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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of an ESL program in assisting international students to prepare for future university studies. Questions that guide the research include: 1) How does an ESL program assist ESL students' learning in relation to linguistic influences? 2) How does an ESL program assist ESL students' adjustment in relation to social-cultural influences?
The data gathered are from in-depth interviews with ESL students (international students who are attending ESL programs), former ESL students (international students who have attended ESL programs prior to university studies), faculty members in the ESL program (ESL directors, ESL administrators, ESL instructors), a university ESL director (in charge of international students in the university.), class observations, and artifacts (students' written works, grade reports).
The findings related to the two research questions are: 1) To use placement tests as key evaluations to find out what the students' needs are and devise corresponding designs to develop the language proficiency of students. 2) To employ experienced and qualified ESL teachers so that various teaching methods and curriculum adjustments for proper planning can be made to meet the students' language needs and enhance learning. 3) To highlight on the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as university academic skills, so students can learn these skills and apply them appropriately in their university study. 4) To provide various social activities to help students understand the American culture and the American way of thinking, so students can easily orient themselves with the American lifestyle and fit into the new culture and society. 5) To provide an American style classroom setting with American teachers to allow students to familiarize similar classroom settings in the university and understand better the American unspoken, hidden classroom culture.
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