

# Training on the Introduction of TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) to High School Students in Bandung

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## ABSTRACT

*The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a type of language test of which results are often used as a reference for new student admission in Universities. However, this test is not included in the English language learning curriculum at the secondary level so high school students are not familiar with it. Therefore, this community service activity aims at introducing the test to middle-level students so that they have knowledge and are familiar with the types of questions tested in this test. To determine the progress of students' knowledge and abilities, pre and post-tests were conducted, and the result was the improvement of the scores indicating that the learning approach chosen in this activity is in accordance with the objective of the training. In addition, a simple information system for test assessment was created using Microsoft Excel. This information system helps record student grades and makes it easier to convert TOEFL scores.*

**Keywords** : TOEFL, Student Centered Learning, Assessment Application.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Test of English as a Foreign Language, which is abbreviated and known as TOEFL is one type of standardized test of which score is used by around 10,000 institutions in the world to determine acceptance (**Moody, 2021**). This test is very popular, especially for those who want to study in universities that use English as the media of instruction. It is understandable why standardized tests such as TOEFL are chosen as part of academic selection process. It is proven that standardized tests are able to predict a person's ability and success (**Poulsen & Hewon, 2014**). In addition, it is also proven that there is a direct relationship between TOEFL scores and academic English proficiency in various higher education institutions where English is used as media of instruction (**Esfandiari, Riasati, Vaezian, & Rahimi, 2018**). Therefore, it is not surprising that TOEFL teaching programs offered by language institutions are in great demand. However, often programs like this do not reach all people because the price is quite high. It is lamented as the ability to do well in TOEFL test is quite important, especially for high school students who want to continue to a higher level.

Thus it is important to introduce the TOEFL test to high school students and train them to be able to solve the types of questions that usually appear on this test. This is because in high schools, English is taught as general subject, i.e. the curriculum does not include the goal to introduce as well as provide ample exercises to do well in TOEFL test. Meanwhile, to get high score, students have to get a test familiarity or preparation program.

Test preparation is very important because it is part of an intervention procedure that helps increase test scores (**Liu, 2014**). This intervention can be in the form of an effort to increase the skills measured in the test, or increase the skill to do the test, or both. This community service activity was carried out to provide both language skills activities and the skills to do well in the test. The goal was that students would not only be able to master English for any purpose other than tests, but also master the strategies for answering the types of questions that usually appear in this test. Based on a study conducted by Wathoni et al. (2022), it is found out that the mastering of TOEFL completion strategies is important in succeeding in the test.

With the knowledge and abilities gained from this TOEFL training program, it was hoped that they would be able to prepare themselves to take the real test and have a greater chance of achieving the specified score required to enter universities or in receiving scholarships that use TOEFL score as one of the criteria.

TOEFL®Test, which is a trade name created by the official administrator, namely the *Educational Testing Service* (ETS) was first launched in 1964. Since its launch, the TOEFL®Test has grown from using paper (1964-1979), computers (1979-2005) to the internet (2005-present) (**Enright et al., 2020**). These three types of tests are still used side by side according to needs and context.

The paper-based multiple-choice test measures listening and reading skills as well as knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures. When the first generation of TOEFL®Test was developed, linguistic theories then being developed view the components of language competence such as vocabulary, grammar, listening skills, and others as stand-alone, separated from each other. But then, emerged the awareness that tests such as this were considered unable to measure a person's entire language ability.

The next generation of TOEFL®Test that uses computer as media in its administration was developed to perfect its predecessor. In this generation, apart from measuring listening and writing skills as well as vocabulary and grammar knowledge, the test is equipped with types of questions that measure speaking and writing skills. This is in line with the development of knowledge and research in the field of language, which at that time leaned towards the communicative theory putting emphasis on integrative language skills.

Along with the advancement of technology, where internet is increasingly accessible to the world's citizens, ETS develops the latest generation of TOEFL®Test that relies on internet access in administering the test. In addition to using internet as media to facilitate users accessing it from all over the world, this latest edition of the test is developed based on communicative approach, in which language content is adapted to the user's goals, namely in an academic context. This test can also be carried out in test centers that have been authorized by ETS with a much shorter time to receive test results.

