

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions of the findings, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess English teachers' behaviors in obtaining knowledge about Backward Design. The sub-objectives were to identify the proportion of English teachers in Bangkok who knew about Backward Design, to identify in which ways English teachers learned about Backward Design, to investigate whether or why English teachers thought Backward Design theory was good (or not good) for their teaching, to investigate whether English teachers received enough knowledge about Backward Design from the Ministry of Education or other sources, to determine whether English teachers were ready for Backward Design, and to find out ways to improve the Backward Design knowledge of English teachers.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

5.1.2.1 Subjects

The subjects of the study were 108 English teachers who worked at 10 government secondary schools in Bangkok. The study design was descriptive cross-sectional study design.

5.1.2.2 Materials

The research instrument was a self-administered questionnaire comprised closed-ended, open-ended and Likert scale questions. This questionnaire consisted of four parts. The first part was demographic or general background information requiring the respondents to provide information about gender, age, educational level, marital status, occupation, workplace, and teaching experience. The second part of the questionnaire investigated English teachers' knowledge about

Backward Design. The third part of the questionnaire assessed English teachers' behaviors in obtaining supplementary knowledge about Backward Design by using a Likert Scale. The last or fourth part of the questionnaire aimed to find out ways to improve the Backward Design knowledge of English teachers by gathering suggestions by using ranking and open-ended questions.

5.1.2.3 Procedures

The survey began in December 2008 and finished in January 2009. In the beginning of February 2009, the collected data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences or SPSS Program Version 13. Descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages were used to present the findings of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Demographic or General Background Information of the Respondents

Ninety-four respondents (87%) of 108 respondents were female. Seventy-six respondents (70.4%) were in the age range of 51-60 years old. Seventy-six respondents (70.4%) graduated with a Bachelor's Degree. Fifty-six respondents (51.9%) were married. Most respondents (23.9%) were tenth-grade teachers (Matthayom 4 teachers). Twelve questionnaires (11.1%) were received from each of these schools: Satriwithaya School, Samsen Wittayalai School, Triamudomsuksapattanakarn School, Rattanakosinsompot Bangkhuntien School, and Matayom Watsing School which were the schools that the researcher received 100% of the questionnaires back. From the results, it was clear that the researcher got the most questionnaires from zone three of the educational zone of the Ministry of Education. Last, forty-eight respondents (44.4%) had teaching experience of more than 30 years.

5.2.2 English Teachers' Knowledge about Backward Design

Eighty-nine respondents (82.4%) of 108 respondents knew about the Backward Design. Forty respondents obtained information from training courses of the Ministry of Education. Eighty-eight respondents (81.5%) thought that they had knowledge of Backward Design. Thirty-nine respondents (36.1%) thought that they

had a moderate level of Backward Design knowledge, while only two (1.9%) respondents thought that they had very good knowledge about Backward Design. Nineteen respondents (17.6%) could not explain their understanding or perception of Backward Design, while fifteen (13.9%) respondents who answered this question wrote that “Backward Design uses the expected learning results as the goal in teaching, or uses from results assessment as learning management.” Fifty-three respondents (49.1%) were not ready for Backward Design. Forty-six respondents (42.6%) had used or applied Backward Design knowledge in their teaching although they were not sure whether they understood it correctly or not. In the respondents’ viewpoints, forty-four respondents (40.7%) thought that Backward Design theory was not good for their teaching. Twenty-two respondents answered that they have already had training, but they could not apply Backward Design method in their real teaching. For the ways to improve Backward Design knowledge of the respondents, forty-nine respondents answered that they would seek information and knowledge about Backward Design from specialists or experts in the field.

5.2.3 English Teachers’ Behaviors in obtaining their Supplementary Knowledge about Backward Design

Sixty-seven respondents (62%) of 108 respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they tried to find information about Backward Design before they applied it. Seventy-four respondents (68.6%) strongly agreed or agreed that they studied Backward Design before they started to use this theory. Fifty-three respondents (49.1%) strongly agreed or agreed that they asked for clarification from the Ministry of Education or other sources if they did not understand Backward Design. Seventy respondents (64.8%) strongly agreed or agreed that they tried to learn more about Backward Design through other sources, e.g. books, the Internet, other people, etc. Fifty-eight respondents (53.7%) strongly agreed or agreed that they always tried to keep up to date about information on Backward Design.

