

What is Alternative Assessment?

Assessing student learning is key to determining to what degree learning is taking place. Paper and pencil tests are the conventional method of evaluating students. When beginning to think about alternative assessments, it may be useful to consider first what you want to assess and then, the end product which would demonstrate mastery of the chosen concepts.

Products can be auditory, tactile, or visual. Examples of auditory include an interview, letter, simulation game, song lyrics, recording, and many more.

Tactile products include an exhibit, model, mobile, sculpture, invention, game, collection, and others.

Visual products might include a collage, comic strip, Power Point presentation, transparency talk, photo essay, map, portfolio, political cartoon, graphic organizer, web site, video, and others.

1. So, first be clear what concepts, ideas, and skills the students are to master.
2. Select various types of products for various types of learners which will help students demonstrate what they know and understand.
3. Teach students how to perform the tasks and provide rubrics for grading the knowledge gained. It is important that students demonstrate the concepts, ideas, and skills of the discipline and these are the focus of the assessment.