in order to fulfill their duties and responsibilities in the situation (Jones, 1982, p. 5). The most important part of simulations is having participants accept the reality of function (role and duties) fully, not thinking as students but taking on the role, otherwise the simulation simply will not work. Acceptance of the reality of function means that a participant who has the function of doctor must examine the patient, communicating effectively to do the job. The role of students in simulations, therefore, is

- (1) taking functional roles such as reporter, survivor, or customer as a participant
- (2) stepping into the event, and
- (3) shaping the event, carrying out their duties and responsibilities, as they see fit

The word “functional” is not used here in the utilitarian language sense of being able to order a meal or ask the way to the beach. It includes all the social language appropriate to the job (the function) and appropriate communicative behavior that leads to fulfillment of the reality of function in a simulation.

It is very important to choose a topic of interest for students for a simulation, because it is closely linked to the level of motivation which is «self-generated since motive arises out of function, the duties, the responsibilities and the circumstances in which the participants find themselves» (Jones, 1982). Learners have ample chances to make it work, not get it right, while they negotiate meanings in simulations. Therefore, no effort to motivate learners will be necessary as long as learners accept the reality of their functions. Motivation may also come from the emotional satisfaction or the pleasure of having the power to make decisions, and the enjoyment of interactive excitement.

For the non-linguistic benefits of simulation, see:

<http://uk.cambridge.org/elt/ces/methodology/simulation.htm>

http://www.languages.dk/methods/documents/language_sim.htm

2. Simulated environment

In order to fulfil the essential condition of being a simulated environment, there must be no contact between the participants and the world outside of the classroom (Jones, 1982, p. 5). One thing that we need to keep in mind is that only the environment is simulated, but the behaviour of a participant is real.

To enhance realism, particularly for longer-term simulations, the classroom should be adapted so that it simulates the environment in which the activity is said to be taking place, i.e. for a simulation taking place in an office, the classroom can be adapted to replicate a real working office. Although this desideratum is not always practicable, there are other ways in which the learning environment can be changed to resemble that proposed under the Simulation, such as:

- black/white boards can be adapted to resemble office notice boards
- desks can be grouped or separated to simulate work stations
- posters/visual aids clearly associated with the school/college can be removed and replaced by more appropriate work-related material
- the radio should be playing, preferably in the target language, or music if not
- telephones/faxes/computers should be present
- snacks, drinks and personal possessions should be visible at work stations

3. Duration

In simulations the group is given a task which may last a single period or stretch over a number of sessions.

These tasks may range from the fairly short to the longer-term, more wide-ranging and complex (see www.languages.dk/methods/methods.html).

The length of the Simulation need not be connected to the complexity of the language required to carry it out, as the language skills which students bring with them to the activity are what determines its linguistic complexity. At the end of the activity the group will have arrived at some decision or series of decisions and choices which they will be expected to explain and justify.

At the beginning it may be advisable to prepare short-term simulations so that the students get and give feedback as soon as possible. A successful completion of a short-term task(s) will raise their confidence and motivation to do more simulations. However, short-term simulations can be planned as subsequent parts of a more exhaustive topic and later summarized to make an integral logical whole. For example, the topic "In a foreign country" (which is closely linked to the increasing mobility in the EU) can be dealt with in short-term simulations "At the airport", "Finding a flat", "My first interview with the employer", "A party for new friends and colleagues" etc.

4. Teacher's role

There is no teacher participation inside simulation activities. The teacher's role in simulations is to be a good controller, says Jones. He compares teachers' role to a traffic controller: "a person who controls the flow of traffic, tries to avoid bottlenecks, but does not tell individual motorists the direction of their journeys". So the teacher monitors the proceedings unobtrusively, whereas participants are responsible for solving assigned problems and making decisions. Thus, helping or suggesting ideas to participants to solve problems or make decisions should not occur during simulation activities.

Most students make errors in most learning situations. The teacher can consider the simulation session as, *inter alia*, a diagnostic activity in which she can note the most frequently occurring errors for later use in remedial teaching sessions. Over-correction of errors in the spoken language can be de-motivating to students. The question is whether the teacher can take on this role without feeling uncomfortable as a monitor listening to students making errors and remaining passive. If the teacher is to carry out her/his role in the simulation context effectively, she/he should remain an unobtrusive monitor and not enter the process to encourage students to be more active. This last is necessary if the claims of student autonomy made for simulation are to be realised. See McArthur (1983) and Sharrock and Watson (1985). In effect, the teacher is not passive. Errors can be noted and collected for focussed work after the simulation.

