

Development of AP Course for Admission to the Faculty of Management at Songkhla Rajabhat University: A Case Study of AP Course English for Tourism 1

Pornpimon Pornpeerachon

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Statement of the Problem

Thailand Educational Administration has undergone progressive change since the 2542 B.E. Educational Act was issued. In many ways, changes, both past and present, can be seen as addressing the issues of excellence and equity. Education reform in Thailand has been characterized by the idea of decentralization. Many efforts have been undertaken in the schools, such as using school-based management to administrate the school, having National Curriculum Standard for making school curriculum, having local community to participate in developing community education, and so on.

The national curriculum standard is the most important tool used to direct the curriculum administration in schools which make the concrete curriculum alignment in basic education. Obviously, the picture of curriculum alignment between basic education curriculum and higher education curriculum is not clearly in focus yet. Most universities and colleges use examinations to select students to study in higher level education.

After the researcher studied how other countries align both curriculum levels in their educational system, it was found that, of the many methods used, one of the most interesting is a program called "Advanced Placement Program (AP course)" which is an important program in U.S. education system designed for high school students (grade 11-12) to have the opportunity to participate in rigorous and academically-challenging courses. Its reputation for excellence results from the close cooperation among secondary schools, colleges and the College Board. Most U.S. colleges and universities grant credit, advanced standing, or both to students who have performed satisfactorily on the exams.

The interesting idea of the AP courses encouraged the researcher to apply the standard to develop an AP course English for Tourism 1 as a pilot study for Thai secondary students in Songkhla Province. The administration of the course was studied in collaboration with Songkhla Rajabhat University, secondary schools in Songkhla Province and the researcher.

Purposes of the Research

The purposes of this study are

1. to study the administration and management system in AP course developing process.
2. to develop AP course English for Tourism 1 as a pilot case study.
3. to implement, monitor and evaluate AP course English for Tourism 1

Expected Outcome

The expected outcome of the study is to experience AP course developing process and

its administration and management as a model for developing other courses and for other higher education institutes to develop AP courses for the secondary school students in their area.

Summary

There are three interrelated aspects of validity have been reviewed: the relative achievement of AP and non-AP students in college, AP grades as indicators of appropriate placement level, and perceptions of the AP Program by former AP students in college. It is important to remember, however, that all validity studies are constrained by the situation and conditions under which they are performed. This is just a sample of the validity evidence for AP that exists in research literature.

College Achievement

Studies indicate that, in general, AP students tend to demonstrate higher achievement in college than their non-AP counterparts. When placed directly in higher-level courses, they outperform their classmates who took prerequisite courses.

College Placement

Virtually all the studies presented earlier in this section indicate that AP students perform as well as, and often better than, students taking the college-level course for which advanced placement or credit is sought. This is an important finding in that the relationship of AP grades to appropriate college placement is a central element of the AP Program; colleges that wish to offer students advanced placement opportunities must be assured that these opportunities are appropriate to each student's level of achievement.

Students' Perceptions of AP

Longitudinal data indicate that students consistently saw the AP Program as a very positive and helpful experience to both secondary and college education. The investigations presented earlier found that both students and colleges reported satisfaction with the placement results based on AP Exam grades.

Scope of research

1. Research populations consist of
 - 1.1 Instructors who teach English for Tourism 1 at Songkhla Rajabhat University
 - 1.2 Teachers who are the representatives of secondary school teachers in Songkhla Province
 - 1.3 Mathayom 6 students who register in AP course English for Tourism 1
2. Topic area of study
 - 2.1 AP course developing process and its administration and management
 - 2.2 Developing AP course English for Tourism 1
 - 2.3 Implementing, monitoring and evaluating AP course English for Tourism 1

Definitions

AP course : Advanced Placement is a cooperative program between college or university and secondary school to give students the opportunity to take college-level courses in a secondary school setting; passing the course exam may earn them college credit or advanced standing.

AP course English for Tourism 1 : a course which is created using lessons matching the course description of English for Tourism 1 teaching at Songkhla Rajabhat University.

Instructors : the instructors who teach English for Tourism 1 at Songkhla Rajabhat University.

Teachers : the secondary teacher who participate and teach English for Tourism 1 at Mahawachirawut Songkhla School.

Students : the Mathayom 6 students in Mahawachirawut Songkhla School who registered for English for Tourism 1 in the first semester of academic year 2005.

Research Method

This research is an institutional research which integrated cooperation and resources from Songkhla Rajabhat University and secondary schools in Songkhla Province. There are 3 stages of research method.

Stage 1 : Reviewing the related literature and contacting for cooperation commitment.

Stage 2 : Developing AP course : English for Tourism 1

Stage 3 : Implementing, monitoring and evaluating AP course English for Tourism 1

Research Tools

The tools are the questionnaires asking the instructors, teachers and students about opinions of AP course constructed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Percentage, mean and standard deviation will be used for analyzing quantitative data. Content analysis is going to be used for analyzing qualitative data.

Research Results

The research results indicated the following :

1. The administration and management system contributes to the development of AP course : English for Tourism 1. The instructors who teach English for tourism at Songkhla Rajabhat University, the secondary school teachers in Songkhla and the researcher collaborated to think, plan, do and evaluate the curriculum. The administration and management system in AP course developing process included 10 steps :

(1) asking and establishing collaboration from Songkhla Rajabhat University and secondary schools in Songkhla.

(2) studying and analyzing basic information about alignment of curriculum framework in basic education curriculum and higher education curriculum and schools' potential readiness.

(3) establishing AP course administration policies, consist of the student qualification applying to study AP course and the student qualification required for admission to study at Songkhla Rajabhat University in major of tourism industry program.

(4) developing AP course : English for tourism 1 curriculum consisted of curriculum materials and examination tools.

(5) preparing personnel by participated in a project of professional development, giving workshops and observing in teaching of tourism classes at Songkhla Rajabhat University

(6) informing AP course : English for tourism 1 curriculum to students at pilot school.

(7) piloting the curriculum which consisted of preparing teaching-learning materials to facilitate teaching process, time allotment, setting up the seminar for improvement with the instructors and the researcher, teaching following the curriculum planning, assessment and evaluation using scoring rubrics. (*in process)

(8) follow up on the implementation of the AP course

(9) using admission system to select students to study at Songkhla Rajabhat University in major of tourism industry program.

(10) Improving and developing the AP course for the next round

2. The results of constructing AP course : English for tourism 1 using the same course description which teaching at Songkhla Rajabhat University, consist of 5 units

Unit 1 Tourism in Globalization

Unit 2 What tourists should know?

Unit 3 Facilities and Entertainments

Unit 4 Amazing Thailand

Unit 5 Songkhla, a Fantastic Province !

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