

# Research On the Current Situation of Teaching English in Lower Secondary Schools In an Giang Province, Vietnam

Nguyen Bach Thang<sup>1</sup>, Nguyen Thi Hong Dao<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>An Giang University, Ho Chi Minh National University, Vietnam; E-mail: [nbthang@agu.edu.vn](mailto:nbthang@agu.edu.vn)

<sup>2</sup>Master's student at an Giang University, Ho Chi Minh National University, Vietnam; E-mail: [dao\\_c2hoabinhthanh.ct@angiang.edu.vn](mailto:dao_c2hoabinhthanh.ct@angiang.edu.vn)

**Abstracts:** The quality and effectiveness of teaching English in secondary schools depend on several factors, including the objectives, curriculum content, teaching methods, instructional organization, and the teaching capacity of the teachers. It also relies on the student's motivation, awareness, and study attitude during English learning. Additionally, it is influenced by the organizational management mechanisms of the secondary schools. The author conducted a study to examine the current state of English teaching in secondary schools in An Giang province, aiming to shed light on the current status of English teaching activities in these schools.

**Keywords:** Teaching Situation, English Subject, Secondary School, An Giang Province.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there have been innovations in organizing English language teaching activities in secondary schools in An Giang province. These changes encompass teaching methods, learning approaches, and assessment practices [1]. However, the results still fail to meet practical demands and requirements. The current situation of teaching and learning foreign languages still presents many shortcomings, and the organization of English language instruction remains inadequate. Many teachers continue to employ traditional teaching methods that have been in use for decades. The organization of teaching activities within the schools, both in general and specifically for the English subject, largely relies on self-learned experiences, failing to fully align with the educational objectives of secondary education in the current educational landscape [2]. The author will examine the current state of English language teaching in secondary schools.

## 2. MATERIEL AND METHODS

### 2.1. Survey Objectives

Evaluating the current state of teaching English in secondary schools in An Giang province based on a competency-based approach is intended to provide a foundation for school principals to consider managing English language instruction with a focus on students' competencies.

### 2.2. Survey Content

The current state of teaching English in secondary schools in An Giang province, specifically in Tinh Bien town, Thoai Son district, and Tri Ton district, is being assessed using a competency-based approach.

### 2.3. Survey Participants

The survey participants include 30 managerial staff members, 68 teachers, and several students from 12 secondary schools in An Giang province.

## 2.4. Survey Methods

The survey employs various methods, including questionnaires, interviews, experience summarization, and statistical analysis [3].

## 2.5. Criteria and Evaluation Scale

**Table 2.1. Scoring and evaluation scale for the current situation of teaching English and managing English language instruction using a competency-based approach [5]**

No	Assessment criteria	Scoring method	Assessment standard
1	Good	4	3,25 - 4,0
2	Satisfactory	3	2,5 - 3,24
3	Average	2	1,75 - 2,49
4	Unsatisfactory	1	< 1,75

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1. The current status of implementing the curriculum for teaching English in lower secondary schools in An Giang province.

To investigate this content, we surveyed the administrative staff and teachers in lower secondary schools in An Giang province. The specific results are as follows:

**Table 3.1. Administrative staff and teachers evaluated the level of implementation of the English teaching content using a competency-based approach in lower secondary schools in An Giang province.**

No	Content	Good		Satisfactory		Average		Unsatisfactory		$\bar{X}$	Rank
		Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%		
1	Provide knowledge of the English language.	30	30,61	60	61,21	4	4,08	4	4,08	<b>3,23</b>	<b>1</b>
2	Provide knowledge about the United Kingdom.	18	18,37	38	38,78	26	26,52	16	16,33	<b>2,59</b>	<b>4</b>
3	Enhance teamwork skills.	12	12,24	34	34,69	40	40,83	12	12,24	<b>2,47</b>	<b>5</b>
4	Cultivate political integrity.	6	6,12	34	34,69	38	38,78	20	20,41	<b>2,27</b>	<b>6</b>
5	Cultivate moral and ethical values.	26	26,53	40	40,82	32	32,65	0	0	<b>2,94</b>	<b>3</b>
6	Develop communication skills in English.	32	32,65	36	36,73	30	30,62	0	0	<b>3,02</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Average</b>										<b>2,73</b>	

Comment:

Administrators and teachers participate in the assessment to evaluate the level of implementation of the curriculum content using the competency-based approach, achieving a satisfactory level, demonstrating points  $\bar{X} = 2.73$  (min=1; max=4).

