

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Alternative Assessments Teacher Guide

Purpose

Practical classroom strategies, accommodations, printable assessment ideas, and implementation options for ASL teachers using alternative assessments to measure student learning fairly.

What are Alternative Assessments?

Alternative assessments are ways of measuring student learning that don't rely on traditional timed, written, or paper-based tests. They allow students to demonstrate ASL knowledge and skill through formats like video, performance, or portfolios, giving a more accurate picture of what a student truly knows.

Who Benefits

- Students with anxiety or testing pressure
- Students with ADHD or attention challenges
- English Learners
- Students with intellectual or language disabilities
- Hands-on and visual learners
- Every student, as a fairer measure of skill

Teaching Strategies

- Match the assessment format to the skill being measured
- Offer choice in how students demonstrate knowledge
- Use rubrics with clear, visual criteria
- Allow practice with the assessment format before grading it
- Break larger assessments into smaller checkpoints
- Provide feedback throughout, not just at the end

Learning Support Activities

- Video-recorded sign performances
- Portfolios of student work over time
- One-on-one demonstration assessments
- Project-based or storytelling assessments
- Peer or self-assessment checklists

Implementation Tips

- Share rubrics with students before the assessment
- Keep a consistent record-keeping system across formats
- Start small with one alternative format, then expand
- Check assessments align with IEP or 504 accommodations

Things to Avoid

- Using one assessment format for every student
- Grading students on an unfamiliar format without practice
- Inconsistent or unclear rubrics
- Assuming alternative formats are less rigorous than traditional tests

Remember

Every student is unique. Use these strategies together with each student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, school policies, and professional judgment. The goal is not to lower expectations, but to provide meaningful access to learning.