Teaching and Learning of English
in Secondary Schools

A Zambian Case Study in Improving Quality

Casmir Chanda

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Commonwealth Secretariat

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Dedication

To my parents: Delfine and Luke Chanda
My sisters: Astrida and Prisca
And my brothers: Maximo, Luke, Cornelius and Chrispin

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Foreword

Improving the quality of teaching at secondary school level has been and continues to be a major concern for public sector education authorities, teacher educators and trainers, and teachers' professional organisations, as well as for secondary teachers themselves. The need to improve the professional training and performance of teachers in their subject areas is widely accepted. We know, for example, that the demands of today's secondary education call for teachers who are highly skilled and grounded in knowledge, values and effective teaching strategies.

To provide this, teachers need to demonstrate – among other factors – knowledge of child development, gender sensitivity, appropriate attitudes to teaching and skills in organising lessons, lesson planning, working with children, teaching methods, teaching strategies and selection of the best resources to support the teaching and learning process. This book deals with all these key elements in the organisation, planning and delivery of effective lessons. Casmir Chanda has presented teaching practice activities, techniques and the methods of teaching in simple language.

The book provides recommendations, based on an in-depth country case study, on how to improve and manage the quality of teaching and learning in English. Based on the Zambian experience, this book shows how education systems can effect improvements in schools, even in situations of very scarce resources. It gives clear strategies for English language teaching and learning. Although the book focuses on Zambia, the experiences presented will be of relevance to other countries in Africa.

This book is intended to assist front-line practitioners seeking best practice strategies in teaching English language at secondary school level. Chanda's book gives practical guidance on how English teaching and learning can be improved and make certain that meaningful learning takes place. The book will be useful in both teacher-training colleges and schools.

I commend this well-written, readable book to all pre-service and in-service primary and secondary teacher educators, co-ordinators and

managers of teacher resource centres, school heads, serving primary and secondary school teachers, student teachers on teaching practice and school inspectors.

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London, UK

Preface and acknowledgements

List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIEMS	Action to Improve English, Mathematics and Science
ALC	Active learning capacity
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CSIE	Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education
ESL	English as a second language
EFA	Education for All
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
MOE	Ministry of Education (Zambia)
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRG	Northern Rhodesia Government
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PFP	Policy Framework Paper
PBL	Problem-based learning
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SAP	Structural adjustment programme
TPE	Total public expenditure

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UBE	Universal basic education
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

Summary

In the context of the economic and material constraints experienced by some countries while trying to provide quality education to all, this book investigates how the teaching and learning of secondary English can be improved despite such constraints. The study highlighted in the book takes its starting point from previous research and commentaries concerned with the constraints and performance of Zambian schooling over two decades (1980–2000). It examines this research and writing critically, and concludes that two widely-accepted theses are broadly correct. First, the poor state of Zambian schooling is primarily due to its poor resourcing by the national government, which in turn is a consequence of the poor state of the national economy and of policies pursued under pressure from international financial agencies. Second, both national needs and educational logic strongly suggest that Zambian schooling should be improved from the bottom up, that is, with priority initially being given to universal basic education and only subsequently to the further development of secondary and tertiary education.

In order to give it a sharp focus, the study of the book concentrates on the teaching and learning of English in Zambian secondary schools. As the main language of government, commerce and education in Zambia, but as the first language of only a small minority of students, English is both a key subject and a very challenging one for these schools. The author undertook a wide-ranging review of literature to establish a tentative best understanding of what good practice in the teaching and learning of English in Zambian secondary schools might be if there were no severe financial constraints. That understanding was then used as an initial framework for the empirical study. In unravelling the circumstances that lead to poor outcomes, the book provides evidence of the current nature of teaching and learning processes in English lessons and constraints that teachers and pupils experience.

The author argues that it is primarily through exploring the perspectives of teachers and students that useful insights can be gained into both current practice and effective practice in the distinctive Zambian context in the teaching and learning of English, into constraints that limit the effectiveness of current practice, and into the most important ways in which practice might be improved. In this respect, the author employed a case-study approach, which facilitated a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the solicitation, triangulation and analyses of data from multiple sources. In the first phase, the study used purposive sampling, collecting data primarily through questionnaires from six schools. In the second phase, data was collected in three other schools through focus groups and interviews; these were complemented by participant observation.

The study highlighted here generates a great deal of evidence to confirm the importance of financial constraints in limiting the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Zambian secondary schools. Other major findings laid down in this book include the following:

- Some teaching methods, such as the use of drama and role play, quizzes and games, which are widely regarded as elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of English, are not used frequently in Zambia. Nor are they highly valued by Zambian students and teachers, because such methods are not seen as contributing directly to academically-successful learning.

- A range of other teaching methods that are also widely regarded as elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of English – such as explaining to whole classes, group discussions, reading aloud in class, individual reading and writing and receiving feedback on written work – are used quite frequently and are more highly valued by Zambian teachers and students.

- Major constraints limiting the frequency and effectiveness with which such teaching methods are used were reported as including a shortage of teachers; teacher absence, lateness and lack of preparation; large and overcrowded classes; and lack of sufficient appropriate reading materials. Students complained especially of slow and inadequate feedback on their writing, which they viewed as a major constraint on their learning.

- Apart from resource constraints, a government policy of over-recruitment of pupils to secondary schools and pursuit of an 'integration' programme, whereby students with a visual or hearing impairment or other disability are sent to mainstream schools without appropriate resources or specialist expertise, was perceived by students and teachers as disadvantaging all concerned through reducing the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Conclusions drawn from evidence of teachers and students imply that a strategy lessening the constraints on teaching and learning might be the way forward. The situation at the time of writing (2008) is considered on the assumption that little improvement in the resourcing of secondary education is likely in the near future. A more optimistic assumption is also made that over a long period, such increased resources as they become available will and should be used to allow greater numbers of young people to benefit from secondary schooling. The reforms the author suggests are within the frameworks of democracy adapted to inside secondary schools and the framework on teacher cognition. The author has created a model based on – but necessarily going beyond – the evidence of teachers' and students' thinking, of ways in which those concerned with secondary education (including central government, school leaders, teachers and students) might modify their thinking, their policies and their practices so that with the already-available resources, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in English and other subjects may be possible. The proposals in this model are developed to meet the important criterion that their contribution to more effective teaching and learning would be likely to be maintained when the financing of schooling is improved. The model has three principles: first, making use of pupils' expertise as educators; second, moving towards a flexible and democratic regime; and third, maximising the use of teachers' expertise and existing skills.

The structure of the book is as follows: chapter 1 sets the overview, background and methodology of the study highlighted. Chapter 2 focuses on educational crisis in Zambia and lays a foundation about the context of the problems facing the education sector, that is, the economic and social dilemmas in the context of which the Zambian education system operates. Chapter 3 follows from chapter 2 and centres on analysing literature on good and effective practice of English teaching, drawing from literature in countries with fewer economic constraints than Zambia. This chapter lays further foundations for the precise formulation of research questions about the teaching and learning of secondary English in Zambia. Evidence gener-

ated in the empirical study is presented and explained in chapter 4 as findings from pupils' and teachers' perspectives. This final chapter seeks resolution of the problems formulated at the start of the research. It makes clear the research findings and seeks to propose ways of improving the teaching and learning of secondary English, perhaps by providing a model under which such improvement could be undertaken.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Background

This book focuses on the teaching and learning of secondary English in Zambian classrooms and examines two main issues, which stem from a synthesis of previous research findings and arguments on the state of Zambian education. The evidence of these arguments is documented in subsequent chapters. One aspect of the argument is that a lack of resources has been the major cause of poor attainments and progression at basic school level (grades 1–9: age 7–14), and this together with lack of resources for secondary schools (grade 8–12: age 12–19) inevitably means that the performance of secondary schools has been poor (Chamba, 1975; Brown 1985; Odada 1988, Ochieng-Moya 1985; Harber 1997; Kelly 1999a).

There are two arguments to be raised. First, the poor state of the Zambian economy, the consequent national policies and especially the inadequate resourcing of the school system, are the basic causes of poor educational performance. In addition, success at the secondary level depends heavily on success at the primary level (Nkamba and Kanyika 1998; Kelly and Kanyika 1999; Kelly 1999a). Nevertheless, a number of questions remain with regard to the argument above. First, how exactly does poor resourcing impinge on secondary schooling? Second, what particular causal sequences connect inadequate funding to poor educational outcomes? Third, does poor resourcing make good classroom teaching and learning difficult? And fourth, what in particular are the aspects of good teaching and learning practice that are prevented, or at least made much more difficult, by poor resourcing? It is important to know the answers to these questions if Zambian secondary education is to be improved.

The second issue complements the first and gently challenges the economic determinism of established explanations, as discussed in chapter 2. These explanations present secondary schooling as the helpless victim of the economic situation and of consequent government policies (Kelly 1999a).

The second issue is premised on an alternative possibility that those concerned with secondary schooling might themselves, without necessarily any substantial increase in resources, be active and effective agents in addressing their own problems by mainly focusing on classroom processes that may enhance effective teaching and learning. There is no doubt that the most important factor in improving Zambian education is better resourcing. However, effective classroom practices do not only depend on resourcing, but also on other factors, which may be addressed independently. If stakeholders understand more adequately the weaknesses of classroom practice, which have developed as a consequence of poor resourcing, it may be possible to find some ways of addressing these constraints other than through improved resourcing. Through close analysis of the nature of the problems, it may be possible to find more effective ways of making best use of the limited resources available, including perhaps some aspects of materials currently neglected.

