

## Need Analysis of Pharmacy Students in TOEFL Preparation Class

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### Abstract

In response to the demand for higher education institutions to internationalize their campuses and strengthen their students' global collaboration, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Farmasi (STIFA) Makassar has made English language proficiency a requirement for graduation. The evidence is bypassing the TOEFL test held by universities. This study aims to analyze the students' learning styles and expectations for studying English in TOEFL class and the students' difficulties. This study was conducted at one of the Pharmacy campuses in Central Indonesia, Makassar, South of Sulawesi, namely the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Farmasi (STIFA) Makassar with 62 people as a population. While using purposive sampling, there were 20 people chosen as a sample. From this research, we found that 60% of students prefer the auditory learning style and 100% of students expect the teacher to teach combines in English and Indonesian, gives many exercises, and provides new vocabulary in every meeting. In addition, 65 % of students select Structure and Written Expression as the most challenging skill in TOEFL class.

**Keywords:** Students' need analysis, TOEFL preparation class

### INTRODUCTION

The needs of the world community for the mastery of English increasingly showed a rapid increase. Even in some countries, English is used as a second language after the national language (Himawati, 2018). The most frequently put forward is that English is a global or international language and is considered the only means of unifying the nation. English is needed both in mastering communication technology and interacting directly (Handayani, 2016). In many Asian countries, English has long been seen as a critical tool and

a good reason for national development and globalization, including Indonesia. Indonesia introduces English as a compulsory subject in kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university (Farida et al., 2020). Students must complete this subject to develop their abilities, as English has become a requirement in many sectors of life. In this context, the promotion of English has increased the demand for ESP courses (Choi, 2021), and ESP courses cannot separate from the need for English.

The need for ESP responds to the demand for higher education institutions to internationalize their campuses and strengthen their students' global collaboration. As part of ESP, English for Medical or Pharmacy is covered at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Farmasi (STIFA) Makassar curriculum. STIFA Makassar has made English language skills a prerequisite for graduation for students with passing evidence is on the TOEFL test held by universities. For students who do not meet the English proficiency standard set by STIFA. To support TOEFL test scores, STIFA offers a TOEFL subject compulsory for students to take to finish the curriculum. The aim is to encourage students to learn and enrich themselves with English language skills as TOEFL is required for students seeking admission to universities in English-speaking nations the TOEFL class becomes a prerequisite that students must follow.

As the needs of vocational students and general students are different, the lecturer must present learning materials following the needs of students. Teaching materials must be submitted as effectively as possible to achieve learning objectives in the shortest possible time. So, this research is done to conduct a need analysis to see learners' strengths, weaknesses, learning style, and what the learners expect from the teacher in the classroom.

Needs analysis, also known as needs assessment, is a set of actions carried out by individuals or a group of individuals to identify areas that require improvement (Jordan, 1997). This analysis supplies analytical and disciplined techniques for gathering data and making decisions based on that data. So this job is completed before any action is take (Watkins et al., 2012). Needs analysis answers the question of how educators or practitioners design effective curriculum (Akyel & Ozek, 2010). In addition, Long speculates that it is critical to do a thorough needs analysis in foreign and second language acquisition (Long, 2015). It is the prerequisite for effective course design (Berwick, 1996). In other words, teaching a language without first understanding the demands of the pupils would result in inefficiency. In addition, needs analysis is a means to get trustworthy information about what children need to learn (Grier, 2005). While Brown (1995) demonstrates how needs analysis is carried out to satisfy learning objectives, construct learning resources, and plan teaching tactics (Sulistiyani, 2018). So, Needs analysis examines what learners already know and what they need to know (Macalister & Nation, 2019).

To determine the students' needs, learning style is always included. Learning style is a way for mastering, processing, and remembering new and challenging material (Porter et al., 2004). As the abilities and personalities of each person are unique (Astri & Wahab, 2018), people receive and process data in various ways, depending on their presumptive and

sensory strengths. Learning Styles may be thought of as a collection of unique behaviors grouped into a single concept. (Alonso, 2000). Then Gregorc (1979) said that most individuals learn easier in some subjects and under specific situations than others because learners experience varying comfort levels, ranging from pleasure to agony, depending on the situation (Rasyid & Amin, 1992). As Kolb points out, each learning style highlights individual variations based on preferences for distinct periods of the learning cycle (Ignacio et al., n.d.). Furthermore, Dunn and Dunn in Potter and Hernacki (2004, p. 114) recognize three primary learning styles known as perceptual learning styles: (1) Visual learners, students who learn through vision; (2) Auditory learners, students who learn through hearing; and (3) Tactile or Kinesthetic learners learn by moving, applying, and feeling. As a result, learning style refers to how people capture and store new information, facts, and abilities that might affect their behavior; it also refers to the activities that people engage in in a learning environment, which can vary from person to person.