Implementing the teacher's teaching program encompasses various contents, and the assessed performance varies. The contents that received higher evaluations include: "Providing knowledge about the English language," with an average  $\bar{X} = 3.24$ , ranking 1st out of 6; "Cultivating communication skills in English" with an average score 1152

$\bar{X} = 3.02$ , ranking 2nd out of 6. These are content areas that are regulatory, falling under the professional regulations that require teachers to have a firm grasp of and fully implement within the specified time frame for each week of instruction.

The contents that received lower evaluations include "Nurturing political qualities," with an average score of  $\bar{X} = 2.27$ , ranking 6th out of 6; "Cultivating teamwork skills," with an average score of  $\bar{X} = 2.47$ , ranking 5th out of 6. These two content areas were assessed as the least well-implemented compared to the other contents. To confirm this, we interviewed teacher N.T.T.H. at school X, who stated, "The purpose of teaching English is to help students master knowledge and be able to communicate in English, so in the teaching process, I only focus on that. We follow the curriculum distribution and the textbooks". It indicates that the English teachers have been implementing the curriculum content as required. Still, the emphasis on expanding to develop students' skills and qualities related to the subject has not been given priority.

We interviewed student N.T.B at school Y, who said, "The content that English teachers teach using the competency-based approach is most often about Cultivating communication skills in English because this is the area where we are weakest. Even though we have good grammar skills, our ability to respond and speak in English is still weak".

We continued interviewing student T.T.K.H at school A, who said, "Through learning English, we have access to the English language, culture, and people. However, currently, the content of English teaching mainly revolves around textbook knowledge. We are not being updated with new and enriching knowledge that would allow us to develop comprehensively".

### 3.2. The current state of competency-based English teaching methods in lower secondary schools in An Giang province

**Table 3.2. Evaluation by administrators and teachers of the current status of using competency-based English teaching methods in lower secondary schools in An Giang province**

No	Method	Target	Implementation Level			
			Very often	Often	Occasionally	Not Implemented
1	Interpretation	Managers	20	10	0	0
			(75%)	(25%)	(0%)	
		Teacher	60	8	0	0
			(88,23%)	(11,76%)	(0%)	
2	Dialogue	Managers	6	16	8	0
			(00%)	(52.33%)	(26.67%)	
		Teacher	20	24	24	0
			(29.41%)	(35,29%)	(35,29%)	
3	Presentation and problem-solving	Managers	8	14	8	0
			(26.66%)	(46.67%)	(26.66%)	
		Teacher	22	18	28	0
			(32,35%)	(26,47%)	(41,17%)	
4	Practicing skills: Listening, speaking, reading, writing.	Managers	12	18	0	0
			(40%)	(60%)	(0%)	
		Teacher	30	34	4	0
			(44,11%)	(50,00%)	(5,89%)	
5	Project-based learning	Managers	0	2	16	12
			(0.67%)	(53.33%)	(40%)	

No	Method	Target	Implementation Level			
			Very often	Often	Occasionally	Not Implemented
		Teacher	0	6 (8,82%)	24 (35,29%)	38 (55,88%)
		Managers	0	2 (6.67%)	18 (60%)	10 (33.33%)
6	Situational teaching and case study teaching	Teacher	0	4 (5,88%)	24 (35,29%)	40 (58,82%)
		Managers	0	0 0%	22 73.33%	8 26.67%
7	Drama project teaching	Teacher	0	8 11,76%	24 35,29%	36 52,94%
		Managers	0	2 (6.67%)	10 (33.33%)	18 (60%)
8	Other methods	Teacher	0	4 (5,88%)	24 (35,29%)	40 (58,82%)

The survey results show that, for school administrators, among the eight methods, the interpretive method is the most commonly used in the process of innovating English language teaching methods at secondary schools, with a 75% rate of administrators using it very frequently and frequently. Other methods ranked last, with only 6.67% agreement for occasional use, and the majority do not use them.

For the teaching staff, the interpretive method and leading each lesson are rated as the most frequently and frequently used methods, with 88% of the teachers surveyed using them. In line with the administrators' views, the practical skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are rated second in terms of frequent and frequent use, with 44.11% and 50%, respectively.

We interviewed a student, H.T.N, from school B, who mentioned, "Currently, the English teachers at our school mainly use the interpretive method in teaching. It leads to ineffective English learning, as teachers read and students copy. Therefore, we haven't been able to develop our creativity and proactivity in learning".

English teaching methods that have advantages in developing students' cognitive abilities, social skills, and communication skills but are not often implemented by teachers include:

1. Project-based teaching.
2. Teaching based on situations and case-study research. Teaching through drama projects.

So, it can be seen that English teachers at secondary schools still have limitations in using competency-based English teaching methods. It is an issue that school administrators must pay attention to in teacher training and development.