5. The use of the target language

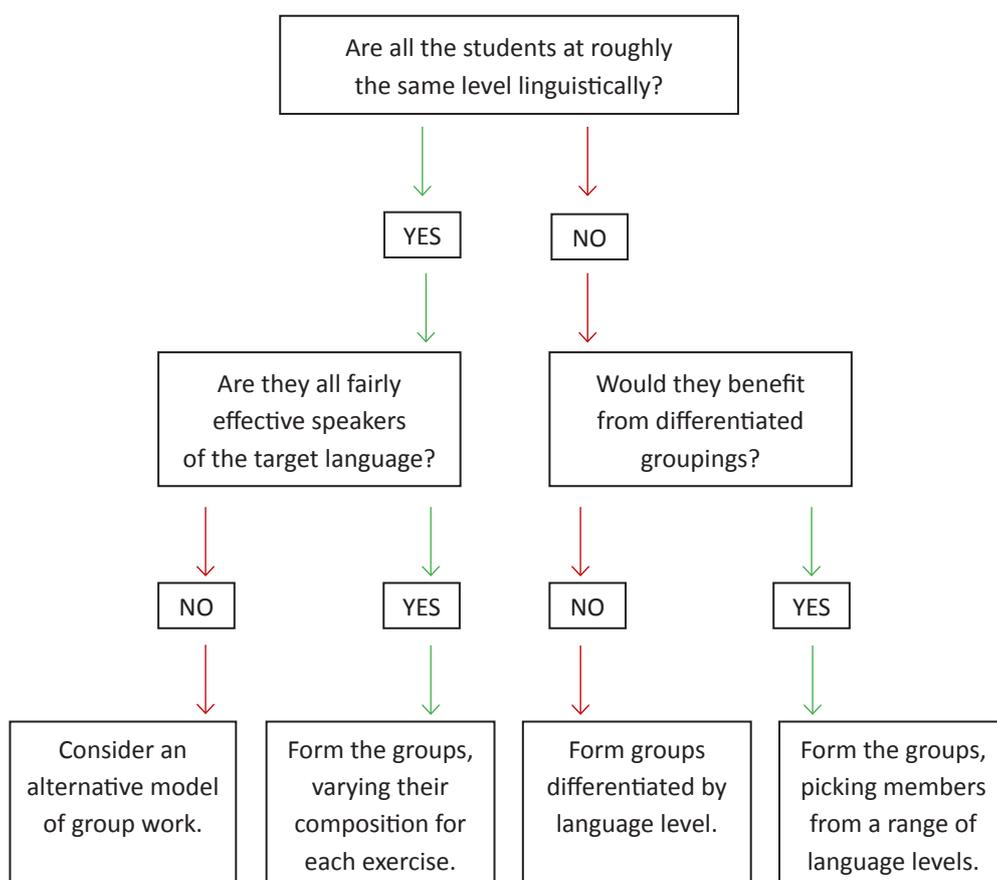
The target language (e.g. the TL - English) should be used exclusively or as much as possible to explain the nature and purpose of the simulation, unless dealing with beginners. To revert to the native language for this purpose is to undermine the notion that the target language can be used for real communication. In this case, target language is any TL language used to achieve its communicative purpose. Since there is no 1-to-1 relationship between (communicative) function and form, students can use a variety of language structures to fulfil the task at their level.

If students are not sufficiently at ease with the target language generally to cope with the demands of the simulation, this can allow them to sit back and leave the bulk of the work to other, more articulate, members of the group. Although this is a problem not unique to simulation but to group work in general, the hands-off nature of simulation on the part of the teacher means that the passivity of such students is exacerbated. Effective speakers of any language will clearly be able to operate in any setting at a higher and more complex linguistic level, but since simulation is about encouraging students to express themselves at their own level, all members of the group should benefit from and contribute to the exercise to varying degrees. However, if students are still grappling with the fundamentals of the target language, their immersion in a long-term simulation might in fact prove de-motivating rather than encouraging. If the students are not confident in speaking or their level is rather low, the simulation should introduce a familiar situation experienced by students in their real life (asking directions, buying, preparing a meal for a special occasion etc.) and provide strong visual and/or audio support within the simulated environment.

Formation of Groups

Since the teacher knows his/her students better than any theorist, it is s/he who must determine how the maximum benefit can accrue to the greatest number of students. If s/he feels that less advanced students would benefit from the help of their more advanced peers, s/he will choose mixed-ability groups. If, however, s/he feels less advanced students will be intimidated in mixed-ability groups, and for the purpose of differentiation, s/he should band groups by language level. Rather than follow a prescribed ruling, the teacher should base his/her decision on his/her knowledge of the students. Sensitivity must be exercised in the formation of groups so that students do not perceive the existence of “clever” and “slow” groups. The method of group

formation can also be chosen in relation to the task(s). For example, if the simulated environment is a workplace, the students should be assigned to groups randomly, thus emphasising that in a real workplace they are unlikely to be able to choose the members of their team. However, if the simulation is meant to encourage students to pursue their own interests or personal goals they should be allowed to form groups based on shared interests and/or goals. It is important to make students aware of diversity in real-life teams which often contain a mixture of people with varying abilities, language skills, personalities, working styles etc. It should be pointed out that the ability to work in diverse groups is highly valued by employers. The table below may be helpful when taking decisions on group formation regarding the students' level of language skills.



