

A TOEFL TRAINING FOR STUDENTS OF GRADE XII SMAN I MASBAGIK FOR THE PREPARATION OF OVERSEAS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

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Abstract

This community service aims to provide TOEFL training to students of grade XII SMA I Masbagik (East Lombok Regency-West Nusa Tenggara). The knowledge and skills they gained from this TOEFL training can later be used to meet the requirements when applying for overseas scholarship programs. 20 students participated in this TOEFL training which was held three times a week for one month, in December 2022. The results of *pre-test* and *post-test* indicated that each participant showed an increase in their TOEFL score after the training. In addition, the data gained from interview process revealed the participants' perceptions which reported positive responses to this TOEFL training. The implication of this community service is that we acknowledge what difficulties students of grade XII have experienced in learning TOEFL and solutions that can be done to help them. Despite this, the limitation of this TOEFL training is that it only involves relatively few participants and in a relatively short amount of time. The next TOEFL training can recruit more participants and allocate a longer training time to obtain maximum result.

Keywords: Overseas Scholarship, School Students, TOEFL Training.

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, everyone is required to have sufficient knowledge and skills that can be used to face global competition. The rapid progress of this competition requires every individual to prepare themselves to be able to adapt to the such modern world. It is not surprising that many people are willing to spend time and energy preparing themselves to face the progress of the times by increasing their knowledge and skills. One of possible ways to gain knowledge and skills is through education (Fahrozy et al., 2022; Mardhiyah et al., 2021). For some people, achieving the highest level of education is not a big problem. Thos who have sufficient money will be able to pay for their education from the school level (primary school, junior high school, and senior high school) to college level (bachelor, master, and doctorate degree). Not to mention extra cost of training programs outside of school or college. However, there have been many Indonesian people cannot go to school or college because of high tuition fee (Hasibuan et al., 2021; Sofya et al., 2018; Trivena, 2021). Low-income condition causes

many people to eventually drop out of school or fail their education (Mujiati et al., 2018; Sudarmono et al., 2020). However, this particular problem can be solved through scholarship programs (Aliyyah et al., 2020). As mentioned by several people (Ayuni & Oktavia, 2022; Ramadhon et al., 2018), scholarship program has a great impact on students both economically and psychologically, where scholarship recipients will feel less burdened and can increase their learning motivation. This is very useful considering the fact that many students are willing to go to school while working part time to be able to earn money for their school fee (Anggraini & Arianti, 2019; Meiji, 2019; Rufaida et al., 2018). Consequently, those who cannot manage their time between school and work will find it difficult to achieve maximum academic grades. Therefore, scholarship programs can become a solution to this problem. There are many types of scholarship programs that offer educational assistance to those in need. These scholarship programs can be obtained as long as applicants meet the requirements. Beside covering full educational assistance (tuition fees, monthly allowance, accommodation costs, transportation costs, thesis writing costs, etc.), another reason that encourages many students are interested in applying such scholarships is that they want to experience to study and live abroad while learning new culture.

Every year, a large number of overseas scholarship programs for school students open registration and provide opportunities for interested applicants. The target of such overseas scholarship program is mainly high school students of grade XII and meet certain TOEFL scores. TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is an English proficiency test that has been one of the requirements of overseas scholarship program. For example, the Toronto Canada Scholarship for Canada requires applicants to be high school graduates and meet a minimum score of IELTS 6.5 or a TOEFL equivalent of 575. Meanwhile, the IFA (International Fashion Academy) Paris Scholarship for France requires applicants to be high school graduates equivalent and meet an IELTS score of 5.5 or the equivalent of a TOEFL of 525. Those who wish to study in Netherlands, one of the popular undergraduate scholarship programs is the Orange Tulip Scholarship which requires applicants to be high school graduates and requires a minimum TOEFL score of 550. To study in Turkey, there is a Turkey Burslary scholarship which requires a minimum TOEFL score of 500. Other than these, there are many other types of overseas scholarship programs which can be applied for interested applicants.

