

Socialization on Improving English Language Skills through TOEFL for Grade 12 Students of SMK Swasta HKBP Pematang Siantar

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Abstract

This socialization activity aims to introduce and provide knowledge and insight to students at the SMK Swasta HKBP Pematang Siantar about the TOEFL test. The socialization activity regarding the introduction of TOEFL to vocational school students, was held on December 5, 2023. Participants in this socialization activity were 12 grade vocational school students totaling 20 people. Participants gain new knowledge about the TOEFL test. There were three phases in conducting this socialization, namely preparation, implementation and evaluation. The results obtained from this socialization activity are, they know and understand what the TOEFL test is, types of questions in the TOEFL test, number of questions tested in the TOEFL test, duration and time for completing TOEFL questions, tips & tricks for studying TOEFL and also the importance of TOEFL test. This socialization can also increase student's motivation to study English more seriously. They can view the TOEFL exam as a challenge to overcome and as a first step towards success in their future academic and professional careers. From the results above it can be concluded that this activity gave a positive impact for the students in the future.

Keywords:

English
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Abstrak

Kegiatan sosialisasi ini bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan dan memberikan pengetahuan serta wawasan kepada siswa SMK Swasta HKBP Pematang Siantar tentang tes TOEFL. Kegiatan sosialisasi mengenai pengenalan TOEFL pada siswa SMK dilaksanakan pada tanggal 5 Desember 2023. Peserta dalam kegiatan sosialisasi ini adalah siswa kelas 12 SMK yang berjumlah 20 orang. Peserta mendapatkan pengetahuan baru tentang tes TOEFL. Ada tiga tahapan dalam melakukan sosialisasi ini yaitu persiapan, pelaksanaan dan evaluasi. Hasil yang diperoleh dari kegiatan sosialisasi ini adalah, mereka mengetahui dan memahami apa itu tes TOEFL, jenis-jenis soal dalam tes TOEFL, jumlah soal yang diujikan dalam tes TOEFL, durasi dan waktu penyelesaian soal TOEFL, tips & trik belajar TOEFL dan juga pentingnya tes TOEFL. Sosialisasi ini juga dapat meningkatkan motivasi siswa untuk belajar bahasa Inggris dengan lebih serius. Mereka dapat memandang ujian TOEFL sebagai tantangan yang harus diatasi dan sebagai langkah awal menuju kesuksesan dalam karir akademis dan profesional

mereka di masa depan. Dari hasil diatas dapat disimpulkan bahwa kegiatan ini memberikan dampak positif bagi siswa dimasa yang akan datang.

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1. INTRODUCTION

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is the test to evaluate the ability of an individual to use and understand English. It is one of the most important factors in international student's success or failure of academic performance. The ability to speak English is very important both in Education and work, that's why there are so many people want to improve their English language skills. One measure of a person's English language ability can be seen from the TOEFL scores obtained. TOEFL test scores with predetermined standards can be used for various selection requirements, such as scholarships, job application requirements, university entrance requirements or as a requirement for graduating from a university.

In general, the TOEFL test is used to assess student's ability to write with good grammar in English to be able to write scientific writing. Student's ability to read English well and correctly in order to understand the required material. Student's ability to listen well and correctly to the description given in English.

For students, especially high school/vocational school students who want to enter college, English language skills are one of the requirements for registering at a university because some universities use TOEFL scores as a requirement. However, getting a high TOEFL score is not easy. Therefore, special preparation is required before the exam to get a high score.

The purpose of this socialization is to help student's gain knowledge about TOEFL. In preparing for the TOEFL test, students must know and understand general knowledge about the TOEFL test itself. The importance of organizing socialization on the implementation of the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) due to student's lack of knowledge about what TOEFL is, the benefits of TOEFL, and how important the TOEFL test is.

Here are some reasons why TOEFL is important;

1. University Entrance Requirements

When registering to study abroad or domestically, there are several universities that require TOEFL to determine each student's English language skills. Domestic universities will require a minimum score of 450 and foreign universities will require a minimum score of 600.

2. Job Application Requirements

Currently, several company agencies require applicants to take the TOEFL test first. English language skills will provide added value for applicants, especially in international companies.

3. Requirements for Obtaining a Scholarship

Institutions providing scholarships, especially overseas scholarships, often require a TOEFL test for applicants in addition to academic and non-academic qualifications.

In TOEFL there are 4 skills tested, namely listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension, and test of written English.

1. Listening Comprehension

The listening comprehension section, tests a person's ability to understand a short conversation, long conversation and speech delivered orally in English. Each question can only be heard once without repetition. Test takers expected to concentrate fully when working on this section. There are 50 questions given in this section with a time of 40 minutes.