**As with most forms of group work,
 keep friends and enemies apart,
 so that each group can form its own dynamic
 in this new "real" environment.**

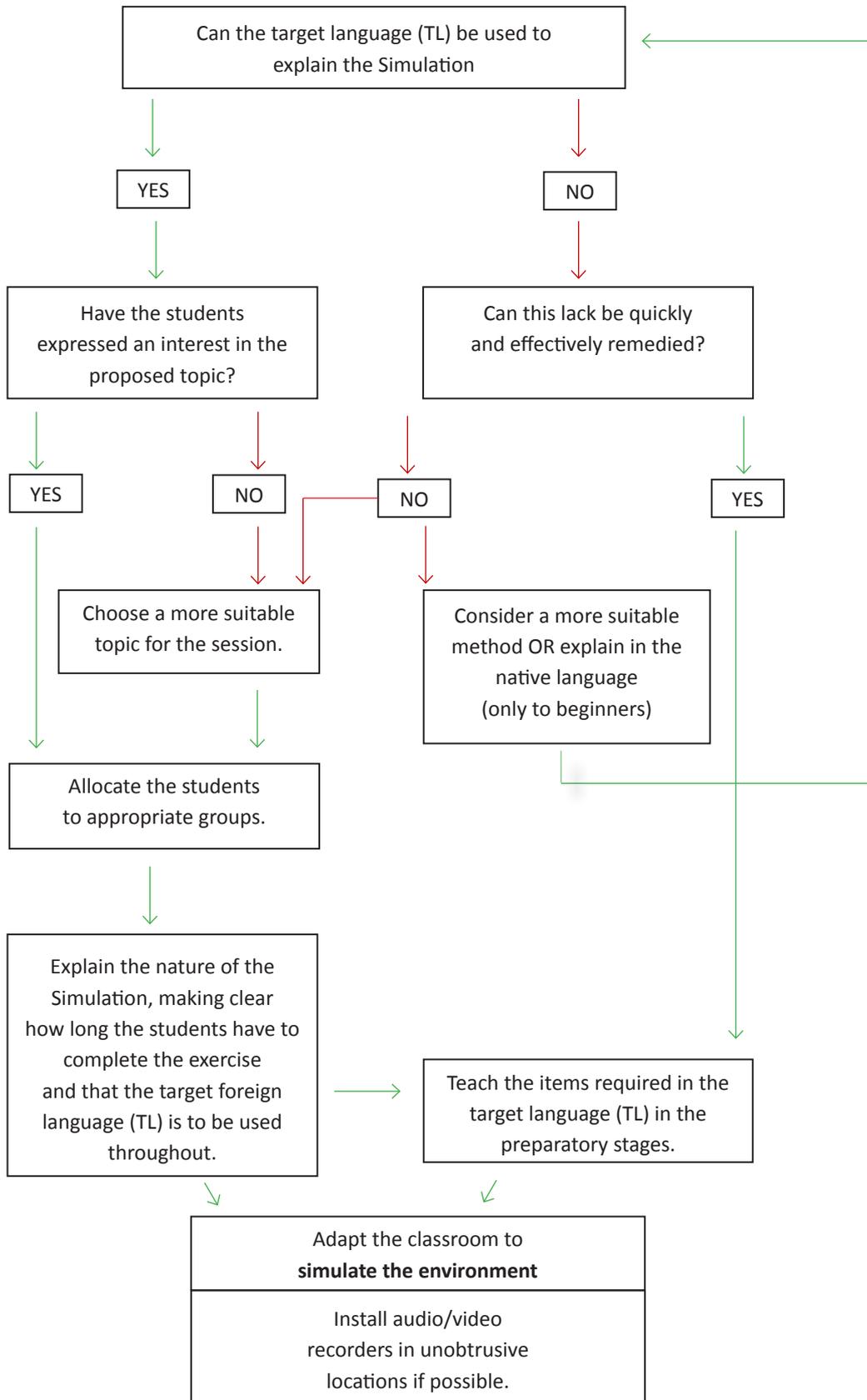
Preparing for a Simulation

The preparatory stage is of vital importance for a successful simulation. Teacher should plan this phase very carefully in order to provide students with all necessary information because s/he will not be able to offer additional help later due to his/her specific role (monitoring only) during the simulation process.