In order to set the context of the study, this chapter examines the main themes. First, the context of the country and place where the study highlighted in this book took place is discussed, presenting Zambian education during the colonial era up to independence. Second, teaching, learning and especially what happens in classrooms is explained, citing programmes that Zambia has undertaken towards improvement. Third, the focus is on secondary schools, explaining why it is important to focus on improvement at this level. Fourth, the focus is also on the teaching of English and the pragmatic importance of concentrating on this subject. Finally, the perspectives of teachers and pupils, which are at the core of this book, are discussed, drawing from research studies on their importance.

Context

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with an overview of the setting in which the study that this book focuses on took place. Grace (1980, p. 3) argues, 'a socio-historical approach to research can illuminate the cultural and ideological struggles in which schooling is located.' What follows is a descriptive summary of Zambia and its education system, citing some of the programmes that it has adopted as well as its dilemmas.

Zambia, a landlocked country in central southern Africa, has a total land area of 752,614 square kilometres with a population of about 10 million (2000 census) resulting in a population density of 11 inhabitants per square kilometre. Zambia is surrounded by the Democratic Republic of Congo in the north, Mozambique in the southeast, Malawi in the east,

Tanzania in the north, Botswana and Zimbabwe in the south, Angola in the west and Namibia on the southwest border.

Zambia recognised education as the engine for human development, economic growth and a prerequisite to industrialisation. This is evident in both earlier education reforms (1977, 1988), and in later education policies (1992a, 1996, 2000). With a population growth rate of 2.7 per cent per annum and with 42 per cent of the population living in urban areas, the widespread provision of effective social services and education have remained a considerable challenge. The population is highly youthful, with 44.5 per cent of the population consisting of children aged 14 years and below (Central Statistical Office [CSO], 2000).

Zambia is a multilingual and multicultural country. The official language is English, but local languages continue to be spoken at home. The seven main languages spoken are Bemba, Lozi, Nyanja, Kaonde, Tonga, Lunda and Luvale.

Zambia, formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, was under British control from 1895 to 1963. The British South Africa Company (BSAC) administered Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) jointly as British protectorates. In 1924, Northern Rhodesia formally became a British colony. From 1953 to 1963, the British ruled Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now Malawi) on a federal basis, with the area known as the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The capital of the federation was in Southern Rhodesia. The federation was dissolved in December 1963 and on 24 October 1964 Zambia became an independent republic.

Zambia has changed its constitution twice since attaining independence, and it is customary to speak of the First Republic, which existed between 1964 and 1972, the Second Republic, which existed between 1972 and 1991, and the Third Republic, which came into existence on 4 December 1991. The present republic is characterised by multi-party democracy and a market-oriented economic system. Extensive policy reforms have been carried out since the last quarter of 1991, with a view to replacing notions and practices of centralised planning and state with privatisation and liberal economic policies. Changes in policy have included the teaching of literacy in the local language in the first two years of primary school (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2002) while English continues to be a medium of instruction in all institutions of learning and in all other subjects from first grade at primary school.

Alongside these changes has come the introduction of health and education boards and a call to strengthen human rights. The need for change within the education sector focuses on the issue of change for improvement within schools, as well as working with the community. Most schools are working on how they can best improve infrastructure, provide resources and improve teachers' morale and teaching so that students can learn better. English continues to be emphasised as a key subject throughout schooling.

In a climate like this, the author argues that there is scope for school improvement *within* schools and *by* schools and perhaps by considering teachers' and pupils' perspectives on how to deal with constraints in teaching and learning of secondary English. The next section presents schooling in Zambia and explains the age groups and levels in primary and secondary schools.

Schooling in Zambia

Zambian children begin primary school between five and ten years of age because of lack of school places, but most begin at age seven according to Zambian education policy. In accordance with education policy (MOE, 2002), the Zambian education system has adopted the following structure: basic schools offer grades 1–9 (age 7–15); high schools offer from grades 10–12 (age 15–18/20); and tertiary education is provided for learners who have completed grade 12, which includes teacher training and universities. The basic education sector is oriented towards the final goal of universal basic education (UBE) and has three levels: lower basic for grades 1–4; middle basic for grades 5–7; and upper basic for grades 8–9. Although the transition from the previous system of primary (grades 1–7) and secondary schools (grades 8–12) has begun, it was not yet completed at the time of writing. At present, both systems continue to run in parallel.

**Break down of the number of Basic and High Schools
by grades in 2001**

[Bar chart showing:
Grades 1-4: 235
Grades 1-7: 3222
Grades 1-9: 936
Grades 8-9: 25
Grades 8-12: 254
Grades 10-12: 2]
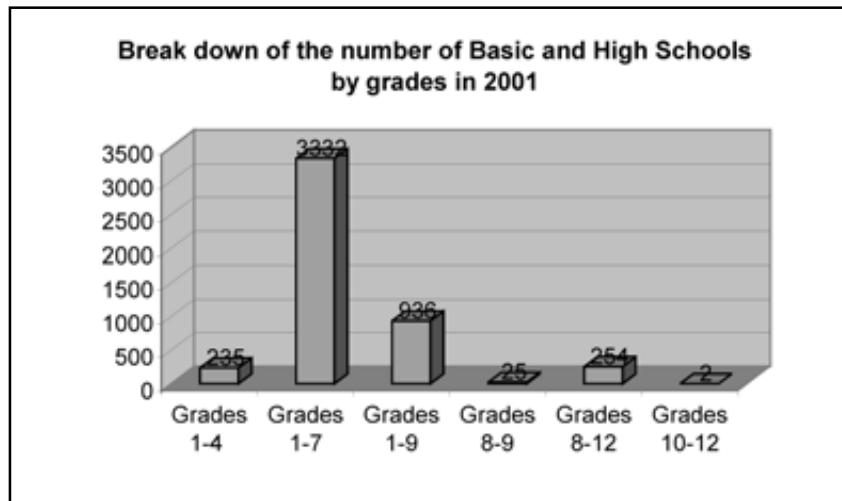
Figure 1.1: Number of schools in Zambia
Source: Ministry of Education, Planning Unit, 2001

As the above figure indicates, there are more pupils in primary and basic schools than there are in secondary schools. Since 2001, the Ministry of Education has aimed to increase the number of senior schools and basic schools. Apparently, after some meetings and discussions with ministry officials in the provinces (regional centres) and headquarters, it seemed easy for government primary schools to become basic schools and for secondary schools to become high schools. However, the change resulted in more pupils entering basic and high schools, which caused overcrowding, overuse of available resources and lack of preparation in terms of there being enough teachers and facilities such as laboratories. It was assumed that such facilities would be provided in years to come, but the government can only afford to provide limited resources[1].

The next section is a description of education provision during the colonial and federation eras. It gives the context in which Zambia has developed its education system.

Historical perspective of education in Zambia

The period of BSAC 1890–1923

The colonial era in Zambia began when the paramount chief of the Lozi signed an agreement with the BSAC (British South Africa Company) to gradually extend its sphere of influence to other parts of the country (Snelson, 1974). At first, the region was administered as North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia, but following the amalgamation of the two sections in 1911, the BSAC administered the whole territory as the protectorate of Northern Rhodesia. Company rule continued until 1924, when the colonial office in London assumed responsibility for the territory.

During the BSAC's administration, the provision of education remained the responsibility of the missionary agencies (with the exception of the Barotse National School). According to Snelson, (*ibid.* p. 269) 'all other educational developments up to April 1924 depended almost entirely on the initiative, energy, perseverance and financial resources of the missionary societies'. By the time BSAC rule ended, about 1,500 schools were scattered throughout the territory, all poorly equipped. The enrolment was approximately 50,000, with the schools being financed by whatever the impoverished missionary societies could afford. Snelson (*ibid*. p. 121) also comments that, 'the failure of the BSAC to invest in education during the 34 'somnolent years' of its rule meant that a generation and more of Northern Rhodesians lost their chance of receiving an education'. This loss had its repercussions 40 years later, when Zambia entered independence with a largely illiterate adult population and a pitifully small supply of educated human resources (Kelly 1991, p. 8).

The colonial era 1924–1952

The responsibility for the administration of Northern Rhodesia was transferred from the BSAC to the British colonial office in 1924. The Phelps-Stokes Commission visited Northern Rhodesia in June 1924 and held extensive meetings with the missionary bodies and with government officials. The commission's tasks were to investigate the population's educational needs, to ascertain the extent to which these were being met and to assist in the formulation of plans to meet those needs. The commission urged that the education provided should meet the peoples' real needs and should prepare students for life in the village community. This point is reflected in the colonial office's Advisory Committee Report, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa,* which states that:

'Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life such as advancing agriculture, developing industries, improving health, training people in the management of their own affairs and inculcating ideals of citizenship and service'.
Source: Quoted in Snelson, 1974, p. 142.

The 'occupational and traditional aspects' were assumed to fit into the education system. The education policy came to favour spreading the available resources over as many children as possible and providing education for at least five years of primary education (Coombe, 1967). Secondary education was delayed because of finance, the economy's absorptive capacity and the hostility of a large section of the settler and miner population to the advancement of the local people. It appeared there was a strong link between the country's progress and the market for copper (Kelly, 1991; Coombe, 1967); however, even when government revenues and reserves increased enormously in the early 1940s because of the high wartime demand for copper, it was reluctant to invest in development projects like education. The Northern Rhodesia Government feared it might produce an unemployed educated class. This fear even dictated some misgivings about the provision of higher levels of primary education, as stated in a government document:

'With a regular supply of Standard IV candidates available for vocational training, the problem will be to make sure, as far as is possible, that no more pupils are trained in each line than can be readily absorbed in the country'.
Source: Northern Rhodesia Government (NRG), 1931, p. 17.