Another way to provide students with their needs, as stated by Diamond (1999), is to encourage the student to be an active participant rather than a passive observer in their classes (Duckett & Tatarkowski, 2005). Teachers play a crucial role in fulfilling students' needs through the teacher's teaching style (Rosenshine, 2012). In their study, Xu and Zhang (2021) noted that effective teaching tactics might be expressed in various ways, including teaching conduct, teacher skills, and teacher convictions. In this case, effective teaching is defined as the capacity to improve student achievement (Xu & Zhang, 2021). Hence, teaching methods are one of the things that teachers get concerned about when trying to attain their teaching objectives in their classrooms (Zulfian et al., 2019).

In conducting this study, the researchers approach students as non-native speakers and non-English participants. They are in the 8<sup>th</sup> semester. They are a diverse group of people ranging in age from late teens to thirties. Motivation on the system is mainly the same; the students' principle aims to improve their chances of achieving the required/desired TOEFL exam scores to graduate and receive a bachelor's degree from their university. TOEFL is a mandatory requirement before graduating from that university. As a result, students' expectations and motivation are high. Generally, classes are lively, with a high level of passionate student participation. On the other hand, students usually have busy day responsibilities, and as a result, they are generally tired when they arrive at class and may find it difficult to concentrate. There is a wide variety of learning styles available; however, students are rarely aware of the strategies available to them or the significance of these techniques.

Based on the authors' provisional hypothesis, students from pharmaceutical high school and school science backgrounds contain practice elements as they always deal with laboratories. Hence, the authors indicate that they are more likely to be tactile learners, etc. From the authors' hypothesis, they try to find the learning style and the need of each student to design and deliver the appropriate method in the teaching process in the TOEFL classroom

so the study's objective can be reached. In other words, to make instruction successful, instructors must conduct a needs analysis before beginning to work with the learners. A needs analysis will provide the instructor with each learner's strengths, weaknesses, learning style, and expectations from the teacher in the classroom. By knowing the learning style, the author can decide the best method in the school. In addition, knowledge about students' expectations will lead the instructor to fulfill the students' needs, and it is instrumental in creating a lesson plan. Furthermore, knowledge about students' difficulties will lead the instructor to decide the number of meetings for every part of skills in TOEFL preparation. It can emphasize the essential and emergent skills that the students need.

Based on the background described previously, this study attempts to address the following three research questions are 1) What are the students' learning styles? 2) what is the student's expectation for studying English in TOEFL class? And 3) what are the students' difficulties in learning TOEFL? The findings help the instructors realize that the TOEFL class and students' individual needs must be considered while providing suggestions for improving the uniqueness and efficacy of TOEFL classes.

## METHOD

This study was conducted at one of the Pharmacy campuses in Indonesia, Makassar, South of Sulawesi, namely the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Farmasi (STIFA) Makassar. The College actively promotes English language education to internationalize its campus and improve the skills of its students. In pursuing this goal, the campus requires students to take TOEFL classes as a medium in passing the TOEFL test as the TOEFL is a prerequisite to getting the best career in the future. The TOEFL course is a 24-hour program: four and a half hours a week. The TOEFL Preparation course has run numerous times but never has a written curriculum and relies on a more organic curriculum, based on a coursebook and the instructors' decision on content.

The population of this study amounted to 62 people consisting of 21 people in each class A and class C and 20 people in class B. Meanwhile, the samples selected in this study were all students in class B who were selected purposively. The consideration for choosing this sample is class B has the lowest score from the average accumulated results on the TOEFL pre-test score.

