

UNDERSTANDING ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES • TEACHER RESOURCE

Alternative assessments provide students with different ways to demonstrate their knowledge while measuring the same learning objective. They are not easier assignments and should not lower academic expectations. Instead, they remove barriers that may prevent a student from showing what they know.

Why Use Alternative Assessments?

- Support students with IEPs and Section 504 Plans.
- Reduce unnecessary barriers to learning.
- Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding.
- Increase confidence and engagement.
- Promote equitable access while maintaining high expectations.

Examples in the ASL Classroom

- One-on-one assessments
- Video-recorded responses
- Matching or picture-supported assessments
- Reduced answer choices when appropriate
- Performance-based demonstrations
- Teacher observation checklists
- Partner conversations

What They Are NOT

- ✗ Not easier tests
- ✗ Do not change the learning objective
- ✗ Do not provide an unfair advantage
- ✗ Not appropriate for every student or every situation

Teacher Reminder

Assess what the student has learned—not how difficult it was to complete the assessment. Follow each student's IEP or Section 504 Plan and collaborate with special education staff when appropriate.

★ Key Principle

Maintain the same learning objective while providing different pathways for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.