A later report of spoke about the danger of the emergence of a discontented unemployed class (Northern Rhodesia Government, 1937). Even as late as 1946, the Education Department responded defensively to a mission request to open a new secondary school by speaking of the danger of creating 'an intellectual unemployed proletariat' (Mwanakatwe, 1968). Kelly (1991) observes another factor that delayed the introduction of secondary education. He claims that:

'Their bitter opposition to any provisions for the African population was that it might reduce employment prospects for white settlers and immigrants. They had increasingly successful disproportionately large amounts of public funds devoted to developing a parallel, but independent and racially exclusive system of European education. Recurrent expenditure

on providing education for about 1,000 European children in 1937 considerably exceeded expenditure on over 30,000 African children the same year, without counting a further 74,000 African children in 'unaided' schools'.

Source: Kelly, 1991, p. 9.

Informed commentators perceived colonial education to be a major source of economic inequalities and social stratification, an instrument of intellectual and cultural servitude. The curriculum provided 'was largely irrelevant to needs of local people' (Kelly, 1991, p. 39) and examinations dominated teaching and learning to such an extent that, 'for an ambitious child, education was a rat race and often drudgery' (Snelson, 1974, p. 275). The emphasis on teaching to pass examinations, rather than to develop the child's ability to think logically and develop natural curiosity, still applies to what goes on in Zambian classrooms today.

The slow and uneasy introduction of secondary education was followed by an equally slow and short-sighted approach to its expansion. By 1952, the country had only four junior secondary schools (offering the first two secondary classes) and one full senior school, with an entire enrolment of 384 boys and 21 girls. Zambia's critical human resources problems at the time of independence, and many of its current difficulties in obtaining good-quality, experienced, mid-level management may be attributed to some extent to this tardy development.

The federal era, 1953–1963

In 1953, against the wishes of the majority of African people in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Malawi), the British government brought the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland into being. During the decade of the federation, the responsibility for education in Northern Rhodesia was divided. The territorial government retained responsibility for African education, while the federal government assumed responsibility for the education of other races. It is observed (in, for example, Snelson, 1974; Mwanakatwe, 1974; Kelly, 1991) that the government established high-quality educational facilities in the major towns, but access was restricted to European children. Increasing provision of primary education in cities led to an increase in migration to urban centres as people travelled in search for education. The underdevelopment of rural schools and loss of many people to cities may have contributed to the state of underdevelopment of education in rural areas, both prior to independence and since.

However, it is important to acknowledge that there was some expansion in education provision during the federation years. During the first years, from 1953 to 1960, the aim for African education was to consolidate and improve the primary school system, to develop secondary education and vocational training schemes and to increase the supply of trained teachers. By 1963, about 342,000 children were enrolled in primary school and 7,050 in secondary. At the secondary level, 80 per cent of the total enrolment were boys.

A significant development took place toward the end of the federal era. The Northern Rhodesia (territorial) government invited the United Nations and the British government to help plan the future development of its education system, to advise on the establishment of a university and to develop a framework for an integrated economic and social development plan. The report of the education mission, undertaken by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), contained the following recommendations:

- Despite the obvious difficulties, both administrative and pedagogic, English should be adopted as the sole medium of instruction from the commencement of primary school (UNESCO, 1964, p. 25);

- The number of well-qualified and well-trained teachers should be increased so that double-session teaching could be eliminated at all primary school levels (*ibid.* p. 19); and

- Education for farming is important, 'but we are not sure that as we saw it being done, it has any educational or social value or would lead to any better farming at home' (*ibid.* p. 91). Any worthy attempt to improve agricultural practice would depend on the quality of farming done by parents in their own community. Improvement would be reflected in increased income and children would see that an agricultural way of life was a viable option.

By the end of the colonial era in 1964, expansion of primary and secondary schools had begun and the Zambian government implemented the establishment of a university immediately after independence. At the point of independence, educational provision was still poor, but the country was quite rich. For the next ten years, between 1964 and 1974, the Zambian government successfully pursued a policy of giving priority to expenditure on education and massively expanding educational provision at all levels. Later, this educational expansion was affected by the fall in copper prices.

The educational crisis Zambia experienced in the early 1980s is discussed in chapter 2.

It is important to point out that the starting point in planning the study that this book focuses on was the author's strong impression that classroom teaching and learning, the problems faced at this level and considerations of what could be done at school level to resolve these problems have tended to be ignored by scholars in the past. Rather, previous research has, understandably enough, concentrated on the effect of reduced input into the system and on its output. Nonetheless, teaching and learning is at the centre of the education system and understanding what teachers and learners do and experience is critical. Schools need not simply be victims, but can be active agents in their own salvation. The author's primary concern in undertaking this study with the unresearched state of classroom teaching and learning.

The following sub-sections focus on English teaching and secondary schooling, as well as the perspectives of teachers and students themselves.

English teaching

The English referred to in this study will be largely 'secondary school English' unless otherwise stated. This is the language and subject taught in Zambia broadly as handed over from British teachers and educationists, but with a number of changes that it has since undergone. English in this context will mean the English language as a subject taught from grades 8–12, that is ages 12 to 18.

English is the medium of instruction in Zambia. 'English medium' is used to refer to an education system in which English is the sole or main medium of instruction. It is the language in which all or most of the subjects are taught right from the moment the child enters primary school in grade 1. However, this was adjusted throughout Zambia in 1965 and later in 1996 to begin with teaching in a local language in the first two grades.

In Zambia, some languages have been designated 'official' and are used in specified situations such as education, broadcasting, parliamentary debates, law courts and administration. The most important official language is English. Cibemba, Cinyanja and Silozi were at first the three other 'official' languages; Citonga was added to these in 1936. English, as the most important official language, is used in education as the medium of instruction throughout primary school, and in secondary and post-secondary education. It is also used in the law courts, parliament, administration and

commerce and trade (Kashoki, 1978; Mwanakatwe, 1974) and serves as a lingua franca for intra-national communication purposes.

English being the key subject and language of instruction seems to be at the centre of teaching and learning in the country. It was of pragmatic importance to concentrate on one subject in the secondary school curriculum to make the study at the centre of this text more manageable and focused. In addition, the centrality of secondary English in any English-speaking country and the distinctiveness of the Zambian situation are significant reasons for concentrating the study on English.

Secondary schooling

There are three types of secondary schools or high schools in Zambia: government, grant-aided and private. The total number of secondary schools in 2001 was 256, of which 208 were government, 33 grant-aided and 15 were private schools. A majority of schools were still structured grades 8–12 (age 12–18), while a few had the grades 10–12 (age 16–18) structure. 'Secondary schooling' in Zambia refers to grades 8–12 (age 11–19). The age range is different because children start school at different ages (the official starting age is seven), because of lack of school places for all school-going children.

The challenges facing secondary schooling in Zambia are many, as reported in a Ministry of Education document (MOE, 2002). The document reports that funding from the government is unreliable, irregular and inadequate and most schools rely on community support through fees and other fund-raising methods. Thus resources to maintain the quality of high school education are extremely limited. Infrastructure and equipment in many schools are in a poor state; supplies of educational materials such as textbooks are also insufficient and out of date. The scenario is worse in day and boarding schools located in rural areas. A major challenge is to ensure that all secondary schools are adequately resourced to provide good quality education, and that funds are released to them on time.

Primary education and concern for improvement at the basic or primary level is important. However, this book and the study it refers to focus on secondary schools. There are various problems that make teaching and learning difficult for teachers and pupils, both in primary and secondary schools. It can be argued that secondary schooling cannot wait until the problems of basic education have been resolved before it receives critical research attention.

It is crucial to understand precisely how inadequate resourcing is preventing high-quality teaching and learning in schools. Those concerned with secondary schooling need to seek ways in which their current problems might at least partially be resolved, especially through establishing teaching strategies to improve teaching and learning in classrooms. In seeking such improvements, it is also important to focus on the opinions of those at the centre of teaching and learning in classrooms, the teachers and students.

Perspectives of teachers and pupils

School development to improve pupils' classroom learning can usefully be thought of in terms of two complementary kinds of strategy: first, helping teachers to develop their classroom teaching expertise; and second, minimising the constraints upon teachers' opportunities to foster effective learning in their classrooms. While some of these constraints may arise from national policies and resource limitations, potentially many may lie within the control of individual schools. Chapter 3 presents an argument that both complementary strategies need to be informed by teachers' perceptions about teaching. Teachers need to be listened to (Oplatka, 2002; Cooper and McIntyre, 1996; Protherough and Atkinson, 1991). Teachers are the implementers and major actors in the teaching and learning process, and it is important that their perspectives about classroom teaching and learning be considered. Insightful teachers can provide insightful knowledge about what goes on in classrooms.

Pupils' perspectives about teaching and learning are also important. Part of the concern and purpose of this book is to discover these opinions. Listening directly to teachers and students as they share their thoughts on classroom processes, constraints and what they perceive to be helpful could be a powerful stimulus to reflect those same teaching and learning processes or repertoires.

Note

1. This is according to conversations with an inspector at MOE headquarters.

Chapter 2
Educational Crisis in Zambia

Introduction

The introductory chapter made some suggestions about the extent, the nature and the sources of educational problems in Zambia. In this chapter these suggestions are subjected to a more critical and analytical examination in the light of such research as there has been on Zambian education.

First, there is a review of research on the Zambian economy and the resourcing of education. This section outlines changes in Zambia's economic circumstance and policies during the last 20 years. The aim of this literature review is to offer some background information on the state of education in Zambia. The literature presented here is included to explain the wide economic context and, in particular, the severe reduction in government financial support for education and other social services.