At SMA Negeri I Masbagik (East Lombok Regency-West Nusa Tenggara), there have been many students interested in applying for such overseas scholarship programs, especially grade XII students who are about to graduate and wish to continue their studies. However, one of the requirements that they need to meet is the TOEFL score. Apart from the fact that the cost of the TOEFL test is quite expensive for students who mostly come from low-income families, their TOEFL skill is assumingly low-level since they had never been exposed to the TOEFL training. Therefore, this community service program aims to provide an opportunity for grade XII students with low-level of TOEFL skills and come from low-income families to participate in free TOEFL training. This training is hopefully able to help them achieve certain TOEFL scores which can be used to apply for overseas scholarship programs. In this regard, the type of TOEFL in this particular training is TOEFL ITP (Institutional Testing Program) or commonly known as TOEFL PBT (Paper-Based Test) because this type of TOEFL is often used as a requirement for the application of overseas scholarship programs. As it is known that there are several types of TOEFL held by many institutions. For example, the TOEFL Prediction Test is

a type of TOEFL test that contains the same test components as the TOEFL ITP (listening, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension), but the test results or certificates can only be used for prediction purposes. The cost of this TOEFL Prediction Test is quite affordable, around Rp. 25,000 to Rp. 75,000. Meanwhile, there is also TOEFL IBT (Internet-Based Test), which is a type of TOEFL that uses a computer and the internet as the test medium and contains all 4 language components (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). The cost of the TOEFL IBT test is quite expensive, around Rp. 2,500,000.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This TOEFL training is conducted three times a week every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for approximately one month in December 2022. The TOEFL training schedule can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1. The Schedule of TOEFL Training 2022

No	Day, Date, Month	Time	Lesson Materials
1	Monday, date of 5, 12, 19, 26 December 2022	16.00-17.30	Listening Comprehension
2	Wednesday, date of 7, 14, 21, 28 December 2022	16.00-17.30	Structure and Written Expression
3	Friday, date of 9, 16, 23, 30 December 2022	16.00-17.30	Reading Comprehension

In regard to the location, this community service program was held in one of the classrooms at SMA Negeri 1 Masbagik. Out of 128 grade XII students, 20 of them were allowed to participate in this TOEFL training since they have achieved a minimum TOEFL *pre-test* score of 400. Apart from this, they also expressed their interest in applying for overseas scholarship program in 2023 and therefore need to take part in TOEFL preparation training. The data of 20 participants can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2. The Data of TOEFL Training Participants

No	Name	Sex	Department
1	Wahyu	Male	Natural Science
2	Winda	Female	Natural Science
3	Mitha	Female	Social Science
4	Alfi	Male	Language
5	Haris	Male	Natural Science
6	Latifa	Female	Natural Science
7	Meisya	Female	Social Science
8	Agi	Male	Language
9	Alan	Male	Social Science
10	Bunga	Female	Language
11	Erza	Female	Natural Science
12	Hadi	Male	Natural Science

13	Endang	Female	Social Science
14	Haris	Male	Language
15	Gina	Female	Social Science
16	Junaidi	Male	Social Science
17	Andi	Male	Natural Science
18	Lina	Female	Natural Science
19	Agung	Male	Social Science
20	Ade	Male	Language

The module used in this TOEFL training is the *Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test* 2001 edition by Deborah Phillips. This book was distributed to the participants in PDF format which they can print themselves. This module contains strategies on how to quickly answer each of the three components of the TOEFL test.

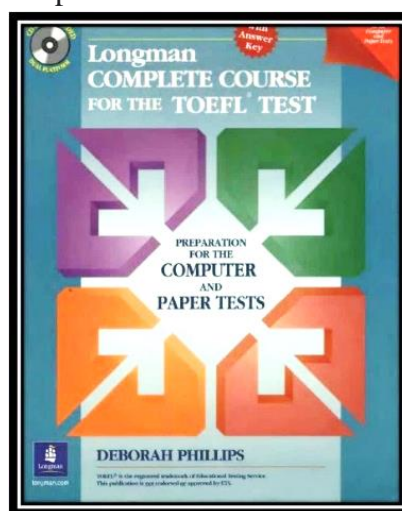


Figure 1. Module Used in the TOEFL Training 2022

In relation to the research instruments, a *pre-test* was administered at the first meeting to see the participants score and their level of TOEFL ability. Then, a *post-test* was administered at the last meeting to see the participants score after attending the TOEFL training. In addition, interviews with 10 representative students were conducted after the TOEFL training was completed with the purpose to explore their perceptions and suggestions for TOEFL training programs in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained from the *pre-test* and *post-test*, the TOEFL score for each participant can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. The Result of *Pre-test* and *Post-test* for Each Participants

No	Name	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-Test</i>
1	Wahyu	427	450
2	Winda	410	453
3	Mitha	417	447
4	Alfi	403	440
5	Haris	410	443
6	Latifa	403	453
7	Meisya	423	457
8	Agi	410	450
9	Alan	453	473
10	Bunga	403	410
11	Erza	417	423
12	Hadi	403	417
13	Endang	417	453
14	Haris	403	450
15	Gina	410	440
16	Junaidi	410	417
17	Andi	417	447
18	Lina	427	453
19	Agung	410	450
20	Ade	403	410

