CHAPTOR ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND

The educational system in Thailand has been facing changes in the past decades. This has been due to education reformers trying to change the Thai educational curriculum by adopting the new method of teaching regardless of whether or not the new adopted method is appropriate for the Thai environment. Some teachers understand the new curriculum and method of teaching thoroughly; hence, they are able to teach students effectively. However, there are still some teachers who have to follow the curriculum although they do not possess enough information and/or understanding about the new way of teaching. This has in turn brought about the ill-effects to the educational system of the country. Compulsory teaching without the full knowledge of the method of teaching might create myths as well as incorrect approaches in schools.

According to a Suan Dusit Poll on 8-12 August 18, 2008 from a sample of 1,257 people in Thailand on the topic "Problems/Obstacles of Basic Education Curriculum", the result was that at the before-elementary school level, 17.52 per cent of respondents answered that teachers did not have enough competence while 41.67 per cent answered that teachers did not have enough competence and were not ready to teach them. Furthermore, for secondary schools the results showed that 21.30 per cent of all respondents answered that the Thai curriculum was not suitable for Thai students at each level. Finally, for all levels of schools, 26.82 per cent of the respondents said that they wanted Thai education reformers to improve the curriculum to be appropriate for Thai students at each level. (สวนดุสิตโพล, 2551)

From the above study, it shows that Thai education reformers should reconsider their performance and carefully select curriculum that is appropriate to the Thai situation and useful for students for their future lives. The new method of teaching should more or less be based on the requirements of the Thai culture and the ways of life of students in each part of the country. Furthermore, before adopting the

new method of teaching into schools, all the teachers who are responsible for teaching should be well trained and understand the new approach. Once teachers can obtain insights into the new method of teaching, they will be able to incorporate it with their own experiences, which will, of course, bring about a successful educational program in the country.

According to the guidelines for revising the basic education curriculum of the Office of the Basic Education Commission, Backward Design was found to be very popular in many countries and it is also used by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in the USA. Many educational curriculum experts suggest that designing the curriculum by using Backward Design is an effective curriculum for developing standards-based education. (สำนักงานคณะกรรมการการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน,

2549, น. 16).

Although changing or adapting curriculum or new methods of teaching seems to be good for the Thai education system, Thai teachers still have few chances to be trained in a new method of teaching. In the "Backward Design for English Teachers Meeting" at Thai Watana Panich Press, Dr. Sirirat Nirakulp, a lecturer from Kasetsart University and educational consultant, said that in her opinion the new method of Backward Design for teaching, supported by the Ministry of Education is a very good design. However, she added that this method is not yet ready for Thai English teachers because these teachers still have not had a chance to learn or to be trained how to use it. Furthermore, the Thai English teachers have also been reliant on foreign teacher manuals, which are translated into Thai language by publishing companies in Thailand. Therefore, if the Backward Design for teaching is to be adopted, Thai English Teachers should be trained to have effective behaviors in obtaining full knowledge and a good understanding about this new approach. (discussion groups, April 29, 2008)

In order to enhance educational system, it is clear that before the education reformers or the Ministry of Education supports the use of this design, they should survey whether Thai English teachers have enough knowledge on or understand Backward Design.

Besides, Thai education reformers and the Ministry of Education should be aware of the importance of how teachers obtain knowledge on this matter and make sure that those teachers understand the Backward Design method well enough before encouraging them to use it, as it will affect the educational system and success in the country's development. Hopefully, this research will also reduce the obstacles of Thai student capacity development.

This research study was carried out to assess 108 English teachers' behaviors in obtaining knowledge about Backward Design and also to what extent the teachers in the study possessed the knowledge about this new approach. The results will be submitted to the parties concerned for further management and development of the Thai educational system.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1.2.1 What is the proportion of English teachers in Bangkok who know about Backward Design?

1.2.2 In which ways do English teachers in Bangkok learn about Backward Design?

1.2.3 Do English teachers think Backward Design theory is good for their teaching or not?

1.2.4 Why do English teachers think Backward Design theory is good (or not good) for their teaching?

1.2.5 Do English teachers obtain enough knowledge about Backward Design from the Ministry of Education or any organizations?

1.2.6 Are English Teachers ready for Backward Design?

1.2.7 Are there any ways to improve Backward Design knowledge among English teachers?

1.3   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are the following:

1.3.1 Main Objective

To assess English teachers' behaviors in obtaining knowledge about Backward Design

1.3.2 Sub-Objectives

1) To identify the proportion of English teachers in Bangkok who knew about Backward Design

2) To identify in which ways English teachers use to learn about Backward Design

3) To investigate why English teachers think Backward Design theory is good (or not good) for their teaching

4) To investigate whether English teachers receive enough knowledge about Backward Design from the Ministry of Education or not

5) To determine whether English teachers are ready for Backward Design and

6) To find out ways to improve Backward Design knowledge of English teachers.

1.4   DEFINITION OF TERMS/VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

The definitions of terms in this study are as follows:

Backward Design: It is the process of designing learning which identifies evidence of learners or students' performance, or activities for evaluating the results of the learners or students according to a learning standard or expected learning results before the teachers or instructors design learning activities in order to allow learners or students gain knowledge or ability, and then express their knowledge or ability as evidence of learners or students' performance. This theory consists of three processes as follows:

1. Identify desired results -Enduring Understanding, Big Idea
2. Determine acceptable evidence of learning- Six Facets of Understanding
3. Plan learning experiences and instruction -Review and Refine

(Wiggins & Mc Tighe, 1998, pp. 9-13)

Government secondary school teachers: English teachers who teach in government secondary schools from grade 7-12 (matthayom 1-6) in Bangkok

Knowledge: The information and understanding that people have gained through learning, training, or experience

Behavior: The thing that a person does in obtaining their knowledge about something

1.5   SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. Population

This research focused on 108 English teachers' behaviors in obtaining knowledge about Backward Design in 10 government secondary schools in three educational zones in Bangkok.

2. Content

This study focused on the following aspects:

➢ The knowledge and perceptions of Backward Design among English teachers in Bangkok

➢ The reasons why Backward Design is good (or not good) for English teachers

➢ English teachers' behaviors in obtaining supplementary knowledge about Backward Design

➢ The methods used by English Teachers to obtain knowledge about Backward Design

➢ Access to sources of Backward Design by English Teachers

➢ Suggestions about Backward Design and the Ministry of Education by English teachers

1.6   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1   This study may stimulate Backward Design users to pay more attention to their behaviors in obtaining knowledge before using this design in their classrooms.

1.6.2   The findings may be useful for English teachers in improving their behaviors and knowledge.

1.6.3   The information gained from this research may tell how much English teachers know and understand about the new method of Backward Design.

1.6.4   The information gained from this research may tell why English teachers think Backward Design theory is good (or not good) for their teaching

1.6.5   The information gained from this research may tell whether teachers get enough knowledge of Backward Design from the Ministry of Education or other sources

1.6.6   The information gained from this research may show whether English teachers are ready for Backward Design.

1.6.7   The information gained from this research may indicate if there are ways to improve the Backward Design knowledge of English teachers.

1.7   ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study of "English teachers' behaviors in obtaining knowledge about Backward Design: A case study of 10 government secondary schools in Bangkok" in this paper is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter One provides the background, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, definitions of terms, scope of the study and significance of the study.

Chapter Two reviews related theories, literature and previous research.

Chapter Three illustrates the methodology of this study which includes information about subjects, materials used for data collection, procedures and data analysis.

Chapter Four shows the result of this research.

Chapter Five gives the summary and conclusions of this study. There are also some recommendations for further research.