Second, the author presents a review of the impact of these economic circumstances on the quality of inputs to education, centring on health and education, learning achievement, public discontent and teacher morale.

The chapter goes on to look at quality of educational outcomes, focusing on universal entitlement to education, primary schooling and secondary schooling. It then draws on studies conducted in Zambia to elicit some ways of improvement, such as the National Assessment Programme and the Literacy Programme, which have been undertaken to address the decline in educational quality. The final section focuses on secondary education in Zambia and a discussion of the integration programme that was implemented to include all students with special education needs in mainstream classrooms.

The Zambian economy and resourcing of education

The overall economy: changing policies

Over two decades (1980–2000), the sub-Saharan region of Africa (which includes Zambia) experienced a significant decline in investment in the

educational sector due to fiscal problems arising from economic recession, structural adjustment programmes and global economic restructuring. For many African countries, the inability to keep up with external debt payments has forced governments to cut down on the rapid rate of human resource development that occurred after independence in the 1960s. According to some surveys, particular problems facing the educational sector are: declining enrolment rates; erosion in the quality of education and level of student achievement; and some inefficiency in the management of educational systems (UNDP, 1989; World Bank, 1988; Hinchcliffe, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Klees, 2002).

Zambia's economy went into a free-fall in the mid-1970s when rising oil prices dented the world economy to such an extent that the bottom fell out of the market for copper, the country's dominant economic commodity. Authors like Kelly (1999a) and Hansungule (2002) claim that irresponsible borrowing, irresponsible lending, inappropriate policies and monstrous and massively inefficient state participation in the economy, quickly transformed the country from middle-level economic status to 'one of the poorest countries in the world'. It is these 'international trends' that need to be understood to see how under-resourcing may have come about and caused such an enormous decline in education provision. Most of Zambia's economic management problems over the last quarter of the century, in particular the resourcing of its education system, may be seen as following on from the difficulties it experienced in adjusting to this change in national circumstances.

In Zambia, problems were such that by 1982 the only answer seemed to lie in IMF-prescribed stabilisation and World Bank-directed structural adjustment. For the next eight or nine years, Zambia had an on-off relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions. Phases of IMF/World Bank-orchestrated market and liberalisation measures regressed to phases of tight government control, when the adjustment conditions were found to be economically too tough and politically too hazardous (Seshemani, 1997; Selvaggio and Henriot, 2001). Late in 1991, with transition to a new political and economic era, the Zambian government committed itself to 'an open-market economy in which private initiative would be encouraged and rewarded' (Government of the Republic of Zambia [GRZ], 1992, p. 1). In what amounted to virtually a total immersion approach, the government co-operated with the IMF and the Bank in implementing measures for economic reform rapidly and vigorously. The 'invisible hand' of the market replaced the visible hand of the government, which showed an

almost unseemly haste in disengaging from direct economic participation, divesting itself of state ownership and facilitating the establishment of conditions that would promote local and foreign participation in economic development. Private ownership rather than government ownership was encouraged. Klees (2002) argues that in most respects:

> *'The World Bank has become a knowledge Bank that spurs the knowledge revolution in developing countries and acts as a global catalyst 'for creating and applying the cutting-edge knowledge necessary for poverty reduction and economic development'.*

Source: World Bank, 2001

The 'open-market' economic strategy advocated by the World Bank and implemented after 1991 in Zambia impacted on public expenditure. The Bank's and Zambian government's concern with reducing the budget deficit led to extensive curtailing of public expenditure, with the result that real public spending in 1993–96 was less than two-thirds of what it had been when adjustment began in 1981–84 (Kelly, 1999a). Ministerial or discretionary expenditure was even more severely affected, spending in the most recent years being only 40 per cent of what it had been when adjustment commenced. Remarkably, this curtailment in public spending made its biggest impact on the economic sector (figure 2.1). Production-related ministries, such as mines, lands, agriculture, tourism, commerce and industry, saw their aggregate annual spending cut from an average of US$164 million in 1981–84 to a yearly average of US$48 million in 1993–96. On the other hand, the general administrative sector (covering government administration, legislation, security etc.) increased its spending from an annual average of US$217 million in the earlier period to an average of US$241 million in the more recent period.

Spending on non-ministerial heads (debt service, pensions, subsidies, defence) grew at first from an annual average of US$416 million in 1981–84 to US$443 million in 1989–92, before falling back to US$399 million in 1993–96.

The social sectors also suffered badly – not only in the uncertain period after 1982 when adjustment was on and off, but also since 1992 when adjustment has maintained its inscrutable, sphinx-like features. Real spending on the social sectors in the period 1989–1992 was 50 per cent less than it had been at the time when structural adjustment commenced some years earlier. The most severely affected areas were those relating directly to community services (housing, water and sanitation, social services and community development, youth, sport and child development etc.) where spending
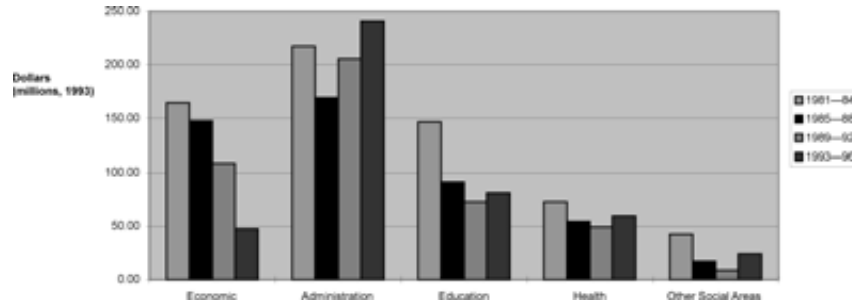
Figure 2.1: Public expenditure by sector (millions of 1993 US$): 1981–1996
Source: Derived from GRZ: *Financial Reports*, annual issues, 1981–1996.

in the period 1989–92 was only one-fifth of what it had been at the beginning of the adjustment period.

Kelly (1999a) claims that compared with other areas in the social sector, health fared best, with spending falling by about one-third in the eight-year period. Education, on the other hand, saw its real spending cut by more than 50 per cent during that time. The four-year period, 1995–1999, saw an overall 26 per cent increase in social-sector spending, with the most dramatic improvement in spending being on community services and similar areas. However, none of the social sectors has returned to anything like its position at the time when structural adjustment commenced. In particular, spending on education in 1996 amounted to no more than US$80 million, compared with US$153 million in 1983, the first year of adjustment measures.

Structural adjustment has had some short-term benefits. Stabilisation and adjustment measures necessitated a high level of financial discipline in order to bring the government's budget deficit under control and reduce inflation. This discipline transformed the budget from its deficit pattern, maintained each year since the early 1980s, into surplus in 1996 and 1997. Likewise, there was a dramatic reduction in inflation, from an annual average of 197 per cent in 1992 to 19 per cent in 1997. The introduction of a cash-based budget system in 1993, whereby government expenditures were incurred only if revenues were actually in hand, was a major factor in bringing about these improvements. Essentially these were the initial, short-term successes of a tightly-controlled fiscal management programme. With inflation rising again, to 31 per cent in 1998, it seemed that they might not have been maintained 'lending some support to the critique that structural

adjustment policies do not, in fact, constitute a long-term economic development programme' (Kelly 1999a).

Moreover, these initial successes were bought at a high social price. The Zambian government's submission to the 1995 World Summit for Social Development acknowledges that:

> *'Measures to curtail government expenditure to achieve a balanced budget have also impacted negatively on the provision of social services. This, coupled with the need to share costs in the social sector, has had telling effects by limiting the access of the poor to social services.'*
>
> *Source:* GRZ, 1995, p. 4.

The 1999 Budget Address expressed a similar view when it stated that despite the economic setbacks experienced in 1998, the government 'continued implementing structural and other reforms and serviced (its) external debt – albeit to the detriment of (its) priority spending in social sectors and on poverty alleviation' (GRZ, 1999, p. 14). In other words, the social impact of structural adjustment was, and continues to be, quite negative, particularly in terms of the losses sustained by the population's core poor of small-scale peasant farmers and the growing number of urban unemployed (Kelly, 1999a; Oxfam, 2001; Selvaggio and Henriot, 2000; Klees, 2002).

The goal to alleviate poverty through education appears to have turned into a 'dream' for World Bank and most developing countries. Klees (2002) claims that the retreat from the goal of poverty elimination became clearer when James Wolfensohn became World Bank president in 1995 and invented the 'Knowledge Bank' with the argument that 'we don't have much money to combat poverty, so don't come to us for our money, but for the quality of our advice' (World Bank, 1995). It seems the Bank retreated from its commitment to education. Few resources appear to be forthcoming and the continuation of structural adjustment programme (SAP) policies may yield further cuts in education budgets.

Education and structural adjustment

Focusing more sharply on the education sector, Zambia had at the time of writing the unenviable distinction of ranking among the lowest countries in the world in terms of the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that it devotes to education and training; it is also one of the poorest countries in the world (Kelly, 1999a; Oxfam, 2001; Voluntary Service Overseas [VSO], 2002). In 1992, only 14 countries in the world devoted less of their GDP to education (World Bank, 1996).

Zambia's position was not always so bad. In 1982, before any form of structural adjustment began, the education sector accounted for 5.9 per cent of the country's GDP. By 1990, that proportion had plummeted to 2.3 per cent, falling further to 2.2 per cent in 1993, before rising slowly to 2.8 per cent in 1995 (see figure 2.2). Modest increases in educational expenditures after 1996, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of total government spending, have not improved the sector's position in relation to GDP.