The preparation for simulation may/should include the following teacher's activities:

- If students have no prior or little experience in group work point out the benefits of working collaboratively to both their learning and their longer-term employability
- Provide students with strategies and tools to deal with the most common problems experienced in group-work (conflict management, negotiations, tolerance, lack of confidence to actively participate etc)
- Explain the specific role of the teacher during the simulation process (no active support) and encourage students to ask all clarifying questions at this stage
- Check students' interest in selected topic or let them participate in choosing the most motivating one (particularly when implementing a simulation for the first time)
- Ask students for suggestions and/or contributions related to adapting the classroom - creating a motivating simulated environment
- Explain the simulation process in detail (group formation, functional roles/tasks, expected outcomes, time, available, monitoring techniques (observation, recording), evaluation/assessment criteria and the follow-up activities like having a debriefing session with feedback, evaluation and assessment, and remedial lessons to improve the mistakes and gaps noticed during the Simulation.

One of the most frequent questions teachers usually ask themselves at this stage is which language to choose for preparatory activities (TL, native or combination of both). This applies particularly when a Simulation is implemented in a class with students who are either at a rather low level or at different levels linguistically. The following table may be helpful to draft a preparatory plan.



Conducting a Simulation

- Ensure that preparation was detailed and adequate, that students are aware of the time available to them to conduct the simulation and its constituent parts, and that they know exactly what is expected of them at the various stages of the process.
- Has it been possible or necessary to adapt the classroom so as to replicate the environment posited by the simulation? Engage students to create visual materials and/or to bring some objects typical for the simulated environment - realia.
- Do the students have all the materials required to carry out the simulation to the best effect? It is important that the essential "facts" of the simulation environment are provided, not invented by the participants, to preserve reality of function.
- Has monitoring equipment / a process been set up to record the proceedings of each group?
- Perhaps the teacher's being in the classroom will not distract students, in which case recording equipment may not be necessary. But ensure that any notes on the teacher's observation form are made out of sight of the students.
- Are all groups and their members working effectively and contributing to the process? If not, it may be necessary - outside of simulation time - to mention this in order to make the next sessions more productive.
- Has discussion ground to a halt? If so - without intervening in the session - amend the timetable so that students do not feel they are at a loose end.

Evaluating and Assessing a Simulation

The evaluation and assessment of a simulation probably represents the most challenging phase in the whole process because there are no unified guidelines which could be applied without reference to national educational systems, local practice and any institution's regulations. Compared with the traditional forms of evaluating and assessing language skills, which usually require oral expression/conveyance or various written products, the evaluation and assessment of a simulation should encompass the whole activity and not only the final product/output. According to Littlejohn (1990), "the use of simulations as a testing device is...an important development since it should be possible to replicate the situations in which learners will have to use the language" and this kind of replication "allows us to view not only the language product but also the process by which that language emerged". Whereas standardized methods give us insight on how the student might do in a real setting, "simulations show us how the student actually performs".

Nevertheless, by the end of the simulation the teacher will have gained an impression of how the students and groups performed in general terms, and whether the activity in itself was successful as an exercise. The answers to the questions below may help to form the first overall evaluation:

- Did the groups know what they were doing?
- Were they able to operate without the assistance of the teacher?
- Did they operate effectively and carry out all tasks as required?
- Did they make decisions and exercise options?
- Were all students/groups reasonably well motivated?
- Were the bulk of linguistic interactions realistic and natural?
- Did the students themselves feel the activity was of benefit?

In evaluating the efficacy of the simulation, it is useful to get feedback from all involved: the teacher in his/her role of a monitor/controller and the students as participants in the activity. Various combinations of the following techniques could work well for more detailed evaluation of simulations:

- Feedback Form for students (Appendix 1)
- Observation Form for teachers (Appendix 2)
- Self-Assessment Form for students - "Can Do" sentences (Appendix 3)
- Assessment Form for teachers (Appendix 4)
- Video/audio recordings
- Debriefing session

Debriefing after simulation activities is very important. According to Jones it is not just summing up the event; in fact, it is the most critical stage of the simulation process. He suggests that it would be a good idea to start the debriefing by asking each participant to explain briefly what s/he did and why. This will let learners continue to be involved in communicative activities as well as put them in the picture about what happened. It is an opportunity for the students to see their behaviour objectively and differently from

their experience as participants, and to allow them to reflect on the course of events in the simulation. They can also explain their answers from the questionnaire (if filled in), point out the gaps in vocabulary/grammar knowledge, make suggestions for improvements etc. An ample amount of learning may happen during the debriefing from their experience of success and failure in the simulation.

For the basic level learners, the teacher may have to help them to explain what they did and why by asking questions like “What was your role?”, “Where did you go?”, “What did you want to do/buy/ask?”, “Why did you do that?”, etc. since they may not be able to explain fully in the target language. After everyone gives a brief explanation, then the teacher can guide the discussion. The discussion may be done in the learners’ native language for the basic level learners.

The debriefing stage is not for rerunning of the arguments dealt with in the simulation. It should concentrate on those aspects of the behavior that correspond to the teacher’s aims.