### 3.3. The current state of teaching the English language with a competency-based approach in lower secondary schools in An Giang province

To investigate this content, we utilized a survey table and obtained the results as follows:

**Table 3.3. Evaluation by administrators and teachers regarding the extent of implementing competency-based teaching methods for the English language.**

No	Method	Good		Satisfactory		Average		Unsatisfactory		$\bar{X}$	Rank
		Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%		
1	Whole-class learning (Class lessons)	40	40,81	36	36,74	22	22,45	0	0	<b>3,18</b>	<b>1</b>
2	Experiential learning	12	12,24	52	53,06	34	34,69	0	0	<b>2,78</b>	<b>4</b>
3	Self-guided learning	16	16,33	60	61,23	26	26,53	0	0	<b>3,02</b>	<b>2</b>
4	Learning through role-play	19	18,37	30	30,61	40	40,82	10	10,20	<b>2,57</b>	<b>5</b>
5	English club of interest	0	0	28	28,57	48	48,98	22	22,45	<b>2,06</b>	<b>9</b>
6	Learning through a case study	2	2,04	38	38,78	56	57,14	2	2,04	<b>2,41</b>	<b>7</b>
7	Learning through an E-learning environment	4	4,08	32	32,65	38	38,78	24	24,49	<b>2,16</b>	<b>8</b>
8	Learning through handling situations	26	26,53	42	42,86	30	30,61	0	0	<b>2,96</b>	<b>3</b>
9	Project-based learning	16	16,33	44	44,90	18	18,37	20	20,40	<b>2,57</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Average</b>										<b>2,65</b>	

Comment:

Table 3.3. shows that implementing various teaching methods for English with a student competency-based approach is rated reasonably well by participating managers and teachers during the assessment, as reflected in the average score  $\bar{X} = 2.65$  (min=1; max=4).

Teachers' teaching methods encompass various forms, and the performance of each teaching method is evaluated differently. The teaching methods that are assessed to be more effective are as follows: "Whole-class learning (Class lessons)" with a score of  $\bar{X} = 3.08$ , ranking 1st out of 9; "Self-guided learning (teaching with guided home study)" with a score of  $\bar{X} = 3.02$  organizing 2nd out of 9. The teaching method that is assessed to be less effective is the "English club of interest," with a score of  $\bar{X} = 2.06$ , ranking 9th out of 9; "Learning through an E-learning environment" with a score of  $\bar{X} = 2.16$ , ranking 8th out of 9...

We interviewed student B.T.M from C Middle School, and he mentioned, "The most commonly used teaching method by English teachers is whole-class instruction. This method is not very effective because the class sizes are typically large, so teachers cannot fully engage with the entire class or pay attention to all the students. Many students are not proactive and self-motivated in their English lessons".

The reason why the teaching methods "Whole-class learning (Class lessons)" and "Self-guided learning (teaching with guided home study)" are considered more highly is because they are traditional teaching methods that are easy to use, and teachers are proficient in using them. Furthermore, these teaching methods do not require much preparation time. On the other hand, the ways rated lower in implementation have several reasons. Some are relatively new, and teachers are not yet familiar with them. Some methods require the mobilization of more resources, which makes teachers hesitant to implement them. Additionally, school leadership does not provide specific targets for teachers, and subject departments do not organize or link these activities to teacher evaluation criteria or performance assessments during the academic year.

### 3.4. Current status of utilizing English language teaching resources with a competency-based approach in secondary schools in An Giang province

Our research on this topic yielded the following results:

**Table 3.4. Evaluation by management officials and teachers regarding the current status of utilizing teaching materials for English language education with a competency-based approach.**

No	Content	Implementation Level								Total points	Mean	Rank
		Good		Satisfactory		Average		Unsatisfactory				
		Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%			
1	Teachers establish criteria for assessing the effectiveness of teaching materials using a learner-centered approach.	14	14.3	26	26.5	34	34.7	24	24.5	113	2.31	6
2	Teachers receive training on how to use teaching materials to enhance students' competencies.	18	18.4	68	69.4	12	12.2	0	0.0	150	3.06	1
3	Teachers choose suitable teaching materials for lessons to develop students' competencies.	18	18.4	64	65.3	16	16.3	0	0.0	148	3.02	2
4	Teachers organize activities for students to utilize teaching materials to acquire knowledge and develop their skills.	8	8.2	36	36.7	40	40.8	14	14.3	117	2.39	5
5	Teachers innovate teaching methods, incorporating teaching materials to encourage active and positive student engagement.	6	6.1	68	69.4	22	22.4	2	2.0	137	2.80	3
6	Teachers can self-assess the effectiveness of implementing teaching materials with a competency-based approach.	14	14.3	48	49.0	36	36.7	0	0.0	136	2.78	4
<b>Average</b>											<b>2.72</b>	

Comment:

The data in the table indicates that the level of implementing teaching materials (with the corresponding conditions) using a competency-based approach, as evaluated by the management officials and teachers who participated in the survey, is reasonably satisfactory. It is demonstrated by the average score of  $\bar{X} = 2.72$  (min = 1; max = 4).