Since the mid-1980s, this decline in public resources for education has been accompanied by an ever-increasing reliance on parental contributions, with a proliferation in the fees and funds that parents or users are expected to pay. Parents are called upon to provide financial support to every aspect of the education system.

At some schools, even teachers' salaries are being supplemented by parental contributions, while teachers themselves also supplement their incomes by charging fees for additional or special tuition, for instance, through what were officially sanctioned as 'Academic Production Units', but were later abandoned in 2003 (MOE, 2002). At the primary level, school-related payments of various kinds by parents in government schools range from US$5 a year in very remote and poor areas to over US$50 in urban schools. Zambia's real GDP of US$250 per capita (1996) provides the context for interpreting these figures.
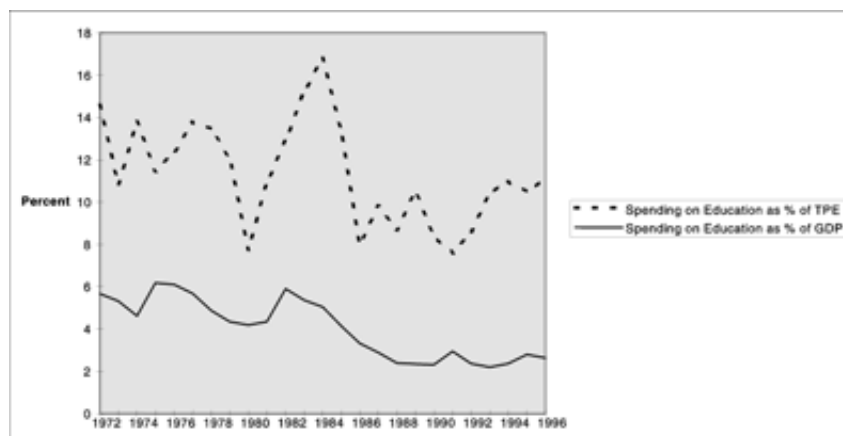
Figure 2.2: Public spending on education as a percentage of total public expenditure (TPE) and GDP: 1972–1996
Source: Kelly, 1999a

It may be asked whether responsibility for this development rests clearly with the adjustment measures. Have they expressly mandated such consumer participation in meeting social service costs, or has this emerged as a surreptitious way of coping with reduced public expenditure in the sector? Although structural adjustment advocates are reluctant to admit it, there seems to be little doubt that cost sharing for social services is intrinsic to adjustment. In many respects, cost sharing is the social sector counterpart to the removal of maize, fertiliser and fuel subsidies in the agricultural and transport sectors. That user fees for social services are a constitutive part of a structural adjustment programme appears in Zambia's *Economic and Financial Policy Framework Paper* (the PFP) for 1992–1994, which was approved by the Board of the IMF in February 1992 before being released to the Zambian public.

In the education sector, the paper notes that, 'in order to strengthen the financial base for education, Zambia has introduced user fees for the beneficiaries of secondary and higher education and instituted cost-effective measures' (GRZ, 1992, p. 23). Influenced by the rate of return approach and the figures disseminated by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985), the World Bank steadily advocated beneficiary payments at the secondary and tertiary levels, where private returns promise to be so high, but has been less vocal on user charges and fees at the primary level, with its large social rates of return. The logic of this is impeccable, but unfortunately it does not appear to have been so clearly understood by governments implementing adjustment strategies. User fees, cost sharing and privatisation have become such a haven for cash-strapped governments that they have allowed them to spill over into the provision of the basic social services of primary and secondary education, as well as primary health care.

According to Kelly (1999a), the subordination of education to structural adjustment priorities has meant the following:

- The fiscal imperative of achieving a balanced national budget has been so dominant that the financing needs of education (and other social sectors) have not been met;

- The liberal economic model of private provision has been applied almost indiscriminately to education (and other social sectors), to the disadvantage of the poor and marginalised;

- The counter-development policy of cost sharing for the basic human services of education and health care has come about in response to the demands of structural adjustment, again to the

disadvantage of the poor and marginalised (also Narayan et al, 2000; Oxfam 2001);

- The reduction in real terms of teachers' salaries, arising from restraints in the financing of the education sector and from the structural-adjustment-dictated imperative of constraining the growth of the public sector wage bill, has had two negative outcomes: (i) widespread demoralisation among teachers, with consequent lower levels of classroom performance; and (ii) extensive and costly loss of teachers and other education personnel (also VSO, 2002; Klees, 2002); and

- The low levels of national funding for education, arising from the implementation of adjustment policies, have brought in their wake extensive dependence on donors for educational provision and policy.

Predictably, this has led to a dramatic deterioration in the provision of education and to extensive decline in school participation. According to Kelly (1999a) and others like Klees (2002) and Selvaggio and Henriot (2001), structural adjustment in the larger picture has:

- Made it difficult to ensure that every child and adult can exercise the human right to education;

- Made it impossible to guarantee that, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, 'education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages' (Article 26);

- Undermined education's potential to prepare a satisfactorily educated workforce that would sustain and develop a self-reliant economy;

- Enhanced gender discriminations in education (because in times of hardship boys and men are given preference);

- Reduced the potential for more equitable partnerships in education between developing and developed countries; and

- Aggravated poverty instead of helping to eradicate it.

There are many discussions of alternative 'economic structures' that authors believe may help improve people's lives and alleviate poverty (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2000; Marchand and Parpart, 1999; Schurguensky, 2001). The alternatives these authors propose are under the rubrics of par-

ticipatory economics, democratic development, popular, smaller, more exchange-based economics, feminist economics, bioregional economics, ecological economics and others.

Quality of inputs to education

The 'inputs' to education represent what should go into a school if it is to run effectively. These include strong parent and community support, effective support from the education system and adequate material support, such as teacher-development activities, textbooks and other materials and facilities like buildings, desks, chairs and so on. The quality of education may be judged in terms of the impact such 'inputs' have on students.

It seems clear that even before the World Bank and IMF came in with structural adjustment programmes, the inputs to education in were inadequate. In the early 1980s, some reports and studies revealed that most schools in developing countries were under-resourced. For example, Nyirenda (1981), a Zambian scholar, argues that educational development in developing nations is facing numerous problems. The situation that Nyirenda describes was despite the high level of government expenditure in Zambia at that time (World Bank, 1996), and more because of colonial heritage. He identified four critical problems:

1. Scarcity of resources, which include skilled people, money and learning materials. The rising school-age population or the 'student flood', increasing participation rates at every level, and rising human expectations and aspirations are all creating pressure for developing nations to increase expenditures for formal education much more rapidly than their GDP. These countries seemed to be spending higher proportions of their income on education than before, but spending has gone down. Shortages of qualified teachers and administrators also limit the growth and improvement of formal education systems.

2. Overcrowded classrooms, poor student–teacher ratios and a shortage of textbooks and other learning materials and equipment are all associated with *low quality of learning and teaching.*

3. Because of limited financial and other resources, there is a shortage of school places, which limits access to educational opportunity, particularly in the rural areas. Insufficient school places are a major problem facing educational development in developing countries.

4.   The imbalance of school places between primary and secondary schools is a major cause for the vast numbers of school leavers and repeaters. There seem to be fewer school places at secondary level.

More than a decade later, Kelly (1998) argues that the inputs into education are inadequate and it appears that they may have deteriorated over this period. Ndawi (1997) also comments on the quality of education by observing that:

'With increasing numbers of consumers of the commodity (education) against a background of limited material resources, especially in poverty-stricken countries in Africa, the quality of the EFA (Education for All) to be offered is likely to be prejudiced. There will be too few textbooks, exercise books, classrooms, laboratories, pencils, chalk etc. Already critical shortages of resources are being experienced, especially in most rural secondary schools.'

Source: Ndawi, 1997, p. 124.

Kelly (1998) claims that primary education has suffered a great deal in Zambia due to fiscal problems arising from economic recession, structural adjustment programmes and global economic restructuring and the country's inability to keep up external debt payments. For instance, Zambia is classified as one of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) whose situation is described as one of 'helplessness, almost hopelessness'. The situation is extended to the entire social sector in Zambia. Kelly (1998, p. 1) argues that 'this perilous state is known by people, the government knows it, the aid community knows it, and something radical must be done to improve it'.

Kelly (1998) presents the situation as perilous. There appears to be wide differences between families, individuals and schools. For instance, some individuals and schools *do not* experience the extremes that Kelly is describing: there are 'good' schools and 'rich' Zambians. This suggests that schools need to be viewed on an individual basis as well as collectively. However, the author does agree with Kelly's thesis that there is a crisis in Zambia. In addition, the schools affected (government schools) are the ones most Zambian pupils (over 70 per cent) attend.

There follows a discussion of the specific kinds of input to schooling that have been negatively influenced by Zambia's economic problems and policies: health, poverty, teachers' salaries, teaching and learning materials, reliance on donors and school structures.

Health and education

The most important input to education is the learner, who needs to have a capacity for active learning. The health of children appears to affect the actual learning that pupils experience in classrooms, hence attention needs to be focused on the 'quality' of the child – helping the child to become an active agent in his or her own learning. Concern is with the child's active learning capacity (ALC), that is, the child's propensity and ability to interact with and make the best possible use of all the resources offered by any formal or informal learning environment. It is argued (e.g. Kelly, 1999b, Shaeffer, 1994, Oxfam, 2001) that a child's ALC is severely reduced by health-related factors, several of which are of major importance in Zambia.

