Progress testing

Video at: www.trinitycollege.com/TESOL-AL

This video looks at progress testing, their purpose and how teachers can make the most of them.

00:09 – 02:31	Progress testing overview	07:17 – 11:29	Feedback to learners
02:32 – 03:53	Institutional requirements	11:30 – 12:41	Using results to track progress
03:54 – 07:16	Using results formatively		

1. Before watching the video

a. If you have already seen 'Types of Assessment' [number 2 of 12 in Trinity TESOL - Assessment Literacy series], make a note in the space below of the different types of assessment that were discussed in *that* video.

or

If you have not seen this video yet, make a note of the different types of assessment – not the names of the exams but the types (eg progress, diagnostic)

b. Now think specifically about the progress tests you use with your class. What do they assess (eg reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary)?

c. How do you mark your students' progress tests – do you give them a grade/score, write comments or do both?

d. Apart from tracking the progress of your students, what other functions do progress tests have in the teaching process?

2. During the video

Progress testing overview (00:09)
Now watch the Progress testing overview and match the terms on the left with the definitions on the right.

1) Proficiency tests   a) are used to identify the areas a student need to work on to improve/

2) Diagnostic tests   b) are used to see how well students have learnt what has been covered in their lessons.

3) Progress tests   c) are used to identify where a student is in terms of level at that particular point in time.

In the video, Alex talks about progress tests being used incrementally. He says that ideally progress tests should not just cover the language taught since the previous progress test, but they should test different areas from throughout the course.

In other words, progress test one will cover what was covered in the first month but progress test two should not just test what was covered in the second month; it should also cover some of the areas from the first month.

What is the main advantage of this?

Now think about the progress tests you use at your school. Do they allow for regular cyclical revision?

Institutional requirements (02:32) and Using results formatively (03:54)
Now watch the next two sections of the video on 'Institutional requirements' and complete the table below.

How are progress tests used by		
Students?	Teachers?	Institutions?

Feedback to learners (07:17) and Using results to track progress (11:30)
Now watch the next two sections of the video and answer the following questions.

Which of the three is the best way to provide feedback? What are the problems with the others?

	Grade only	**Comments only**	**Grades and comments**
Tick the best method			
Problem			

How should teachers give feedback?

What is the 'medal and mission' way of giving feedback?

3. Discussion points

How frequently should teachers give students progress tests?

What are the most effective ways to assess your students' progress? (for example, formal written progress tests or informal class quizzes)

Think about your own teaching. How can you encourage your students to read and respond to the feedback comments you give them?

4. Further learning

If you want to learn more about this topic, look at these resources:

Books
Alderson, C., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language Test Construction and Evaluation*. Cambridge: CUP
Baxter, A., & Seligson, P. (1997). *Evaluating Your Students*. London: Richmond Publishing
McNamara, T. (2000) *Language Testing*. Oxford: OUP
Ur, P. (1999). *A Course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.

Websites
http://tedpower.co.uk/esl0706.html

Journal article
Lee, I. (2007). 'Assessment for learning: integrating assessment, teaching, and learning in the ESL/EFL writing classroom'. *Canadian Modern Language Review,*
64(1), pp199-213.