The data in this study were collected using two types of questionnaires; *First*, consisting of 24 question items from Barsch's LSI to identify student learning styles (Barsch Learning Style Inventory, Scoring Procedures, and Explanations, n.d.). It was categorized on three scales: often, sometimes, and rarely. *Second*, the questionnaire to find out students' expectations and weaknesses and students' difficulties (in terms of Reading, Structure and Written Expression, and Listening comprehension) (ETS, 2015a, 2015b; Ling et al., 2014; Phillips, 2003). After that, the researchers used quantitative methods with descriptive analysis to analyze the students' questionnaire results. We calculated through Excel to look for the students' answer percentages in analyzing the data.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

According to the questionnaire, most pharmacy students at STIFA Makassar believe that the TOEFL course is essential and positively affects their academic and professional development. In studying in the TOEFL class, they also have a learning style that they like. This learning style is an incentive for them to take TOEFL classes with enthusiasm and passion. Based on the questionnaire given to students in measuring their learning style, the percentage obtained is shown in figure 1.

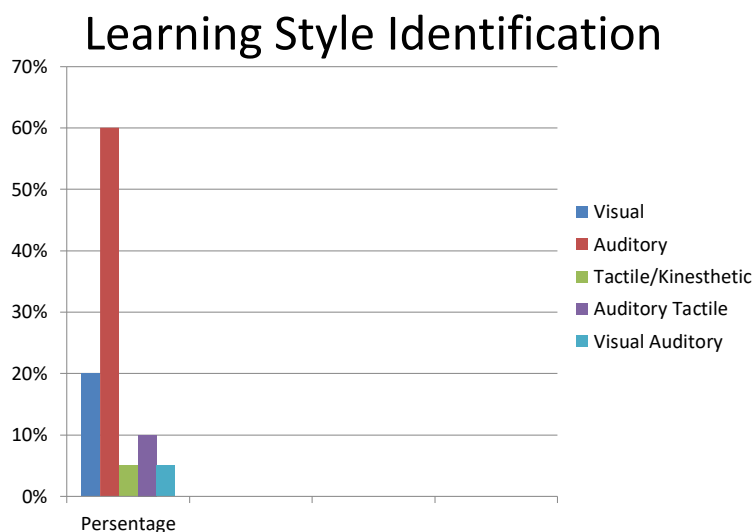


Figure 1. Questionnaire type 1 (Learning Style Identification)

Learning Style Identification is based on scoring procedures by Barch (Appendix 2). From the table classification, we can see the class consists of 12 students with auditory learning style (60 %), four students with Visual learning style (20 %), and only one student with tactile learning style (5 %). In addition, it is also found that there are some students with a combination of learning styles. Two students (10 %) are classified as Auditory-Tactile learning style because they have identical scores in those two types. There is also 1 Visual-Auditory learner (5%) because he has similar visual and auditory statements scores. Based on the finding above, the author should combine the teaching method to cover all of the learning styles in the classroom, and also, she should be creative to make students not bored and sleepy in the classroom. When students get knowledge in their preferred learning style, they can quickly process and retain it. This is primarily connected to Felder and Solomon's (2001) Dunn and Dunn learning style approach, which identified learning techniques in four dimensions: sensing/intuitive, visual/verbal, active/reflective, and sequential/global. When materials are built with this learning style in mind, learners' interests and processes may be considered, making it easier for instructors to use adaptive teaching approaches. (Felder &

Solomon, 2001). For example, a learning style's "sensing/ intuitive" dimension can influence innovation (Graf et al., 2007).

In addition, for the type 2 questionnaire, we also compiled to see students' expectations of the instructor's teaching style. The research results can later become suggestions for instructors regarding what to do during the TOEFL course process. To see the research results on student expectations, we present them in figure 2 below.

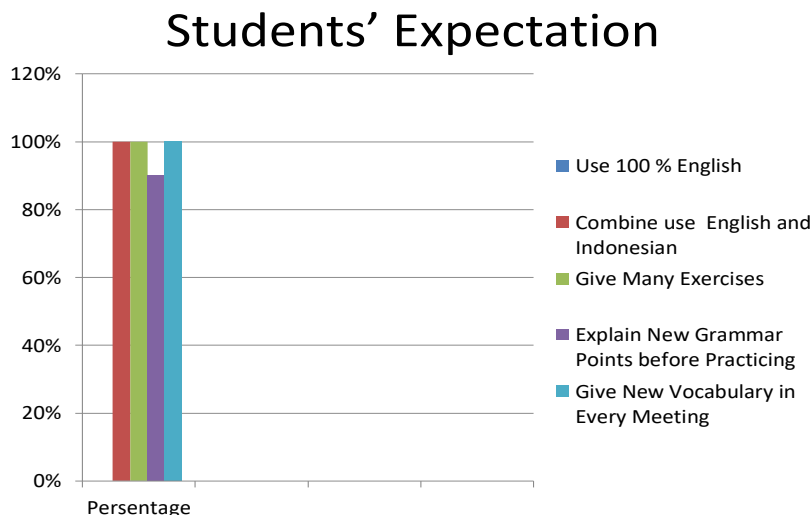


Figure 2. Questionnaire type 2 (The Most Difficult Skill)