The major problems affecting children in Zambia include malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, parasitic infections and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Children affected by malnutrition have difficulties in concentrating and paying attention; they are affected in terms of memory and in inclination to be active and explore. Those lacking micronutrients like iodine and iron have difficulty in maintaining attention, alertness, concentration and show less motivation to persist in intellectually challenging tasks. Almost half young children in Zambia are iron-deficient with low haemoglobin levels (Levine, 1992) and many are infected with roundworms, whipworm, hookworm, bilharzia and malaria. Such large infections are associated with impaired cognitive functioning; negative effects on ability to learn; possible effects on short-term memory and the ability to retrieve information from long-term memory; and the ability to make sharp visual discriminations, which is crucial in reading. Malaria also affects children at different times in their lives and impairs children's school participation and learning.

It is claimed elsewhere that good nutrition is important for children's health and impacts on learning in schools. Mukudi (2003) analysing some African countries including Zambia, argues that the linkage between education and nutrition is posited as one of synergism. Good nutrition plays a role in enhancing educational outcomes. Children with nutritional deficiency have difficulty in learning and nutrition-based supplementation has been proved to improve learning outcomes (Mukudi, 2003; Politt, 1995).

AIDS is a challenge to education and has had a devastating effect on education in Zambia. Since the first AIDS case was diagnosed in Zambia in 1984, the cumulative total of notified AIDS cases has increased alarmingly. The data available on HIV infection indicate that Zambia is among the countries more seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Kelly, 2000;

Swainson and Bennell, 2002). Whereas several other diseases are currently more prevalent in the population, there are some important characteristics of HIV and its epidemiology that causes it to have a greater socio-economic impact. Given the current medical technology, HIV seems in Zambia almost inevitably lead to AIDS, a condition that is always fatal.

The most immediate and visible impact of HIV/AIDS has appeared already in many education systems of the world. Children infected at birth do not live to enrol in school. Some of the children that do enrol have to drop out of school in order to earn money for their families and to take care of ill relatives. Meanwhile, teachers fall ill and die, and because students and teachers are ill most of the time, the process of teaching and learning itself becomes more complicated and difficult and its quality deteriorates. The impact of HIV/AIDS is already quite clear and identifiable on the demand for education, on its supply and on the nature and quality of teaching and learning. There are claims that diarrhoeal sicknesses, due in large measure to inadequate water and sanitation, endemic malaria, respiratory sicknesses and the pervasive HIV/AIDS pandemic, have struck hard at a populace already weakened by cash poverty and inadequate food intake. The health situation has deteriorated to the extent that a 'quarter of the Zambian population is sick during any given time' (Seshemani, 1998, p. 5).

Public poverty

It is not only the economy of Zambia that is poor. Its people are poor, indeed very poor (Kelly, 1999a; Kelly, 2000; VSO, 2002). An estimated 70 per cent do not have income enough to provide them with an adequately nutritious daily intake of food. In addition, the cash economy has been severely curtailed with declining wage-sector employment, down from 546,000 in 1992 to 469,000 in 1996 (UNDP, 1997), and no cash economy exists at all across large segments of the rural provinces. There is human poverty manifested by a decline in life expectancy; an increase in infant and child mortality (the 1996 under-fives mortality rate of 197 per 1,000 live births, which had deteriorated by over 13 per cent in ten years, was one of the highest in the world); an increase in child malnutrition (in 1996, 46 per cent of under-fives were stunted through malnourishment); and high maternal mortality levels (649 per 100,000 births).

Given the deplorable statistics, many of which can be attributable to the higher price of foodstuffs and agricultural inputs, the introduction of user charges for health services, the laying off of low-paid government workers and other structural adjustment measures, very many Zambian families

are too poor to make any education-related payments. Yet these are the very families who stand most in need of education for their children if they are to disentangle themselves from the entrapment of poverty and deprivation. They themselves recognise this and state that they would still be prepared to sacrifice even their very limited resources for the education of their children if they could see that the quality of that education was worthwhile (World Bank, 1994b). However, so long as education remains peripheral to the adjustment programme, it will not receive the resources it needs to assure its quality and to make it worthwhile.

Teacher salaries

Because teachers' salaries account for as much as 95 per cent of spending on primary education, much of the reduction in the budget at this level was realised through a reduction in the real take-home pay of teachers. By 1996, teachers' salaries had fallen to about one-third of their pre-adjustment (1981) level. In 2002, teachers' salaries in Zambia ranged from a minimum of 29 pounds sterling (£) per month for teachers to £49 per month for head teachers (VSO, 2002). The situation in Zambia is very similar to that in Malawi where the VSO reports that:

> *'While a Malawian teacher earns 5,000 [Malawi kwacha, MK] a VSO teacher is paid MK14,000. The amount for the VSO teacher is determined to be the minimum required for basic living, not including travel or entertainment. Not surprisingly, poor remuneration has a detrimental effect on teachers' classroom performance, as they reported being tired and distracted during their time in school and in some cases took time out to attend to other business'.*
>
> *Source:* VSO, 2002, p. 26.

It is also not surprising that such low remuneration has led to widespread demoralisation and dissatisfaction among teachers in Zambia (Kelly, 1999a); VSO, 2002). Many of the better ones have reacted by seeking teaching positions outside the country, as have many of the best university lecturers. The restraints on the education budget during the period of adjustment have, in other words, led to an extensive and costly 'brain drain'. Apart from the financial implications, this is something that Zambia can ill afford, given the tremendous shortfall in educated personnel that it has experienced ever since it became independent.

Many teachers who have remained in the system strive to boost their meagre incomes by a variety of extra-curricular and para-curricular activities. Those who cannot find supplementary sources of income remain in

'the slough of despond'. They teach, but experience little of the joy, challenges and satisfaction that committed teaching can bring. Perhaps the remarkable thing is that teachers do continue to teach, even when so lowly paid and without the resources needed for their task. In recognition of this, the Ministry of Education, in its policy statement, has paid tribute to teachers by saluting 'the great number … who work so valiantly, frequently under very difficult circumstances, to educate Zambia's future' (MOE, 1996, p. 107).

Teaching and learning materials

Under-resourcing seems to have impacted on learning achievement among pupils. As observed by Harber (1997, p. 62) it appears that:

> *'There is little doubt that shortages of teaching resources, such as text books, chalk, chalk boards, exercise books, pens, pencils and so on, are a severe hindrance to the development of more active teaching methods and consequently impacts on pupils' learning'.*

The MOE (1996) states that 'all learners should be facilitated in the attainment of the highest standards of learning through teaching of excellent quality'. Quality involves the provision of educational materials and is brought by maximising the efforts of all those responsible for the education of learners. In this case it appears that provision of teaching and learning materials are crucial to better learning and teaching.

Zambia has been trying to reverse the trend of falling standards in the education system, especially in trying to improve teaching and learning in schools in subjects like English. Interventions to date have included provision of resources like textbooks through donors, training head teachers in management, and in-service courses for teachers aimed at improving content and teaching strategies in areas such as English, Mathematics and Sciences (the AIEMS project – Action to Improve English, Mathematics and Science).

Reliance on donors for improved resources

Donor aid seems to be problematic in terms of its adding or reducing constraints facing the education sector. Although some of the countries studied (Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana) are highly dependent on donor aid for educational development, donors and recipients are fairly sceptical about the value of such aid. Donor aid is significant and yet does not seem to always satisfy national goals. It appears

that donor aid is concentrated in sub-sectors, and projects are of the donor agency's choice and preference rather than that of the government concerned. Countries like Zambia and Tanzania have never learnt to say 'No' to projects that do not meet their own priorities.

It is clear that donor agencies do not *run* education or health systems in Zambia and their contribution is quite minimal. However, it is also important to acknowledge the contributions that donors make to improve resources in education, because they have contributed to projects such as Action for the Improvement of English Mathematics and Science (AIEMS). It is also important to note that NGOs have been able to keep the pressure on, in part, by publicising quickly and disseminating widely the continued bad practices and harmful consequences of policies of the World Bank and IMF (Oxfam International 2001; Selvaggio and Henriot, 2000).

It appears that donors are available to give some *short-term* relief to educational problems in Zambia. It has been reported, for example, that rapid population growth and unfavourable economic conditions have contributed significantly to the serious decline in the provision of educational services in Zambia. This decline has led to a number of donor-funded initiatives in recent years in an attempt to strengthen various aspects of the education sector. Some donor intervention programmes have targeted improvement in schools and the education system as a whole.

Although donor support seems significant, it appears minimal and inclined to support *projects* that are short term rather than long-term *programmes*. What seems interesting is that over the last decade it appears that education is still declining after such interventions. Why is this so? Perhaps focus on what happens in classrooms may bring to light other ways of improving schooling.

School structures

A study of classroom conditions in most urban areas in African countries shows that nearly half have inadequate teaching and learning facilities. For example, Hallak (1990) reports that classrooms designed for 40 pupils accommodate up to 70 pupils. The maintenance of school buildings is often the first to suffer in the context of budgetary cuts. A decade later, a report by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2003) revealed that the infrastructure in Zambia had deteriorated over the previous 20 years due to economic decline, lack of resources and institutional inefficiencies. In addition, stagnation of school enrolment is due to a

number of long-standing problems, including not enough schools and long distances between homes and schools.

Many schools in Zambia, especially primary schools, lack many attributes taken for granted in more prosperous settings. Existing buildings often have no water or sanitation facilities, nor do they have enough desks or chairs for students and teachers. Schools, especially those in rural areas, may lack electricity and even when they are connected, power supplies are often erratic and unpredictable.

The next section focuses on the quality of educational outcomes that have emerged from such difficult circumstances.

Quality of educational outcomes

The appropriate starting point here is a discussion of the universal entitlement to basic education. That leads on to a consideration first, of the extent of school participation in Zambia, differentiating between primary and secondary education, and then of the quality of learning outcomes.