2. Structure and Written Expression

Structure and written expression section, test a person's abilities in understand grammar and expressions commonly used in the language English. There are 40 questions given in this section with a time of 25 minutes.

3. Reading Comprehension

The Reading comprehension section tests a person's ability to understand various types of scientific reading presented in English. Generally, questions on reading skills contain a questions about the main idea, topic, content, meaning of words, word similarities, meanings of word groups and also questions about the information contained within reading both implied and hidden. In this section, there are 50 questions with a time of 55 minutes.

4. Test of Written English

Test of written English, tests a person's ability to write an essay in English. Test takers will be given one specific topic and asked them to create an essay on the specified topic. In this section, participants are given 30 minutes to complete an essay.

2. METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

The socialization activity regarding the introduction of TOEFL to vocational school students, was held on December 5, 2023. This activity was carried out at the SMK Swasta HKBP Pematangsiantar for 12 grade students with a total of 20 student's. In carrying out this activity the team used the lecture method. This socialization activity includes several stages including:

1. Preparation

- Preparing a permit letter with the aim of requesting permission from the school principal to carry out socialization activities at the SMK Swasta HKBP Pematangsiantar.
- Preparing tools and materials.

2. Implementation

- Conducting an opening socialization by saying thank you for providing the opportunity to socialize and then introductions to students and teachers in the class.
- Providing a presentation or explanation about TOEFL.

3. Evaluation

- Conducting a question and answer session on the material that has been presented.
- Closing the socialization by the presenters

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is the overall series of socialization activities that we carry out.

1) Preparation

- a) At this stage, the team discussed with the school principal to give us permission to carry out socialization activities at SMK Swasta HKBP Pematangsiantar for grade 12 students.
- b) Preparing tools and materials such as, power point, LCD, laptop, etc. So that socialization activities can run smoothly and well.

2) Implementation

- a) At this stage, the presenters conduct opening socialization by saying thank you for providing the opportunity to socialize and then introductions to students and teachers in the class.
- b) After that, the presenters presented material related to TOEFL, which starts from (1) The definition of TOEFL, (2) the function of the TOEFL test, (3) skills that will be tested, the number of questions for each skill and also the length of time to complete the questions , (4) types of TOEFL, and (5) tips & tricks for studying TOEFL .



Figure 1. Presenters presented the material about TOEFL

3) Evaluation

Questions and answers session; In this session, students can ask questions to the presenter related to the material that has been presented so that students can be more understand about the TOEFL. After that the presenters closing the socialization with say thanks to the teacher and also to the student's and then taking photos with teacher and students.



Figure 2. Documentation with a teacher and participants in socialization activities.

A. Discussion

Improving English language skills can open up opportunities for student's to access study programs and careers that require good English language skills. Results obtained after carrying out this socialization activity are: 1) Participants gain new knowledge about the TOEFL test. Through this socialization they know and understand what the TOEFL test is, types of questions in the TOEFL test, number of questions tested in the TOEFL test, duration and time for completing TOEFL questions and tips & tricks for studying TOEFL. 2) The socialization about TOEFL can help increase awareness of students at SMK Swasta HKBP Pematang Siantar about the importance of English language skills and also about the TOEFL exam itself. 3) Socialization about TOEFL can also increase student's motivation to study English more seriously. They can view the TOEFL exam as a challenge to overcome and as a first step towards success in their future academic and professional careers.

B. Challenges in socialization activities

After the presentation with the participants, there were several challenges that were reflected in the importance of TOEFL for HKBP Vocational School students. (1) There were several student's in the class who didn't know what TOEFL was and had never even heard of TOEFL, so they felt a little confused when the presenters explained about TOEFL. (2) There were students asking the speaker how students would do TOEFL questions within the specified time constraints.

C. Steps to overcome the challenges

(1) The presenters explain slowly and clearly about TOEFL so that the students can understand and increase their knowledge about TOEFL. (2) To overcome this challenge, it is important for students to practice working on questions with limited time because it can help students in acquiring good time management skills and increase their speed in answering questions, develop speed reading strategies, and increase efficiency in answering questions and expressing students' thoughts effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

This socialization activity went well and the students who were participants in this activity were also very enthusiastic take part in this activity. During the activity, there was good communication and interaction between the presenters and the participants so that participants can understand the material presented. This socialization activity increases student's knowledge about what TOEFL is, the benefits of TOEFL, types of questions in the TOEFL test, number of questions tested in the TOEFL test, duration and time for completing TOEFL questions, tips & tricks for studying TOEFL and also the importance of TOEFL test. The suggestions that can be given regarding the implementation of this socialization, it is hoped that in the future activities like this can continue so that students have knowledge about the TOEFL test and how important the TOEFL testis.

5. THANK YOU NOTE

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