Based on the data above, the author finds that no one (0 %) agrees if the teacher or the instructor uses 100 % English in the classroom. Furthermore, they 100% agree if the teacher combines English and Indonesian. Then, 100 % of students agree if the teacher gives many exercises. Next, 90 % of students suggest the teacher explain new grammar points before practicing. In addition, all the students agree if the teacher gives new vocabulary in every meeting. This information can guide the teacher to create a creative lesson plan so the classroom can be alive. This is also a direction to the instructor to consider students' perception of teaching style and how L1 plays a vital role in class. This viewpoint is also more humanistic, accepting that L1 contributes to a greater depth and breadth of thinking and information acquisition and acknowledging the local language's importance (Yavuz, 2012).

Cabrillana & Mayan (2018) also analyze the impact of teaching approaches from both the teacher's and students' perspectives to accomplish better the material's goal. They found the relationship is different depending on whether they use the teacher's or the students' perspective. Relying on the teacher's reports leads to conclude that the teaching style is not related to achievement. Alternatively, relying on the students' reports brings the conclusion to higher achievement (Cabrillana & Mayan, 2018). It is strengthened that students' perspectives for their expectations play a critical role to achieve learning goals

The three items on the TOEFL skill are presented in a questionnaire, namely Reading, Structure and Written Expression, and Listening skills. Another questionnaire in type 2 was also collected information related to students' difficulties in working on or understanding the TOEFL skill. The research results obtained in this questionnaire are obtained as in figure 3 below.

### The Most Difficult Skill

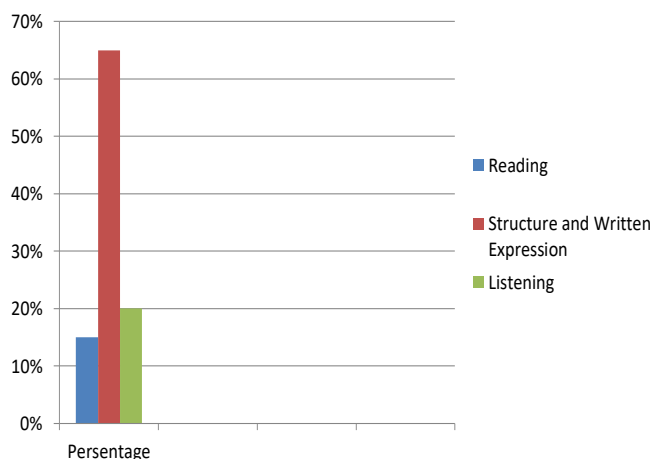


Figure 3. Questionnaire type 2 (The Most Difficult Skill)

This chart shows that 15 % of respondents choose reading as the most challenging daily skill. Then, 65 % of students select Structure and Written Expression as the most challenging skill. Furthermore, 20 % of students choose Listening as the most challenging skill daily. In his early study, Nuur also argues that the structure and written expression segment might become more difficult because the technique for answering questions in this area needs test takers to be familiar with English grammar concerns (Tangkelangi, 2020). Besides that, the aim of the author to collect the data *about "the most difficult skill from the respondent"* is to see the skill that should be prioritized in teaching TOEFL preparation. From this data, the author can divide how many meetings for the Reading part and how many sessions for the Structure and Written Expression Part and listening parts. In addition, it is also helpful in creating a Syllabus for TOEFL Preparation. Based on the finding above, the author will provide many hours on the Structure and Written Expression because 13 out of 20 students choose that part as the most difficult one.

In students' difficulties, we were looking for their effort in every skill of TOEFL. We gave them a questionnaire to see which skills made it difficult for students to take the test. As in reading skill, the writer prepared five skill items in the questionnaire, namely: 1) Understanding the main point of the passage; 2) Skimming and Scanning; 3) Guessing

unknown words in a text; 4) Understanding text organization; and 5) Reading speed. The results of the study are shown in figure 4 below.