Universal entitlement to basic education

At the World Conference on Education for All, held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the international community set for itself the challenge of providing basic education for all and reducing illiteracy. The World Declaration on Education for All that ensued from the conference, stressed the importance of access to educational opportunities: 'every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs' (Article 1). However, equally it stressed the importance of learning outcomes: 'whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development – for an individual or for society – depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities. That is, whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and values' (Article 4).

Almost exactly one year later, in March 1991, Zambia held its own National Conference on Education for All. Article 4 of the Zambia Declaration on Education for All, which was issued by the National Conference, states that: 'the focus of Education for All is not on the numbers enrolled in schools or participating in educational programmes. Rather it is on measurable learning achievements and outcomes.' By that historic declaration, Zambia recognised that the health of its education programmes could no longer be measured merely by enumerating the inputs and resources that

are used by the system. While recognising the importance of input factors, such as numbers enrolled, school building and rehabilitation, the provision of books and learning materials, the training and deployment of teachers, and school inspections, the 1991 Declaration also pointed to the need to focus on what might be called the *essence of school education, good teaching and good learning*, and the manifestation of these in measurable learning achievements and outcomes.

One consequence of this approach was the emphasis that the educational policy adopted by the Government of Zambia in 1992 placed on learning achievement: 'the principal purpose of schooling is student learning and hence unremitting attention must be given to making *student learning* the first priority in all schools' (MOE, 1992a, p. 3). The emphasis of the policy document is on schools as institutions where students are supposed to learn and teachers are supposed to teach.

It is generally accepted that quality basic education will yield the highest social and economic returns and have a positive impact on education, economic development and quality of life (Psacharopoulos, 1985 Fuller, 1991). It is argued that (e.g. Kelly, 1999b, Fuller, 1991, Ndawi 1997) quality universal basic education should, apart from teaching traditional reading, writing and mathematics, help build a strong foundation in reasoning skills, logical thinking and effective communication, as well as strengthen the social values of the community.

In recent years, primary education in Zambia, particularly for girls, has been given precedence over other long-term educational goals (MOE 1992a, 1996, 2002). In addition, primary schooling is the only formal education that the majority of children in Africa can receive (only 30–35 per cent proceed to secondary schools). It is also argued that primary education is of such potential importance because it can reach all the people throughout the country – in rural areas, very remote places, girls, those with disabilities and the underprivileged (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; Scott, 1994). However, if it is to realise its potential, attention needs to be focused on the quality of education delivered. The fact that an individual is in school does not guarantee that he or she is learning. Many constraints already discussed above may influence the education process in Zambia and some can exert profound influence on the dissemination of the teaching and learning process.

Cost sharing and participation in school

Zambia's experience is that cost sharing on the part of the community has contributed to a severe decline in school participation. The signs are numerous: steadily declining completion rates, with few reaching grade 7 at primary level and fewer reaching grade 12 at secondary level; stagnating enrolments in a population that is growing at the annual rate of 3.2 per cent; one-third of the eligible 7–13 year-old population – some 600,000 children – not attending school at all; and 10–15 per cent of final-year primary students not sitting for the crucial secondary selection examination because of inability to raise the prescribed examination fee of about US$10 (Lungwangwa et al, 1998)

The dropout rate at primary level is about 4.5 per cent. As a percentage this is not excessively high, but in terms of numbers it means that about 70,000 pupils leave school prematurely each year, compared with fewer than 20,000 (or less than 1.5 per cent of the enrolment) in 1983. This is a large increase in a period of just 15 years. Reports from the schools attribute more than half the dropout to economic causes: either parents cannot afford the cash payments required in school or they need the labour and domestic inputs of school-going children to supplement the household budget.

On the one hand, the educational participation rate, the premature leaving rate and other measures of the proportion participating in schooling are clear indicators of the inadequacy of education provision. On the other, even as things are, schools and classes are over-crowded both in terms of accommodation and the number of teachers available. It may be argued that there is no point in encouraging more people to attend school unless the buildings, books and teachers are also going to be provided.

Most efforts toward improvement have properly been focused on primary education, in accordance with Zambia's policy priority for basic education. The remainder of this section focuses on evidence relating to the most significant educational outcome for primary education, the quality of pupils' learning achievement.

Learning achievement

In the well-known words of the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All, 'whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development depends ultimately on whether people *actually learn* as a result of those opportunities'. It is argued (MOE, 1992a) the focus

of education must be on *actual learning* acquisition and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment, continued participation in organised programmes and completion of certification requirements. School is a place where students are expected to learn. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) study (Nkamba and Kanyika, 1998) of reading achievement in Zambia set out to investigate how pupils perform in reading English and local languages. The study was conducted in late 1995 by SACMEQ, which prepared and applied reading tests for grade-6 pupils.

Kelly and Kanyika (1999) reported the following:

> *'The principal findings of the National Assessment are that the levels of learning achievement in grade 5 were very low. They were low in English and Mathematics in all parts of the country, for both sexes, and for those from all socio-economic strata in society. Although somewhat higher than in English, levels of learning achievement in Zambian languages were also low, at least in those provinces where these languages were tested. Performance levels were lower in rural than in urban schools. They were lower for girls than for boys. They were lowest of all for girls in rural schools'.*
>
> *Source:* Kelly and Kanyika, 1999, p. 50.

The test was designed to provide a valid measure of basic literacy skills for grade-6 pupils, the minimum and desirable performance standards being based on the professional expertise of Zambian reading specialists. Only little more than a quarter of grade-6 pupils attained the standard designated in advance as the minimum performance level. Only 2.4 per cent attained the standard designated as the desirable performance level. Three-quarters of the grade-6 pupils did not reach the minimum expected level, while 97.6 per cent of them did not reach the desirable level. Put more harshly, three-quarters of grade-6 pupils were found to be virtually illiterate. The analysis from the Eastern Province quotes parents as complaining that 'pupils in grade 7 (age 12/13) are not able to read and write' (Kelly et al, 1998).

Nkamba and Kanyika's study (1998) may be considered to give a poor picture, since examinations do not always give a comprehensive demonstration of actual learning achievement. Specially designed mastery tests are required for this. However, the findings do pose a challenge for all involved in primary education, particularly for those teaching in schools and for the inspectorate. The picture is very poor. Nkamba and Kanyika (1998) claim that:

'Right across all provinces in Zambia, children are not learning much in schools. It is worse for the girls. But since girls have to make their way in a system that has historically been biased in favour of boys, and in a society that is oriented to male values and practices, solid learning achievement is probably of greater importance for girls. Girls do not perform as well as boys in examinations. The percentage of girls who obtain full Grade 9 and 12 certificate is lower than the percentage of boys; the percentage of girls who fail entirely is higher that that of boys.'

The fact that the reading achievement of girls is poorer than that of boys is all the more serious because girls usually command better verbal skills than boys, and in the school certificate examination usually outperform boys in literature and English. The situation appears serious if the Zambian government is to educate more girls and improve the lives of women (MOE, 2002; Kelly, 1998). Girls' low reading achievement in relation to that of boys may lie at the root of their poorer performance in the grade-8-selection examination. During the 1990s there were redoubled efforts to get more girls in school and keep them there. What may also be needed are greater efforts to ensure substantial meaningful learning acquisition on the part of students while they are in school.

In Focus on Learning, a MOE policy paper (1992b, p. 15), it was noted that performance in secondary schools would obviously improve with better graduates from primary schools; as this improvement works its way up to higher levels, the entire education and training system benefits. On the other hand, when quality is poor at the lower levels, considerable resources must be spent at each grade and level to remedy the deficiencies carried forward from the lower level.

Educational research in Zambia

In this section the author reviews some recent studies of the quality of classroom teaching and learning in Zambia and related suggestions for improvement.

National Assessment Project

The results of the National Assessment Project (1999) regarding levels of learning achievement in grade 5 are reported above. However, the project also collected a great deal of other evidence potentially relevant to the factors influencing these levels of learning achievement. The National Assessment Project brought out factors pertaining to home and school

environment among head teachers, teachers and pupils. A central purpose of the National Assessment was to establish base-line information on learning achievement and its correlates.

That base line has now been established, not perfectly but adequately, that learning achievement among pupils in grade 5 is very low. Kelly and Kanyika (1999) suggest that the daunting challenge that faces the National Ministry of Education and Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) is two fold:

1. To remedy the situation as it exists for pupils currently in school, so that their levels of learning achievement gradually improve; and

2. To take whatever steps are needed to prevent the problem of unsatisfactory learning from developing among new entrants to the school system.

Taking appropriate action along both dimensions will ensure that subsequent assessments will show real and substantial improvements in the learning achievement of pupils in the lower and middle basic grades. The conclusions of the National Assessment Project are based on a survey using achievement tests, together with questionnaires completed by head teachers and teachers.

Kelly and Kanyika's findings may be useful and helpful to understand factors affecting teaching and learning in Zambian classrooms today. They document their findings and bring out characteristics of head teachers, teachers and pupils. Kelly and Kanyika show that there are several factors that contribute to low levels of achievement.

The evidence from the National Assessment Project is that most school heads sampled in the study are persons of long classroom experience, considerable 'headship' experience and reasonable stability in the school they are heading. Their teaching responsibilities are also satisfactorily large, covering on average about two-thirds of the actual teaching week. They appear to be well-qualified individuals who have received considerable in-service training, with the majority having also received some management training.