In any case, the teacher’s feedback must be pointed out using positive comments and constructive criticism. The teacher must think of feedback with compliments and suggestions for improvement. If the feedback seems too negative:

- Wait a period of time to make sure you don’t respond “angry”.
- Approach the feedback as an opportunity to improve and develop, prioritizing areas to focus on.

Assessment

It is difficult to give a student a grade for work carried out as part of a group, however by using the recorded material, or notes made during observation, the teacher will be able to assess each student diagnostically on the criterion of whether the majority of interactions would have been comprehensible to a fluent speaker of the target language. Further options/suggestions for assessment are

Descriptive assessment:

- well done, fair-need improvement, unable to finish the task satisfactorily
- “Can do” sentences (Self-Assessment Form for students -Appendix 3)
- Assessment Form for teachers (Appendix 4)
- portfolios (see: <http://www.upv.es/diaal/publicaciones/amparo5.pdf>)

Combined assessment:

- student’s self-assessment + teacher’s assessment + written product (optional)

The percentage or mark should be agreed upon among the teacher and the students.

Sample Lesson Plan: Short-term

Eat, drink and be merry!



The following Simulation lasts for two periods and requires students to organise an end of session dinner and concert-dance on behalf of the college's Student Association.

Each group has one period to decide on the details of one particular aspect of the event, such as venue, menu and so on. The second period comprises reporting back and a whole class discussion on the merits and shortcomings of each group's determinations.

Sample Lesson Plan: Short-term

All proceedings are conducted in the target language (L2).

Period 1

- The teacher explains to the whole class that the Student Association at college is organising a buffet dinner and concert-dance to celebrate the end of session, and that different groups of students will concentrate on different aspects of the event. Letters are sent to each group (see overleaf for letters).
- The various aspects of the organisation of the event are outlined and the teacher finds out which students are interested in which aspects.
- Groups are formed by the criterion of interest but also bearing in mind linguistic and other criteria.
- Each group receives a copy of the letter overleaf with their area of interest undeleted.
- The teacher tells the groups that they have one period to decide on their area of the organisation. Each group appoints a Chairperson and Secretary to organise and record the proceedings.
- The groups begin their work. The Chairperson guides the process and the Secretary notes down relevant points, decisions and choices.
- The teacher moves round the class, but not participating or interfering with the work of the groups, and at no time correcting any errors she hears. If particular errors recur, the teacher unobtrusively notes them.

** If the session is being recorded, the teacher need not be present. **

- The teacher should ensure that all students participate. Differentiation into groups might be the answer for future exercises. If attention flags, the teacher may have allocated too long to the exercise and may need to alter the structure of the lesson in subsequent short-term simulations.

Sample Lesson Plan: Short-term

The letter from the Student Association

24 April 2004

Dear Fellow Students,

As you know, the Student Association are holding a buffet dinner and concert-dance to mark the end of the 2003-04 session on 18 June 2004.

Your group's offer to help is welcome, and the Committee would be grateful if you could take care of matters concerning the choice of ~~guest speaker/band/~~ menu/~~drinks/transport/venue~~ for the event.

The Committee will be meeting again on 3 May at 3.30 pm to discuss progress. We look forward to hearing the decisions of your group regarding the item left undeleted above.

Yours faithfully,

Catriona NicSuain

Catriona NicSuain
Secretary

Sample Lesson Plan: Short-term

All proceedings are conducted in the target language (L2).

Period 2

- Each group chooses a Spokesperson who uses the notes made by the Secretary.
- The Spokespersons outline the choices/decisions of their groups in organising the event.
- The Spokespersons are now open to questioning by members of other groups. For example, why was venue X chosen over venue Y? Why band X over band Y? The Spokespersons defend the groups' decisions, if necessary with support from other group members.
- Depending on the nature of the relationship between teacher and students, it might be appropriate for the teacher to repeat some questions, subtly correcting errors.
- Once the whole class has agreed on the various aspects of the event, the decisions may be written on the board or on a sheet of paper as a record.
- Further written work can derive from these two periods - designing posters, advertisements, tickets, etc.

Sample Lesson Plan: Long-term

How to survive on a lonely island?



The following Simulation requires students to imagine that, due to global warming, the low lying parts of the country will become flooded and that only certain high lands and islands will be safe for habitation.

The groups are allocated the uninhabited island of Mingulay off the west coast of Scotland, and will have to prepare evacuation plans.

Each group is limited to 20 people travelling to Mingulay in two medium-sized fishing boats. Thus, personnel and material are limited.

The Simulation lasts for five periods, but can be extended to seven as required, and as best suited to the linguistic abilities of the groups. The lesson plans are on the following pages.

Sample Lesson Plan: Long-term

All proceedings are conducted in the target language.