The learning approach that can be used in the TOEFL preparation program is Student-Centered Learning (SCL). It is student-centered as this approach puts learning responsibilities and activities in the hands of students as the center of learning process (**Cannon, 2000**). In other

words, in the SCL-based learning process, students are actively involved in the learning process because they realize that they determine the success in achieving learning outcomes. What is the teacher's role? They are facilitators who provide opportunities for students to gain knowledge by themselves.

Many advantages can be obtained when SCL is applied in the learning process. According to Bogler (2018) the advantage of SCL is that it prepares students to life realities by connecting what they learn to their daily lives. According to Fitriyah (2020) the implementation of SCL in teaching and learning process increases students' motivation as they are given chances to be autonomous which in turn triggers their self-confidence to do any given task. Therefore, by using the SCL approach, it was hoped that the learning activities in this community service program motivated students to continue to be involved until the program is completed.

Even though the TOEFL has evolved both in terms of the processing media and the types of questions tested, the first generation TOEFL or paper-based test (PBT) is still quite popular as a requirement for graduation at universities or acceptance in various companies in Indonesia (**Caromawati, 2017**). In addition, this first-generation test can be carried out at an affordable price because it only requires a question sheet and answer paper. Therefore, in this community service activity, the PBT-TOEFL preparation program was chosen.

In the PBT-TOEFL there are 3 (three) types of questions, namely listening comprehension as many as 50 items, structure & written expression as many as 40 items, and reading comprehension as many as 50 items. In the listening skill section, there are 3 types of questions, namely short conversations with 30 items, long conversations, and long talks with 10 items each. In the second part of the test, there are 2 types of questions, namely structure, where test takers are asked to choose words/combinations of words that can complete the sentence in the question with as many as 20 items and written expression where test takers are asked to find the wrong part in the sentence about as many as 20 items. In the last part, test takers are asked to answer questions based on reading texts.

The number of questions given in the test can put a quite load on the shoulders of examiners in the scoring process. Especially if there are quite a lot of test-takers. Moreover, the final TOEFL score is not the accumulation of correct answers. This is because TOEFL test is a norm-reference test (NRT), which is a type of test that measures general language skills and participants' scores which are interpreted relatively to the scores of all other participants taking similar tests. Therefore, to make manual calculations easier, many book writers on TOEFL preparation equip their books with a list of score conversions. To get the final score, the number of correct answers per part have to not only be converted but also calculated afterward. Thus, examiners will find it is quite difficult to calculate the score in a relatively short time and with less spent energy.

This manual scoring process can actually be assisted by the presence of technology. One of the most commonly used technologies is Microsoft Excel. Microsoft Excel as one of the software that can be used to process data provides a variety of features that can be used to improve the performance of an organization (**Lenawati, Setiawan, & Pamungkas, 2019**). Features that can be used in the application for scoring process are VLOOPUP, SUM, AVERAGE, ISBLANK, and IF. Therefore, in this community service activity, a scoring application was made to facilitate the calculation of the final TOEFL score.

The application was developed using MS. Excel, which is included in Microsoft Office package so that it is easy to access and use. Moreover, MS. Excel is also widely used that it helps people who do not have programming skills maintain the apps. Another benefit is that MS. Excel can

be run not only in the Windows platform but can also be opened in gadgets such as mobile phones and tablets with android or ios as their platforms.

## 2. METHOD

This community service activity was carried out in several stages. The first stage was in the form of identifying the target participants which was carried out by distributing information in the form of leaflets in several high schools in Bandung and accepting registration for students who were interested in joining this program. At the beginning of the program, there were 15 students who registered. However, in the middle of the program, there was 1 student who decided to pull out of the program due to a clashing schedule with his weekly religious activity.

The second stage of this community service is in the form of a training activity which was carried out face-to-face as many as 5 times throughout the program. In face-to-face activities that lasted for 4 hours per meeting, participants received introductory TOEFL materials which included the skills to answer questions in the form of listening comprehension, structure & written expressions and reading comprehension. As discussed in the introduction, the learning approach to deliver the materials chosen in the TOEFL preparation program was Student-Centered Learning (SCL). Moreover, the materials used were taken from several commercialized TOEFL Preparation books.