From the table above, it is clear that there was an increase in the TOEFL score for each participant. Similar data is shown by several previous community service. For example, Fitria and Prastiwi, (2020) provided TOEFL training to several people at different levels of education (school students, university students, lecturers, and public people). Even though the results of their community service reported that the participants showed an increase in their TOEFL scores, this training was not specifically provided for certain groups of people, and not mainly focused on their specific needs as it was conducted in this community service. In addition, an online TOEFL training by Kayyis et al., (2021) is provided for public people. Likewise, their TOEFL training is also not focused on specific groups as in this community service. Slightly different, TOEFL training by Saputri et al., (2021) and Sirajuddin and Yahrif (2021) is provided for students of English education study programs. The results showed that there was an increase in TOEFL scores for each participant. However, the participants in their TOEFL training had already basic knowledge of English language since they came from an English education study program, while the participants in the TOEFL training in this community service were high school students who only studied general English so it can be assumed that they do not have or have little basic knowledge of TOEFL.



Figure 2. Classroom Situations when TOEFL Training is Conducted

In addition, the perceptions of participants regarding this TOEFL training were obtained from the interview process. In relation to the listening comprehension section, for example, Agi and Erza said:

“I initially had the most difficulty answering questions in the listening session. Not only on the TOEFL, the listening session was the most difficult part for me when learning English in general. But this TOEFL training is able to help me to answer listening sessions. Hopefully the TOEFL training will be held regularly in the future.”

“In my opinion, the third part of TOEFL listening session (mini-talk) is the most challenging component. Strategies provided in this TOEFL training are able to help me when dealing with this third part. The next TOEFL training should continue to provide strategies on how to quickly and easily answer listening sessions, especially the third part (mini-talk).”

For the grammar section (Structure and Written Expression), Mitha expressed her opinion during the interview process:

“Personally, I think this TOEFL training is very useful in helping me learning English grammar patterns. Grammar section has been the component of English sentences I hate the most since high school. Hopefully, regular TOEFL training will constantly be held in the future.”

The same thing was expressed by Wahyu. Apart from voicing his opinion, he also gave advice for this TOEFL training:

“When compared to the listening and reading sessions, the number of questions in the grammar session on the TOEFL is only 40 questions. But it takes up a lot of time because there are many formulas or sentence structures that must be memorized and used to answer them. In the next TOEFL training, I suggested that the instructors provide a larger proportion

of time for the grammar section considering there are so many tenses and other sentence structures in English."

Regarding the Reading Comprehension section, Alan and Bunga expressed their opinions and suggestions during the interview process:

"In my opinion, the reading session was actually not that difficult. But because the text is too long, I often get tired quickly and lose my concentration. In the future, this TOEFL training should provide more strategies on how to quickly find answers when dealing with long texts."

"To be honest, I am not good at vocabulary. So, it is difficult for me to answer questions in the reading session. But this TOEFL training is able to help me learn relevant vocabulary to TOEFL questions. Hopefully there will be regular training like this in the future."

This finding is in line with several studies from previous community service programs. For example, Sukmawan et al., (2022) provided a TOEFL training to several civil engineering study program students in Sukabumi. Even though the participants felt the benefits of the TOEFL training they provided, the participants' perceptions were not explored more deeply through individual interviews like conducted in this TOEFL training. Similarly, in the TOEFL training conducted by Candria (2022), the participants were assumed to benefit from the TOEFL training provided, but was not factually supported through an interview process.

CONCLUSION

This community service aims to provide a TOEFL training to grade XII students at SMA Negeri I Masbagik (East Lombok Regency-West Nusa Tenggara) who are interested in applying for overseas scholarship programs but have a low-level TOEFL skill and come from low-income families. From the results of the participants' pre-test and post-test, it was found that there was an increase in the their TOEFL scores. Even though the increase is not very significant, it can be seen that most of the participants experience improvement in the three components of the TOEFL (listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension). In addition, from the results of the interviews, the participants expressed appreciation for this TOEFL training program since it can help them improve their TOEFL skills.

The implication of this community service is that this TOEFL training is said to be very useful in helping improve students' TOEFL skills and knowledge. In addition, this community service helps us to explore students' opinion and suggestions regarding what types of TOEFL training should be provided in the future.

Despite this, it is without exception that this community service is without limitations. Apart from the small number of participants, the study time is also relatively short, which is only 4 weeks. TOEFL training programs in the future should recruit more participants and with a longer duration of study time.

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