5.2.4 Suggestions about Backward Design

From the survey, the most effective methods, materials or instruments were to study this design in the real class room and to be trained by experts, while the moderately effective methods, materials or instruments were to read books, to listen to tapes or CDs from experts, to watch VCDs or DVDs, to learn from websites of the

Ministry of Education or other sources, and to seek information from the educational reformers, supervisors or issuers. To improve informational services about Backward Design of the Ministry of Education or other sources there were ten suggestions which were grouped as follows:

1. The respondents wrote that the Ministry of Education should study whether Backward Design is good or not, and should have a clear training or teaching methods that teachers can apply in their real teaching. Changing the method of teaching to follow the foreign style or interpreting the foreign style for Thai teachers in order to create a new style of teaching sometimes does not make sense, and it uses a lot of government money. Therefore, teachers should use the style of teaching that he or she is good at, but it will be better if it bring the maximum benefit to students.

2. The respondents wrote that they wanted the ready-made teacher manuals for each subject.

3. The respondents wrote that learning management requires several styles of teaching method which depend on the situation, environment and other factors. It is not necessary to emphasize only Backward Design.

4. The respondents wrote that each style of learning management has both good and bad points, so the style which is most appreciate for the situation should be applied.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This section concerns the following discussions:

5.3.1 Most (82.4%) respondents knew about Backward Design theory. This means that Backward Design was widely known by respondents. Most respondents thought that they had knowledge of Backward Design. However, the knowledge of the respondents about Backward Design was not good enough because only 6.5% of respondents thought they had very good and good knowledge about Backward Design. The Ministry of Education is the impetus for Backward Design in Thailand. Therefore, it is not surprising that most respondents obtained information about Backward Design from training courses of the Ministry of Education. Also, while the Ministry of Education thinks Backward Design theory is good for teachers because it is very popular in many countries, is used by the Association for Supervision and

Curriculum Development in the USA, and many educational curriculum experts suggest using this design, most (49.1%) respondents said that they were not ready for Backward Design.

5.3.2 Most (40.7%) respondents said that Backward Design theory was not good for their teaching. The reason that they gave was that although they already had training, they could not apply it in their teaching. Moreover, they thought they still lacked necessary information about Backward Design. It is clear that Thai teachers think Backward Design is not good for their teaching. This is not because of problems with Backward Design, but their own lack of knowledge. Most teachers only superficially knew about this design. A major problem was inadequate knowledge and training. Therefore, the Ministry of Education should provide sufficient knowledge and training in order to help Thai teachers apply Backward Design in their real teaching. Moreover, in this case, there may be some environment factors, variables or reinforcers that govern, predict, control or reinforce behavior. For example, most respondents said that they thought they had Backward Design knowledge, but they could not explain the meaning of “Backward Design”. This means that Backward Design is a new thing in Thai society, and teachers feel that they should have knowledge about it because it’s required by the Ministry of Education. However, teachers may not have real knowledge, as the findings showed. Additionally, the most respondents (42.6%) answered that they thought they had used or applied Backward Design knowledge in their teaching although they were not sure whether they understood it correctly or clearly. To improve Backward Design knowledge, the Ministry of Education should encourage teachers to directly learn about Backward Design from specialist or experts in the field as the results showed that many respondents (38.3%) said that they would like to get information or knowledge about Backward Design from specialists or experts in the field. Therefore, the Ministry of Education should meet this demand.

5.3.3 Although the maximum number of respondents (49.1%) answered that they were not ready for Backward Design, from the teachers’ point of view they did not reject Backward Design. Therefore, their behaviors conformed to their inner feelings. When they had positive attitudes toward Backward Design, this had an effect on their behaviors in obtaining supplementary knowledge. For example, 62%

of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they tried to find information about Backward Design before they applied it. 68.6% strongly agreed or agreed that they studied Backward Design before they started to use this theory. 49.1% strongly agreed or agreed that they asked for clarification from the Ministry of Education or other sources if they did not understand the Backward Design. 64.8% strongly agreed or agreed that they tried to learn more about Backward Design through other sources, e.g. books, the Internet, other people etc, and 53.7% strongly agreed or agreed that they tried to keep up to date on information about Backward Design. This shows that most behaviors can be learned as mentioned by many psychologists.

5.3.4 From the survey, it is clear that the Ministry of Education should improve or pay attention to their informational services and instruments which will help to increase the effectiveness of Backward Design knowledge of teachers. The results showed that learning from websites of the Ministry of Education or other sources and seeking information from the educational reformers, supervisors or issuers was only moderately effective from the respondents' viewpoint. Moreover, the Ministry of Education should encourage teachers to be trained by specialists or experts, or to study this design in real classroom as the results showed that many respondents said that being trained by specialists or experts or studying this design in the real classroom were the most effective methods or instruments for increasing Backward Design knowledge. This implies that if the respondents or teachers received effective training or instruments, their efficiency would improve.