Meanwhile the pre-test had been carried out before the second stage was commenced, the pre-test activity took place in the third stage of the program along with the distribution of questionnaires. To simplify the assessment process, an information system was created using Microsoft Excel. This information system made it easier for test administrator to recap student scores and convert raw scores to standard TOEFL scores. After both of the scores were gathered, the average scores of the two were calculated and compared to look for the difference.

## 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In examining whether or not there was indeed increasing knowledge in students who took part in this activity, tests were administered at the beginning and at the end of the activity. The following is a picture of the atmosphere of the test.



**Figure 1. Test Administration**

From figure 1, it can be seen that students were concentrating on taking the test. Although this test did not affect their grades in school because the nature of the program was voluntary,

the students involved in this activity took the tests seriously. This might be that they understood the importance of TOEFL score in predicting their future education or career.

Further, figure 2 below shows the results of both students' TOEFL scores.

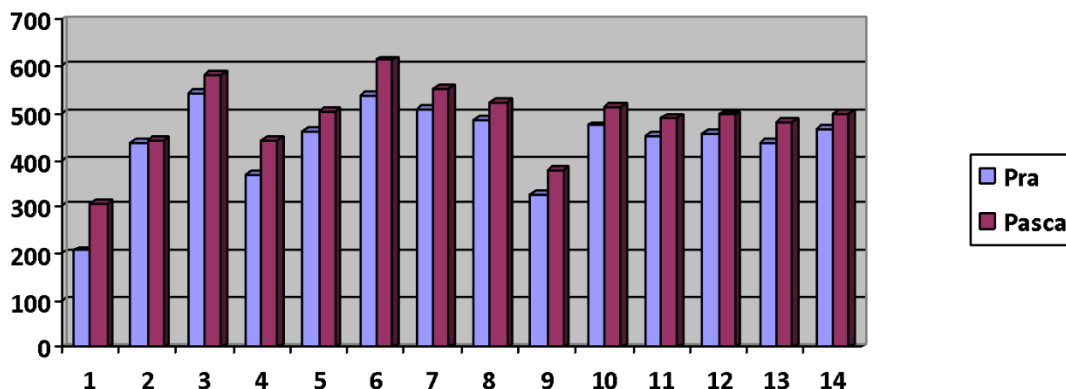


Figure 1. Pre- and Post-Test Scores

From the graph, it can be seen that all students who took part in this activity showed an increase in their TOEFL scores. To find out the extent of the improvement, the scores obtained from the pre- and post- tests were calculated to find the difference between the average scores from pre- and post-tests. The increase in students' knowledge can be seen from the margin of the scores obtained from reducing post-test average scores by the pre-test average score. The increase of the average score can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Average Score improvement

Average		Margin
Pre-	Post-	
440	487	47

From table 1, it can be seen that there was an increase in students' TOEFL scores after participating in this training program by 47 (forty-seven). So it can be concluded that this activity has succeeded in improving students' knowledge about the types of TOEFL questions and students' skills in doing all parts of the TOEFL exam.

This improvement is assumed to be influenced by the student-centered learning (SCL) method used in this program. This is in line with the findings of Saputri (2018) which revealed that SCL had a significant influence on students' learning outcomes in the subjects he studied. Not much different, Hermanto (2017) also found in his research that the SCL learning approach had significantly increased the average students' learning outcomes.

This happens because, in the SCL learning method, students are actively involved in the learning process. As Dong, Wu, Wang, and Peng (2019) mentions, SCL encourages students' high involvement in the acquisition of knowledge. They do not sit passively accepting whatever material is presented to them as in traditional learning methods. This activity affects students' thinking process in teaching and learning process. The activeness of students triggered by SCL method employed in this program can be seen in figure 3.

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**Figure 2. Students' Activeness under the Influence of SCL Method**

In addition to the improvement of students' knowledge about TOEFL and their skills to solve TOEFL questions, this community service activity also has been successful in creating an information system product that can make scoring process easier to do. To gather scores out of answer sheets, you can actually use technology, namely Computer Read Answer Sheet or in Indonesia called Lembar Jawab Komputer/LJK. But not everyone or language institution afford to use it because of the high price of the checking machine. Therefore, grading TOEFL score is often done manually. However, using this method needs time and spends energy considering there are 120 questions in total and the conversion process from the raw score to the final score. So we need a way to simplify this manual scoring system.

