OER on Academic English, Educational Research and ICT Literacy, Promoting International Graduate Programs in Thailand

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Abstract : The 2015 Kasetsart University Research Plan, which was funded by the National Research Institutes: TRF – NRCT, comprises four sub-research projects on the development of three OER websites and on their usage study by students in international programs. The goals were to develop the open educational resources (OER) in the form of websites that will promote three key skills of quality learning and achievement: Academic English, Educational Research, and ICT Literacy, to graduate students in international programs of Thailand. The statistics from the Office of Higher Education showed that the number of foreign students who come to study in international higher education of Thailand has increased respectively by 25 percent per year, proving that the international education system and institutes of Thailand have been already recognized regionally and globally as meeting the standards. The output of the plan: the OER websites and their materials, and the outcome: students' learning improvement due to lecturers' readiness for open educational media, will ultimately lead the country to higher business capabilities for international education services in ASEAN Community in the future. The OER innovation is aimed at sharing quality knowledge to the world, with the adoption of Creative Commons Licenses that makes sharing be able to do freely (5Rs openness), without charge and leading to self and life-long learning. The research has brought the problems on the low usage of existing OER in the English language to develop the OER on three specific skills and try them out with the sample of 100 students randomly selected from the international graduate programs of top 10 Thai universities, according to QS Asia University Rankings 2014. The R&D process was used for product evaluation in 2 stages: the development stage and the usage study stage. The research tools were the questionnaires for content and OER experts, the questionnaires for the sample group and the open-ended interviews for the focus group discussions. The data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean and SD. The findings revealed that the developed websites were fully qualified as OERs by the experts. The students' opinions and satisfaction were at the highest levels for both the content and the technology used for presentation. The usage manual and self-assessment guide were finalized during the focus group discussions. The direct participation according to the concept of 5Rs Openness Activities through the provided tools of OER models like MERLOT and OER COMMONS, as well as the development of usage manual and self-assessment guide, were revealed as a key approach to further extend the output widely and sustainably to the network of users in various higher education institutions.

Keywords : open educational resources, international education services business, academic English, educational research, ICT literacy, international graduate program, OER

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