Period 1

- The teacher explains to the class that due to global warming the local population have to move to the hilly island of Mingulay. However, there won't room for everyone. There are no habitable buildings left on Mingulay and winter is approaching. Basically, the students have to decide on 20 people (or types of people) who will get the chance to set up this new society and survive the imminent flood.
- The class is told that each group needs to:
 - *coordinate the selection of personnel;*
 - *coordinate the selection of materials, foodstuffs, fuel, cultural artefacts, etc;*
 - *prepare for the first few weeks of settlement;*
 - *set down the foundations of a viable society.*
- The teacher finds out which students are interested in undertaking which tasks, and forms groups accordingly. (Whether the groups are mixed or differentiated is up to the teacher.)
- The teacher outlines how the exercise will work over each period and will make clear that s/he will not be participating in the simulation.
- The class is told that the exercise will extend over five (or seven) periods including the current one, and that the last will be a whole class session in order to report back and discuss outcomes.
- Depending on the level of the class and groups, however, the exercise can be extended over seven periods, with the work covered in Periods 3 and 4 below expanded to four periods (new Periods 3 - 6) each being devoted to only one aspect of the organisation rather than to two.

Sample Lesson Plan: Long-term

Period 2

- Each group is given a set of cards (as on p.28) and told to decide among themselves which members will specialise in which area of concern. The Chairperson decides how the group will work over the following few periods but has to consider the opinions of others in the group. Group consensus is important.
- Each group works through the cards together, noting any possible areas of conflict or difficulty, but do not yet come to any firm decisions.
- They could also make lists of +ve, -ve and “interesting” outcomes.

Period 3 (or Periods 3 & 4 for more detailed discussion)

- The groups begin work on the selection of personnel, etc, the Secretary taking notes as required.
- The groups next decide on how the journey will be carried out.

Period 4 (or Periods 5 & 6 for more detailed discussion)

- The groups consider how the first few weeks of settlement will successfully be carried through.
- Next, the groups discuss how to ensure the long-term viability of the colony.

Period 5 (or Period 7 for more detailed discussion)

- The Spokespersons for each group outline the groups’ decisions and try to explain why they arrived at the decisions they did. For example: why did Group A decide not to allow any elderly women or priests to join the evacuation?
- Groups question each others’ Spokespersons on the choices made and decisions reached, and if appropriate the task specialists may enter the discussion in support of their Spokespersons.
- If time permits, each Group’s decisions should be displayed for the whole class to read.

Subsequent Work

- The teacher can use her observations for remedial work on particular language points, if necessary.
- If recording equipment was used, students may watch themselves participating in the Simulation. This should serve two purposes:
 - *encouraging them by letting them see themselves working through the medium of the target language;*
 - *helping them to see how/if they are going wrong in terms of vocabulary, structure and pronunciation.*
- A whole class discussion might be of value to see if the confidence level of less confident students has been raised.
- The entire Simulation may provide the basis for a variety of extended and differentiated items of written and oral work.
- Students can fill in self-evaluation sheets & the Teacher can feed back with his/her own evaluation. It is important to let students see the evaluation criteria before the simulation, to motivate them to try and achieve a higher score.

Sample Lesson Plan: Long-term

Decision Cards

Who's going with you?

You only have room for 20 people.

Who will you choose, eg:

imam/minister/priest/rabbi?

doctor/nurse/first aider?

grandparents?

Maths teacher/Primary teacher?

computer programmer?

joiner/bricklayer/painter?

rap/hip hop/folk singer?

Why have you chosen those 20?

Do you want to change your mind?

Who was easy to choose?

Who was hard to leave behind?

What are you taking with you?

You can't bring much. You only have two medium sized fishing boats for everyone and everything.

CD player/DVD/video/radio/TV?

books? - what kind?

candles/lightbulbs/torches?

beer/vodka/whisky?

frozen/dried/salted food?

cigarettes/cigars/tobacco/etc?

building blocks?

wool/cotton/black plastic?

What will you really **need**?

Can you afford any luxuries?

The First Few Weeks

It's late November. It's getting wet and cold. The winds are rising and snow isn't far away.

The only buildings left on the island are roofless, the glass has gone on the windows and the doors are off the hinges. There are wild sheep and goats in the hills. Some wild barley and oats are growing nearby. The pier is OK.

If you forgot some essentials, what can you do to get by? Can you?

A New Society

If you survive the winter, you need to plan ahead. The society will need food, homes, infrastructure and children.

Will it be enough just to survive? Is it to be survival of the fittest? What kind of society do you want to live in? Do you want to re-create the society you live in now?

How can you put the foundations in place to ensure that your society does not degenerate into a "Lord of the Flies" type scenario?