The information system for the scoring process uses the Excel program comprised in Microsoft Windows Office so that it is easy to access and use. This is because now the Excel program can be opened not only on a PC or laptop but also on gadgets such as mobile phones and tablets. The display of the information system for automatically converting the scores can be seen in Figure 4 below.

Students' Name	Univ ID#	Section 1		Section 2		Section 3		TOTAL SCORE
		Raw	Converted	Raw	Converted	Raw	Converted	
Asy Syifa Nabila Yasmin		8	32	4	23	10	29	280
Fahmi Aziz		26	48	12	36	29	47	457
Fasha Zahrani Putri		42	59	28	52	35	52	543
Talitha C		20	45	6	26	20	40	370
Widya Siti Rogiah		28	49	22	46	25	44	463
Nabillah Siti Sya'diyah		34	53	30	54	38	54	537
Salma Aulia Suherman		37	55	20	44	38	54	510
Inanty M S		32	52	23	47	27	46	483
Dilla Rahmatillah		10	33	12	36	10	29	327
Yunita Putri Lestari		30	51	19	43	30	48	473
Rifka Galura S P		28	49	20	44	24	43	453
Dianora Rizka Nurani		28	49	19	43	26	45	497
Nabilla Alia Zahra		20	45	19	43	24	43	437
Tharig Hanief S		26	48	19	43	32	49	467
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Figure 3. Scoring System Using Microsoft Excel**

In the picture you can see the columns for pre and post-test consist of the columns for student names, student identification numbers, part 1 (listening comprehension), 2 (structure & written expression), and 3 (reading comprehension), each of which consists of column for raw scores and conversion scores, and lastly the total score column. Test administrators only need to enter the number of correct answers in the raw score column for sections 1, 2, and 3 then the conversion score and total score will automatically appear.

In this section, a MS.Excel feature is used, namely Vlookup which functions to retrieve a value that refers to a data series, which in this case a list of score conversions that is used as a reference into a table to produce a TOEFL score (Iranipour, 2018). Further, the conversion score used in this Excel program is a list of conversion scores issued by Phillips (2001). However, if you want to use other author's score conversion list, you can change it on sheet 4 of this file.