The assessments of the content related to educational media management vary. The highly-rated range includes: "Teachers are trained in using educational media to develop learners' capabilities," with a score of  $\bar{X} = 3.06$ , ranking 1st out of 6; "Guiding the selection of appropriate teaching media in lessons to enhance learners' capabilities," with a score of  $\bar{X} = 3.02$ , ranking 2nd out of 6. The lower-rated contents include: "Teachers establish effective evaluation criteria for educational media according to the competency-based approach," with a score of  $\bar{X} = 2.31$ , ranking 6th out of 6; "Teachers organize activities for students to use educational media for knowledge acquisition and self-skill development," with a score of  $\bar{X} = 2.39$ , ranking 5th out of 6.

Through the analysis of the data above, we have observed that the content "Teachers establish effective evaluation criteria for educational media according to the competency-based approach" and "Teachers organize activities for students to use educational media for knowledge acquisition and self-skill development" are rated the lowest in the use of English language teaching media based on a competency-based approach. The reason for these low ratings is that schools conduct annual assessments of the effectiveness of educational media, but these assessments are often general and lack specific evaluation criteria. Schools have also been promoting and reminding students to utilize educational media, including smart devices, for knowledge acquisition and skill development. However, they have not yet organized many activities to enable students to use these educational media effectively.

### 3.5. The current state of assessing and Evaluating the results of teaching English subjects using a competency-based approach in lower secondary schools in An Giang province

**Table 3.5. The Current State of assessing and evaluating the results of teaching English subject in lower secondary schools in An Giang Province**

No	Assessment methods	Target	Implementation Level			
			Very often	Very often	Very often	Very often
1	Design a question bank according to the established learning outcomes.	Managers	6 (20.0%)	16 (53.330%)	8 (26.67%)	0
		English teacher	24 (35,29%)	40 (58,82%)	4 (5,88%)	0
2	Regularly assess student progress.	Managers	8 (26.67%)	14 (46.67%)	6 (20%)	2 (6.66%)
		English teacher	26 (38,23%)	22 (32,35%)	16 (23,52%)	4 (5,88%)
3	Test and assessment results classify students' competencies.	Managers	6 (20%)	14 (46.67%)	8 (26.66%)	2 (6.66%)
		English teacher	20 (29.41%)	14 (20.58%)	30 (44,11%)	4 (5,89%)
4	Teachers and students use assessment results to adjust the teaching and learning process.	Managers	10 (33.33%)	16 (53.33%)	4 (13.34%)	0
		English teacher	24 (35,29%)	32 (47,05%)	12 (17,64%)	0

Looking at the statistical results, it is evident that, initially, English teachers in lower secondary schools have implemented competency-based assessments, but the level of regular implementation is not high. Specifically:

Designing question banks according to the established standards has a 20% agreement among management personnel and 35.29% agreement among English teachers for regular implementation.

Test and assessment results that classify students' competencies have a 32% agreement among management personnel and 29.41% agreement among English teachers for regular implementation.

Regular assessment of student progress has a 26.67% agreement among management personnel and 38.23% agreement among English teachers for standard implementation.

Teachers and students using assessment results to adjust the teaching and learning process have a 33.33% agreement among management personnel and 35.29% agreement among English teachers for regular implementation.

Therefore, it can be seen that competency-based student assessment activities have been initiated. However, the frequency of implementation is not high, and there is not yet a regular assessment of student progress, classification of student competencies, and the use of assessment results. Thus, these practices have not truly motivated students to develop their competencies.

## CONCLUSION

The practical survey conducted in lower secondary schools in An Giang province shows that the management of English teaching reveals certain limitations and deficiencies in organizing teaching and learning activities and assessing and evaluating students' academic achievements. There hasn't been a deep investment in education, which, in turn, reduces the effectiveness of teaching English in schools and doesn't fully develop students' potential. Consequently, the research findings will help school principals strengthen the assessment and evaluation processes to enhance the quality of teaching and learning English in schools to meet the requirements of international integration in today's world.

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