Bibliography

- Davis, R S (1996). Simulations: A Tool for Testing “Virtual Reality” in the Language Classroom. In JALT '95: Curriculum and Evaluation. Tokyo: Japan Association for Language Teaching
- Jones, K (1982). Simulations in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Jones, K (1983). Nine Graded Simulations. Muenchen: Max Hueber Verlag
- Jones, K (1985). Designing your own Simulations. London: Methane
- Jones, K (1987). Simulations: A Handbook for Teachers and Trainers (2nd ed.). New York: Nichols Publishing
- Krashen, S D (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon
- Littlejohn, A (1990). Testing: The Use of Simulation/Games as a Language Testing Device. In Crookall, D & Oxford, R L (eds). Simulation, gaming and language learning. New York: Newbury House
- McArthur, T (1983). A Foundation Course for Language Teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Sharrock, W W, & Watson, D R (1985). Reality Construction in L2 Simulations. In Crookall, D (ed). Simulation applications in L2 education and research. Oxford: Pergamon
- <http://uk.cambridge.org/elt/ces/methodolgy/simulation.htm>
- <http://www.languages.dk/methods/methods.html>
- <http://www.upv.es/diaal/publicaciones/amparo5.pdf>
- <https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/>
- Wong Kate, discussions on the forum at: www.teachingenglish.org.uk

Appendix 1

Feedback Form for Students

① *If you compare this simulation with other language activities in your classroom (reading and listening comprehension, vocabulary and grammar exercises, tests, pair work etc.) do you find it:*

- a. more interesting
- b. less interesting
- c. the same

② *If your answered "more interesting", why? (you may choose more than 1 answer)*

- a. I had more fun
- b. I enjoyed the discussions within my group
- c. I had more time/opportunity to use the target language than during other lessons
- d. I was more relaxed because I didn't have to speak in front of the teacher or the whole class
- e. My active participation did not depend on the specific text learnt from the book
- f. All of the above
- g. Other _____ (please specify)

③ *Were the instructions in the target language before the simulation clear enough? Did you know what you were expected to do?*

- a. Yes
- b. No (they should be explained in my native language)
- c. Partly (I would need some translations)

④ *Did you like your group?*

- a. Yes
- b. No, because the other members were not active/helpful enough
- c. No, because the other members speak much better and I couldn't contribute a lot
- d. Other _____ (please specify)

⑤ *Was the topic of the simulation relevant regarding your personal interests?*

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Partly

If partly, why? _____

6 *Did you find the simulation useful for your future life (though maybe not of your particular interest)?*

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Partly

If partly, why? _____

7 *Was the adaptation of the classroom (visual support of posters, objects, formation of work stations etc.) helpful and motivating?*

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Partly

If partly, why? _____

8 *Did you have enough time to discuss the tasks and agree on decisions with your group members?*

- a. Yes
- b. No

9 *If you answered "no", how much additional time would you need?*

- a. Less than 45 minutes
- b. About 1 hour
- c. More than 1 hour

10 *Did you miss your teacher's interaction during the simulation?*

- a. Yes, because I want feedback on my mistakes
 - b. Yes, because the group needed his/her help to go on
 - c. No, because I could be creative (I was not told what to do at every step)
 - d. No, because the group members and I had the opportunity to check our communication skills in a non-taught situation
 - e. Partly (in some particular moments)
 - f. Other
 - g. Please specify _____
-

11 *Which form of evaluating your achievements do find most appropriate?*

- a. Evaluation by the teacher based on his/her observations (and recordings if applicable)
- b. Self- reflection
- c. Evaluation of the group members
- d. All of the above
- e. A combination of _____ (please specify)

- 12 *How should the simulation be assessed?*
- a. No grades
 - b. Only by descriptive grading (e.g.: well done, fair, unsatisfactory)
 - c. By a grade consisting of: self-assessment (50%) and teacher's assessment (50%)
 - d. By evaluation according to pre-defined criteria
 - e. Other _____ (please specify)

- 13 *Would you like to practice your language skills with simulations again?*
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know/I can't make up my mind now

- 14 *Which topic/ situation would you choose for the next simulation? (you can make more suggestions in order of priority)*

Appendix 2

OBSERVATION FORM FOR TEACHERS

BEHAVIOUR and ACTIVITIES	Yes	No	Partly	Comments /Solutions Weak points to improve
1. Most students showed interest in the selected topic/task				
2. The students used the simulated environment (materials in adapted classroom) to bridge the gaps in vocabulary/phrases				
3. The group members often asked each other questions to confirm agreement or understanding				
4. The group members allowed each other to finish speaking without interruption				
5. The group members often asked clarifying questions to each other and tried to find answers				
6. The students often used non-verbal communication during their discussion				
7. The students seemed to be disrupted by recording them				
8. The students seemed to enjoy their functional roles/duties				
9. Most groups made decisions on solutions without conflicts and with negotiation				
10. Most students expressed their own personalities by arguing their points of view				
11. The groups stayed focused on the task in spite of different opinions/disagreements				
12. The discussion sometimes came to a dead end				
13. There was positive interaction among most group members				
14. Students made grammatical and lexical mistakes which, however, didn't affect the completion of the task(s).				
15. The students used appropriate phrases to express agreement/disagreement and to defend/argue their points of view				
16. The students knew what they were expected to do throughout the simulation process				
Overall conclusions				
My strategy used to form groups resulted in effective teams				
The preparatory stage provided the students with information needed for a successful simulation process				
I managed to keep my monitoring (inactive) role during the whole simulation process				

