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## **SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING (SDL)-BASED LEARNING CENTER (LC): A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' TOEFL SCORE**

By

I Made Rai Jaya Widanta, A.A. Raka Sitawati,  
I Nyoman Rajin Aryana, I Wayan Dana Ardika

**Politeknik Negeri Bali (2015)**

### **Abstract**

This paper addresses two things, (1) development of Learning Center (LC) as a place to learn and practice TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and (2) a further plan to develop a computer-based LC to be a better self-directed learning (SDL) center. A conventional LC has been being developed and is about to reach its end. As a self-directed learning site, it is completed with a number of facilities, including ten learning and practice test modules, listening materials in form of CD, answer sheet, CD player, point card, membership card and directory sheet and SOP. The idea for development of LC was pursuant to the result of tracer study to see needs of assistance of students and lecturers in five universities in Bali in learning TOEFL. To be appropriate devices, the modules had been finalized through some validation including content, design, individual, and a small group test. They were required to fill in the questionnaires and give comment on the modules. The field test to see effectiveness of modules was done at the end. Thus, a group of student as sample group was given a self-directed learning for one session by using one of the modules and practice test at the end of the session. The result of the test was then compared with that of the test prior to the learning. The result showed that the mean of students' achievement between test 1 and test 2 were respectively 367.26 and 416.17. The mean of increase of both tests was 48.91 with percentage of increase 13.32. For further plan, the model will be designed in such a way that computer can be effectively used to support the LC program.

**Key words:** Computer assisted learning, Development, Learning Center, TOEFL

## **I. Introduction**

Implementation of self-directed learning (SDL) has been widely energized in most parts of the world. The learning model is chosen since it gives salient benefits, such as it can promote the natural development of self-confidence, initiative, perseverance and life satisfaction and also decreases the probability that learners will suffer from the life-long wounds commonly produced by coercive schooling. In addition, SDL can provide opportunities to pursue a far wider range of interests than is possible in a typical school and reinforce collaboration, within and beyond the family.

SDL is a self learning which meets almost all levels of each individual and every learning situation. It is resulted by the condition that SDL involves various activities and resources, such as self-directed reading, internship which is effective for teachers to lead in students' critical thinking (Hiemstra, 1994). This is a way how to insert information into one's life (Altuger-Genc, 2013). SDL also enables students to build their comprehension on learning by identifying an adult learners' learning method and to provide them with a view of process, challenge and adult learners' characteristic as well as to widen their insight on a formal learning (Caffarella, 1993). In addition, SDL, particularly for adult learners is more beneficial as it can trigger students to learn more effectively, creatively, initiatively, individually as well as more future oriented (Knowles, 1975; Gugilielmo, 1977; Tylor, 1981).

The model has been used as a basis for developing LC as a place to learn and practice TOEFL. TOEFL was chosen to be a measuring device in fostering Politeknik Negeri Bali students' English competence as the device is recognized as a standard testing device (Education Manual of Politeknik Negeri Bali, 2006, article 6). Referring to the statement and by determining the importance of the testing device, a number of learning models with SDL have been developed to facilitate students to improve their academic achievement (Widanta, 2008; Widanta, 2012).

LC is developed in Politeknik Negeri Bali to provide students with a place where they are able to learn knowledge, like grammar, structure of English language as well as strategies to answer and practice working out TOEFL. In developing LC, there are