5.3.5 The researcher can summarize the suggestions about the Ministry of Education from the respondents as follows:

To begin with, the respondents wrote that the Ministry of Education should study whether Backward Design is good or not, and should have a clear training or teaching methods that teachers can apply in their real teaching. Changing the method of teaching to follow the foreign style or interpreting the foreign style for Thai teachers in order to create a new style of teaching sometimes does not make sense, and it uses a lot of government money. Therefore, teachers should use the style of teaching that he or she is good at, but it will be better if it bring the maximum benefit to students. Moreover, the respondents wrote that they wanted the ready-made teacher manuals for each subject. Furthermore, the respondents wrote that learning

management, requires several styles of teaching method which depend on the situation, environment and other factors. It is not necessary to emphasize only Backward Design. Besides, the respondents wrote that each style of learning management has both good and bad points, so the style which is most appreciate for the situation should be applied.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

5.3.1 Backward Design was widely known by the respondents. However, the knowledge of the respondents about Backward Design was insufficient as there were few respondents who thought they had very good or good knowledge about Backward Design. Besides, most respondents obtained information about Backward Design from training courses of the Ministry of Education. Also, while the Ministry of Education thinks Backward Design theory is good for teachers because it is very popular in many countries and educational curriculum experts suggest using this design, most respondents said that they were not ready for Backward Design.

5.3.2 Most respondents said that Backward Design theory was not good for their teaching. The reason was that although they already had training, they could not apply it in their teaching. Moreover, they thought they still lacked necessary information about Backward Design. It is clear that Thai teachers think Backward Design is not good for their teaching. This is not because of problems with Backward Design, but their own lack of knowledge. A major problem was inadequate knowledge and training. Therefore, the Ministry of Education should provide sufficient knowledge and training in order to help Thai teachers apply Backward Design in their real teaching. Moreover, most respondents said that they thought they had Backward Design knowledge, but they could not explain the meaning of “Backward Design”. This means that Backward Design is a new thing in Thai society, and teachers feel that they should have knowledge about it because it’s required by the Ministry of Education. However, teachers may not have real knowledge, as the findings showed. To improve Backward Design knowledge, the Ministry of Education should encourage teachers to learn about Backward Design from specialist or experts in the field.

5.3.3 Although most respondents said that they were not ready for Backward Design, from the teachers' point of view they did not reject Backward Design. Therefore, their behaviors conformed to their inner feelings. When they had a positive attitude about Backward Design, this had an effect on their behaviors in obtaining supplementary knowledge.

5.3.4 From the survey, it is clear that the Ministry of Education should improve their informational services and instruments as this will help to increase the effectiveness of Backward Design in the classroom. The results showed that learning from websites of the Ministry of Education or other sources and seeking information from educational reformers or supervisors was only moderately effective in obtaining knowledge about Backward Design from the respondents' viewpoint. Moreover, the Ministry of Education should encourage teachers to be trained by specialists or experts, or to study this design in the real classroom. The results confirmed that teachers thought they should be trained by specialists or experts or study this design in the real classroom because these are the most effective methods or instruments to increase Backward Design knowledge in respondents' opinions.

5.3.5 The researcher can summarize the suggestions about the Ministry of Education from the respondents as follows:

The Ministry of Education should study whether Backward Design is good or not, and should have a clear training or teaching methods that teachers can apply in their real teaching. Changing the method of teaching to follow the foreign style or interpreting the foreign style for Thai teachers in order to create a new style of teaching sometimes does not make sense, and it uses a lot of government money. Therefore, teachers should use the style of teaching that he or she is good at, but it will be better if it bring the maximum benefit to students. Besides, teachers wanted the ready-made teacher manuals for each subject. Also, learning management requires several styles of teaching method which depend on the situation, environment and other factors. It is not necessary to emphasize only Backward Design. Last, each style of learning management has both good and bad points, so the style which is most appreciate for the situation should be applied.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research.

5.5.1 Not everyone who receives a mailed questionnaire returned it, so there was self-selecting bias. Teachers who returned their questionnaires may have had attitudes attribute or motivations that were different from those who did not. Therefore, as the response rate was very low, the findings may not be representative of the total study population.

5.5.2 Mailed questionnaire made it impossible for the researcher to clarify some parts that the respondents did not clearly understand, so this affected the quality of the information provided.

5.5.3 To improve the generalizability of Backward Design users in Thailand, it's possible that further study should be expanded to cover a larger area.