Appendix 3

Sample Self-Assessment Form Student

GENERAL		1	2	3	4	Score
1	I can co-operate in group work	I could not co-operate	I co-operated sometimes, but let others do most of the work	I co-operated most of the time, but could co-operate more	I found I was good at co-operation. I contributed fully to the teamwork	
2	I can use the TL when speaking to others in my team	I could not use *TL much	I used TL, but found it difficult	I used TL, but there were some things I could not say	I used TL, and found it easy to use. Was quite fluent	
3	I can manage to defend my opinions	I tried, but I could not manage much	I managed, but it was difficult	I could generally do so. Sometimes I could not	I found this easy to do	
4	I can give reasons for my decisions	I tried, but I could not manage much	I managed, but it was difficult	I could generally do so. Sometimes I could not	I found this easy to do	
5	I can make suggestions to the group	I tried, but I could not manage much	I managed, but it was difficult	I could generally do so. Sometimes I could not	I found this easy to do	
6	I can ask others to explain what I do not understand	I tried, but I could not manage much	I managed, but it was difficult	I could generally do so. Sometimes I could not	I found this easy to do	
7	I can complete the task which was set	I tried, but I could not manage much	I managed, but it was difficult	I could generally do so. Sometimes I could not	I found this easy to do	
8	I can use a range of words to express myself	I have very few words in my vocabulary	I managed but I need a lot more vocabulary	Generally, I managed, but there were some words I didn't know	I found I knew most of the words. It was easy	
9	I can use a range of grammatical structures to express myself	I use only simple sentences	I try and use longer sentences, but it's difficult	I generally manage, but I need to learn more	I feel confident using a variety of sentences	
TOTAL						

*TL= Target Language

TOPIC/TASK SPECIFIC						
»In a foreign city«		1	2	3	4	Score
1	I can ask questions about directions and understand the answers	It was too difficult for me to complete this task	I still have to work on the vocabulary and phrases	I managed but needed some help from the group	I managed to do this independently	
2	I can express my interest to see certain sights of a city and argue/explain my decision	It was too difficult for me to complete this task	I still have to work on the vocabulary and phrases	I managed but needed some help from the group	I managed to do this independently	
3	I can get information about important buildings and services in a city like: bank, tourist office, hospital	It was too difficult for me to complete this task	I still have to work on the vocabulary and phrases	I managed but needed some help from the group	I managed to do this independently	
4	I can explain the way to selected destinations on a city plan	It was too difficult for me to complete this task	I still have to work on the vocabulary and phrases	I managed but needed some help from the group	I managed to do this independently	
5	Etc.					
TOTAL						

Appendix 4

Sample Assessment Form Teacher

Student's name	1	2	3	4	Score
1 Student can co-operate in group work	Could not co-operate	Co-operated sometimes, but let others do most of the work	Co-operated most of the time, but could co-operate more	Good at co-operation. Contributed fully to the teamwork	
2 Student can use the TL when speaking to others in his/her team	Could not use *TL much	Used TL, but it seemed difficult for him/her	Used TL, but there were some things s/he could not say	Used TL easily. Was quite fluent	
3 Student can manage to defend his/her opinions	Tried, but could not manage much	Managed, but it seemed difficult	Could generally do so, but sometimes could not	Managed very well	
4 Student can give reasons for his/her decisions	Tried, but could not manage much	Managed, but it seemed difficult	Could generally do so, but sometimes could not	Managed very well	
5 Student can make suggestions to the group	Tried, but could not manage much	Managed, but it seemed difficult	Could generally do so, but sometimes could not	Managed very well	
6 Student can ask others to explain what s/he does not understand	Tried, but could not manage much	Managed, but it seemed difficult	Could generally do so, but sometimes could not	Managed very well	
7 Student can complete the task(s) which was set	Tried, but could not manage much	Managed, but it seemed difficult	Could generally do so, but needed help sometimes	Managed very well	
8 Student can use a range of words to express himself/herself	Very few words in his/her vocabulary, making it hard to cope	Needs more vocabulary, but it was just adequate enough to manage	Adequate vocabulary. Generally managed, but there were some words s/he did not know	A range of vocabulary used with some flexibility	
9 Student can use a range of grammatical structures to express himself/herself	Uses only simple sentences	Tries to use longer sentences, but this is difficult	Generally manages, but needs to learn more	Confident about using a variety of sentences	
TOTAL					

*TL= Target Language