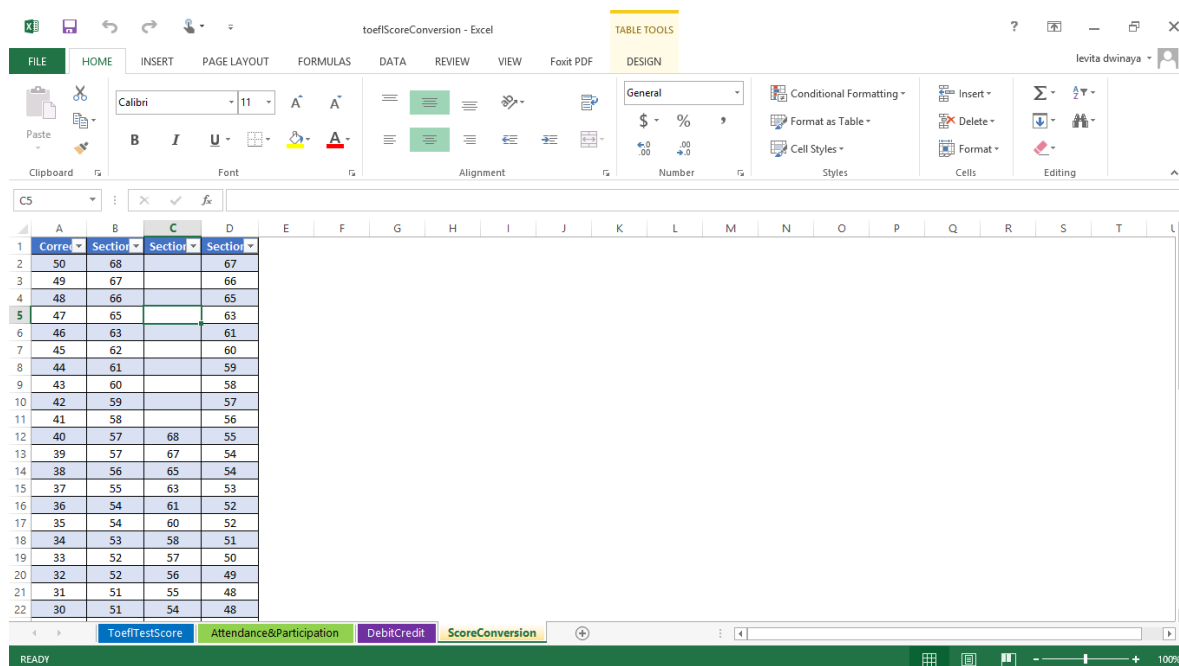


Figure 4. Score Conversion Based on Phillips (2001)

Figure 5 above shows the score conversion list sheet. If you want to change to the desired score conversion list, just enter it into this list. Automatically, the conversions on the first sheet (see figure 4) will refer to the list of score conversions that has been replaced.

Apart from having a score converter sheet and a score conversion list, this information system is also equipped with an attendance sheet and a financial sheet. Attendance sheets can be used to record student attendance while the financial sheet is used to recap the income and expenses of a course program. The appearance of attendance and financial sheets can be seen in Figures 6 and 7 below.

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Number	Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
1	5/16/2019	Pendaftaran	Rp 180,000	Rp -	Rp 180,000
2	5/17/2019	Konsumsi	Rp -	Rp 25,000	Rp 155,000
3	5/18/2019	Donatur	Rp 15,000,000	Rp -	Rp 15,155,000
4	5/18/2019	Konsumsi	Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
5			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
6			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
7			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
8			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
9			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
10			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
11			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
12			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
13			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
14			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
15			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
16			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
17			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
18			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
19			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
20			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -
21			Rp -	Rp -	Rp -

Figure 5. Sheet for Financial Balance

Students' Name	Univ ID #	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Recap
		18-Sep	9-Sep	11-Sep	16-Sep	18-Sep	23-Sep
		1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1
		0.5	0.5	0	1	0	1
		1	1	0.5	1	1	1

Students' Name	Univ ID #	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Recap
12-14-003	60	80	75	90	65	370	
12-13-201	100	90	85	80	90	445	
14-13-023	85	75	50	55	60	325	
21-14-015	80	75	80	75	80	390	
21-14-058	55	25	25	60	30	195	
21-13-070	50	60	55	70	80	315	

Students' Name	Univ ID #	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Total
		6-Oct	8-Oct	13-Oct	15-Oct	20-Oct	22-Oct
		1	0	1	1	1	0
		1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1
		0	1	1	1	1	0.5
		0	0	0.5	1	1	1
Indah Theresia	21-13-070	1	1	0	1	1	0.5

Students' Name	Univ ID #	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Total	Comment
12-14-003	55	90	70	60	50	70	70	You can get invol
12-13-201	90	80	95	80	85	68	68	Good job!
14-13-023	50	45	65	75	70	63	63	You can get invol
21-14-015	80	95	69	85	85	80	80	Good job!
21-14-058	50	40	45	35	30	40	40	You need to spe
21-13-070	45	60	75	85	70	65	65	You can get invol

Figure 6. Sheet for Attendance Record & Recapitulation

Therefore, this information product has all things needed to run a TOEFL preparation course.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

This community service activity has achieved its goal of increasing high school students' knowledge of the TOEFL and their skills to do TOEFL tests. The enthusiasm of the participants in participating in this activity is seen from their full attendance from the beginning until the end of the program, and their statements of hope for other follow-up programs. Hopefully, community service activities in the form of introducing TOEFL using the SCL method can be carried out in different community groups such as youth organizations and the like.

In addition, from this activity an information system was successfully created to facilitate the conversion of scores. This information system is also equipped with attendance and financial balance sheets so that it can be used by the public, especially private TOEFL teachers or TOEFL course institutions to make running a TOEFL course easier. Thus, community service activities to introduce and use this information system are quite important to carry out so that community groups who need such an information system can obtain adequate information and use it. Seeing this importance, a follow up activity was carried out in form of a socialization on the information system created in this community service to several English lectures. We hope this TOEFL score converter application can be shared to wider scope by carrying out similar events in the future.

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