



# AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## 2021 - 2025 Officers

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The American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) recommends that learning takes place through a target language 90% of the time with the exception of an immersion environment in which the target language is used exclusively (ACTFL, 2020). This is also the position of the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA). The only times a target language may not be used if there exists a specified reason, such as teaching advanced cultural information in lower level ASL courses. Second language acquisition research to date has shown that those who are learning a target language must be exposed to that language as much as possible for acquisition to occur (ACTFL, 2020).

ASLTA does not endorse the use of SIM-COM in ASL classrooms. Strong (1987) conducted a research study on the use of simultaneous communication (SIM-COM), also known as sign supported speech (Johnson, Liddell & Erting, 1989) and the effects on spoken English and found that teachers engaged in SIM-COM were predominantly ungrammatical and presented many deletions in terms of the English equivalency. It also found that teachers were strained in their ability to teach effectively when attempting to simultaneously utilize two modalities, sign and speaking at the same time. Teneval (2009) found a similar conclusion from their research. When information is presented in English and ASL at the same time, the messages produced are not equivalent (284).

Therefore, ASLTA positions that ASL classroom instruction and interactions be conducted 90% of the time in the target language for proper acquisition. In addition, if spoken language is used in the classroom, it should not be used simultaneously with signed language. To do otherwise produces an unintelligible message that does a disservice and severe harm to the language communities that rely on American Sign Language.



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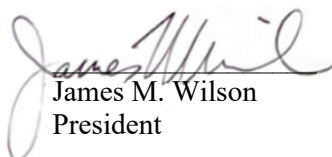
## References

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