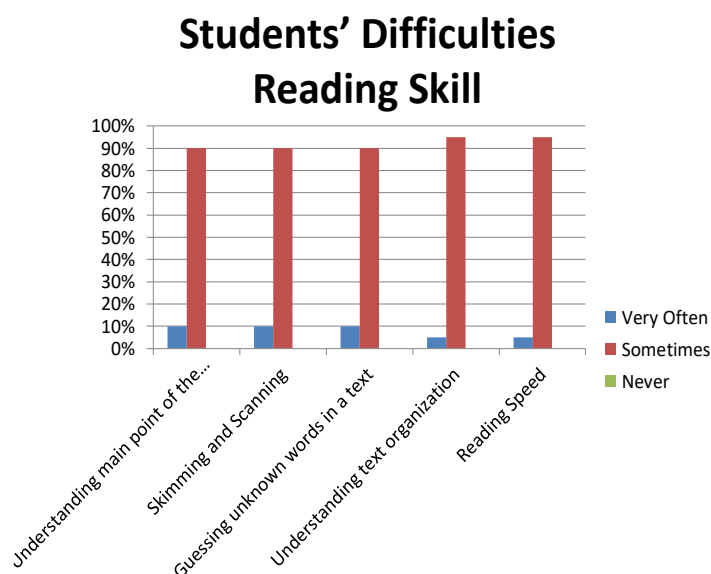


Figure 4. Questionnaire type 2 (Students' Difficulties Reading Skill)

Based on the data above, the author finds that 10 % of the total respondents often have difficulties understanding the main point of the text, and 90 % state that they sometimes have problems in that part. Then, 10 % of the total respondents stated that they often have difficulties in skimming and scanning, and 90 % sometimes have issues in that part. Furthermore, for problems in guessing unknown words in a text, 10 % choose '*very often*,' and 90 % prefer '*sometimes*.' Next, 95% of the total respondent states that sometimes they have difficulties understanding text organization and reading speed. Meanwhile, only 5 % of the total respondents said they often have problems in those two parts. According to Iftanti's (2012) study, most EFL students who do not have a regular reading habit will have difficulty comprehending literature since reading comprehension requires familiarity with the topic to urge students to read it (Nurjanah, 2018). Besides that, compelling reading is considered a formidable talent to acquire (Jayanti, 2016).

While the difficulties in the section structure and written Expression, we collected data on four criteria: 1) Understanding about passive voice; 2) Understanding Part Speech; 3) Subject-Verb Agreement; 4) and Place of Subject, Verb, and Object. The results of the study are presented in figure 5 below.

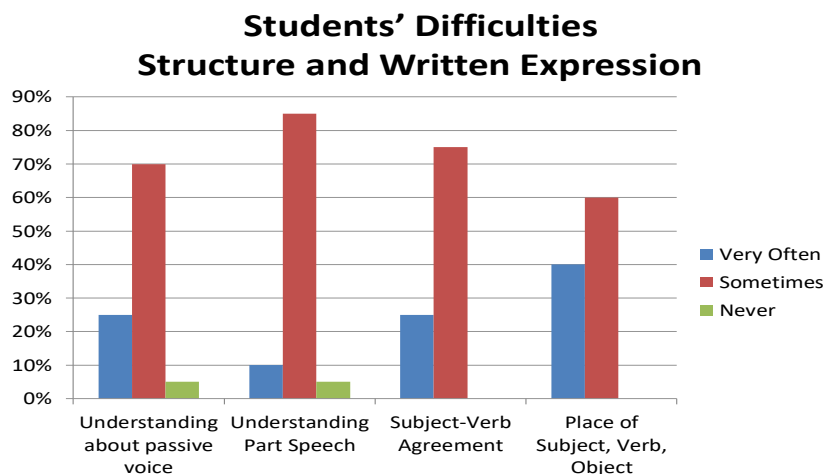


Figure 5. Questionnaire type 2 (Students' Difficulties Structure and Written Skill)

Based on data above, 25 % of students from the entire population state that they very often have difficulties understanding passive voice, and 70% state 'sometimes' and 5 % state 'never' have problems in that part. Furthermore, 10 % choose 'very often,' 85% prefer 'sometimes,' and 5% choose 'never' for difficulties in understanding part of speech in English. Then for understanding subject-verb agreement, 25% of the total respondent choose very often, and 75 % state that they sometimes experience difficulties in that part. In addition, about understanding the place of subject, verb, and object, some respondents also have problems on that part. 40 % state 'very often' and 60 % state 'sometimes'. This is also related to other research findings of nursing students that students also struggled with the structure and written expressions sections, which was one of the main reasons for their inability to pass the test (Handayani, 2019). That is why as instructors, these data indicate that we should focus our efforts on this. Other than that, a study carried out by Hambali (2008, pp. 84-85) revealed that recognizing verbs, identifying the correct word order of subject and verb in a noun phrase, and identifying words with origin and function are all issues with part two of the ITP test (Ananda, 2016).

