

TESTING

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Test Administration

A test is an activity whose main purpose is to convey to the tester how well the testee knows or can do something. My assumption is that the way how the test is actually administered and returned can make a huge difference to motivation and performance; in particular, sensitive presentation of a test can significantly reduce learner anxiety.

Test as a teaching act presupposes three stages, namely:

- * before the test
- * giving the test
- * after the test

Before the test.

I use the preparation period in order to do all I can to ensure that my students will succeed in it. Thus, the tests are announced at least in two weeks in order to give them plenty of time to prepare and details are given of when, where and how long the test will take. The group is also told as precisely as possible what material is to be tested, what sort of items will be used, and how answers will be assessed. I usually give them some tips - for instance, how the best to allot time, or what to do first. I also allow at least some class time for revision, in order to encourage and help with pre-test learning.

Giving the test.

During the test, I may help students who still have some difficulty with instructions; I do not normally help with the content itself.

After the test.

The tests are marked and returned as quickly as possible (within one day) so that we can discuss specific points while the test is still fresh in the students' minds. Usually I will go through the answers in class, but fairly briskly; points that seem to produce special problems I note for more leisurely representation and further practice in the future. I do not usually ask students to copy out corrected answers: this is, I think, more tedious than helpful for them. It is better and more interesting to provide the practice in the same language points in other activities, using new content and tasks.