The last questionnaire was related to students' difficulties in the listening section. In this section, we examine the four skill items in listening: 1) Trouble in understanding lengthy conversation; 2) Trouble in understanding the subject of talk; 3) Trouble in understanding the speedy conversation, and 4) Trouble taking practical notes. The results of the study can be seen in figure 6 below.

## Students' Difficulties Listening Skill

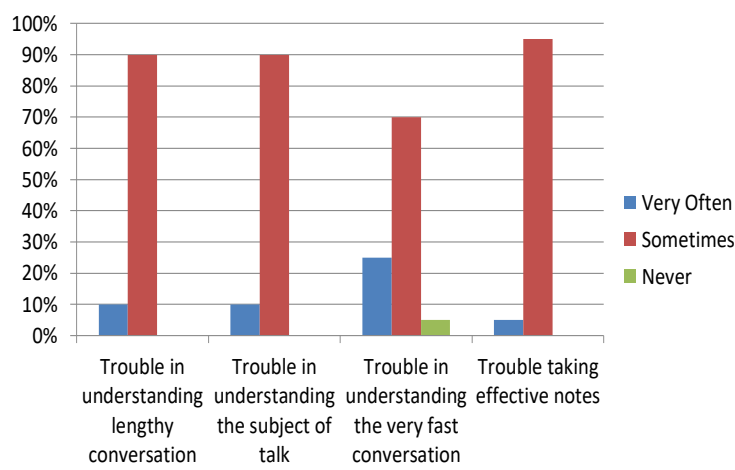


Figure 6. Questionnaire type 2 (Students' Difficulties Listening Skill)

Based on the data above, 10 % of the total respondents stated that they very often have trouble understanding lengthy conversations, and 90 % state that sometimes they have a problem in that part. Then, 10 percent state that they often have difficulty understanding the subject of talk, and 90 % state that sometimes they have trouble in that part. Furthermore, 25 % of the total respondents stated that they often have difficulty understanding the speedy conversation, and 70 % choose 'sometimes.' There are 5 % of the total respondent who says that they never have trouble in that part. In addition, 5 % of the total respondents stated that they often have difficulty taking practical notes, and 95 % said that sometimes they have trouble in that part. Based on the data about students' problems above, the author can emphasize the essential and emergent skills that the students need. The above information will also be beneficial in arranging the coursebook students' course. As noted, one of the challenges in comprehending spoken English, aside from needing to become acclimated to hearing spoken English, is a lack of appropriate knowledge of English grammar (Fitria, 2021). Thus, knowing and understanding grammar in English is one indicator of mastering English skills. This is equally important in listening skills in the TOEFL test component, considering that all sentences are presented in the correct sentence structure and grammatically intact. This is confirmed by Purnaning (2014) that all sentences in this section use a grammatically correct sentence and usually in the form of a complete punishment (Purnaning et al., 2014).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data obtained in this study, 60% of students tend to have an auditory learning style. Furthermore, in terms of students' expectations in learning the TOEFL, 100% of students agree if the teacher combines English and Indonesian, provides a lot of practice,

and offers new vocabulary in every meeting. And regarding the difficulty skill question, 65% of students chose Structure and Written Expression as the most challenging skill.

Instructors need to conduct a needs analysis and know learning styles and students' expectations. Therefore, the instructor can give the appropriate method in the class. By being aware of learning techniques, conducting needs analysis, and learning the learning styles, instructors can optimize the classroom and take full advantage of learners' strengths and knowledge. Students can also maximize learning opportunities, optimize techniques and skills that should be emphasized, and get the most benefits from the classroom and education programs.

Considering all this, researchers strongly encourage other studies in future research to involve large samples or populations so that research findings can be more objective and applied to a broader context. Not only that, but the researcher also suggests further measuring the academic needs of students in the TOEFL class. More specific information refers to operations in the form of strategies or special tips in working on TOEFL questions.

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