Although concerned about teacher shortcomings, such as late arrivals and absenteeism, almost all school heads have instituted programmes aimed at the professional development of teachers. Head teachers are aware that in many respects their schools fall far short of the ideal. They have a strong professional interest in seeing that this is remedied, particularly by improvements in the furnishing and infrastructure that will enable them to

provide conditions more conducive to learning. They also want to see their schools equipped with the learning materials and resources necessary for good teaching and satisfactory for pupil learning.

Kelly and Kanyika (1999) claim that few of the teachers teaching in grade 5 have been well educated and trained. Though relatively young, they are experienced, highly professional and dynamic teachers who are concerned about their professional development and gladly seize opportunities for self-improvement. They draw strength and professional support more from one another than from outsiders. They make use of various teaching strategies and methodologies. They are conscientious about monitoring pupil performance through various activities within class, homework and through extensive testing. They work under somewhat difficult conditions, in classrooms that are not adequately furnished or equipped. In particular, they must teach with some books generally available, but never enough for pupils, even on a shared basis. Teachers find the management of their schools supportive of their work, but are demotivated by the level of their salaries and the inadequacy and poor quality of teacher accommodation.

It is important to recognise that the pictures painted by head teachers and teachers are based on what they say about themselves. While these pictures are indeed encouraging, they need to be understood for what they are. If head teachers and teachers are really positive in their attitudes, it is surprising that learning achievements are so poor. Kelly and Kanyika's study does not seem to provide convincing evidence of what really underlies poor levels of achievement.

Overall, the National Assessment brings out the enormous potential for enhancing pupil learning that exists in those teaching grade 5 as also, no doubt, in the majority of teachers in primary schools. What needs to be done is to establish conditions that will enable all teachers to actualise their potential, so that they in turn can assist pupils to bring out their latent possibilities. Kelly and Kanyika (1999, p. 8) suggest that

> *'The discouragement of finding that the levels of pupil learning achievement are so low should be counterbalanced by acknowledging the latent potential of Zambia's teachers, recognising that they are like a coiled spring, ready to erupt into a ferment of activity on behalf of pupil learning, if given the necessary support, supplies, encouragement and motivation'.*

This focus on teacher motivation is echoed by other studies conducted in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa (VSO 2002, Oxfam 2001).

In terms of learning achievement of students, Zambia appears to be a nation at risk. The critical state of learning achievement that the National Assessment has documented is not confined to grade 5. The Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) and SACMEQ (Nkamba and Kanyika, 1996) investigations indicate that low levels of learning achievement are equally characteristic of grades 4 and 6. The overall conclusion seems inevitable: levels of learning achievement are low right across the country, in all grades and in all curriculum areas. Very little learning of the type expected by society is occurring in Zambia's schools.

Collectively, the National Assessment, SACMEQ and MLA studies reveal what virtually amounts to a national emergency in the learning situation in schools. An emergency situation requires an emergency response, in this case a strenuous national campaign for the improvement of learning in the lower and middle basic classes and perhaps at all levels of education. The campaign should focus on action at two levels – preventive and remedial – and should seek to mobilise the human, material and financial resources needed to effect an improvement in the learning situation in schools.

Kelly and Kanyika (1999) suggest that schools need to be 'flooded' with the necessary textbooks and learning resources. Through school-based and regional centre in-service activities, teachers need to be helped to integrate these materials into their teaching. These resources should be supplemented by a steady supply of back-up materials that will help teachers in their actual classroom teaching.

The authors seem to be addressing the national Ministry of Education and the education boards. What appears realistic in the short term is perhaps to invest more into what teachers and pupils can do to improve the teaching and learning processes. However, the 'flooding' of resources that is called for may be implemented more realistically in the long term. Other interventions that Kelly and Kanyika (1999) claim are needed include all spheres in the education system, that is inputs, processes and enabling conditions:

- *Key inputs* for bringing about pupil learning are teachers and materials, especially writing materials and textbooks.

- *Key processes* are teaching methods, the proper use of books, regular pupil testing and feedback, and frequent and regular homework that is quickly marked and returned to pupils.

- *Key enabling conditions* are a school ethos (to a large extent personified in the school head) that is unambiguously oriented to pupil learning, and adequate time for that learning to take place.

Taking the preventive and remedial actions advocated for the improvement of classroom learning necessitates the large-scale mobilisation of resources. The National Assessment, SACMEQ and MLA studies all point to the pedagogical degeneration of schools, which have been denied the resources needed to ensure worthwhile pupil learning. The low levels of learning achievement of the majority of pupils is the high price that Zambia is paying today for under-investment over a number of years in the instructional dimensions of education. Remedying this intellectual decay will entail very great cost. However, this cost must be met if education is to play its proper role in the development of the country's people and economy.

The preventive and remedial measures outlined above may result in more investment in teachers, teaching materials and books. Kelly and Kanyika (1999) also argue that school and system-based dimensions relate to learning achievement:

- The longer it takes a pupil to travel to school, the lower the mean achievement scores;

- Those who have repeated a grade have lower achievement scores than those who have not repeated;

- The availability and use of books in the classroom raise levels of learning achievement, with best results being obtained when the pupils share books, preferably with two pupils to a book;

- Higher levels of learning achievement are attained when students are given homework regularly and frequently, but not too often;

- Better learning occurs when pupils are seated comfortably, on a chair or at a desk, but the benefits are lost if pupils are crowded around a desk;

- Better learning occurs when pupils have sufficient writing space at a stable facility, such as a desk or table, designed for this purpose;

- Levels of learning achievement of students who have manual work or sports at school every day tend to be somewhat lower than those of students who have work or sports less frequently; and

- The learning achievement of pupils taught by female teachers surpasses that of pupils taught by male teachers.

Kelly and Kanyika have produced clear statistical evidence showing these relationships between system-based dimensions and learning achievement levels.

Literacy programme

After some debate on which language to use in instruction of lower grades 1 to 3, the Zambian Policy on Education (1996) states that a local language will be used for the first two grades. The language policy in Zambia (MOE, 2002) has been modified to allow for initial literacy to be taught through local languages. The argument for this change in language policy is the attribution of low levels of achievement to the long-standing policy of using English as a medium of instruction from grade 1, that is, from age six or seven.

A literary programme was identified as one way to improve literacy levels in primary schools. The pilot study commenced in 1996 and there have been some encouraging findings:

> *'Zambian children who learn through the local language acquire literacy skills at an earlier age; the approach is transforming classrooms into lively learning environments where confident, happy children interact freely with their teachers and can work independently and co-operatively; teachers are abandoning their traditional chalk-and-talk approach in favour of child-centred group work and the use of the local language is binding school and community more closely together'.*

> *Source:* Kelly, 1998, p. 11.

The findings seem convincing, although minimal evidence only was gathered from the sampled schools. The schools and teachers were trained and evaluated by the researchers and they also received support from them[1]. The support offered also seems to take for granted the activities that enable pupils to learn, which perhaps may be lacking in other schools where this child-centred approach has not yet been implemented. It is also assumed that most teaching and learning activities under this programme take place in the classroom.

Apart from the literacy programme, another programme that has been introduced in Zambia is the 'integration programme', discussed below.

Integration programme in secondary schools

Some policies that have been implemented in Zambia may seem to have contributed to further decline in the provision of quality teaching and learning. Most countries have adopted a policy of inclusion for children with special educational needs. Zambia has also adopted such a policy, known as the 'integration programme'.

Children with special educational needs include those with physical disabilities, and children with a hearing, visual and/or cognitive impairment. Special education has become a proxy for wider concerns about education and social policy. It is certainly at the centre of debates about inclusion and exclusion, about identity and diversity, about professional roles and responsibilities and about the extent to which similar standards and targets can be set for *all* children. In most countries since the 1980s, there has been a movement towards integration of 'special education' into the mainstream (Florian and Rouse, 2001).

'Integration' involves preparing pupils for a placement in ordinary mainstream schools, where the pupils must be able to adapt to the school. 'Inclusive education' is based on a value system that recognises and 'celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language of origin, social background, level of education achievement or disability' (Mittler, 2000, p. 10). This implies that all pupils have the right to attend their neighbourhood school, which is important for social reasons. Inclusion means that all teachers are responsible for the education of all children and the curriculum must be adapted to cope with this diversity.

In Zambia, there is a lot that needs to be done in order to achieve accessibility and quality of education for exceptional children. It is important to identify the barriers to learning in order to identify where the transformation of the system needs to occur. Kelly documents that:

> *'These barriers lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, leading to learning breakdown or preventing learners from accessing educational provision. The challenge is to minimise, remove and prevent barriers to learning and development and thereby assist the education system to become more responsive to the diverse needs of the learner population'.*
>
> *Source:* Kelly, 1999a, p. 24.

Social economic disadvantages have had a negative effect on education and all aspects of social development in the majority of the population. The effects of sustained poverty, which becomes a self-perpetuating cycle, such

as under-nourishment, lack of or overcrowded housing and unemployment, all have a deleterious impact on learners, including those with disabilities who are excluded from the system. Other social, economic and political conditions have had harmful effects on the physical and emotional well-being of children such as dysfunctional families, sexual and physical abuse, and chronic illness, including HIV/AIDS. These barriers are most severe among the marginalised in society, such as those with disabilities or special educational needs. This barrier is compounded by lack of teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials and large classroom numbers, which inhibit teachers from providing individual attention.

Language and communication may also be a barrier to learning when the medium of instruction is not the first language of the learners. Sign language is not provided for deaf learners in 'integrated' classrooms and there is a lack of alternative and augmentative communication strategies for non-speaking learners. Kelly (1999a) tabulates some barriers for students with special educational needs and their teachers. These include inaccessible and unsafe built environments, which are barriers when not adapted to the needs of learners with physical and/or sensory disabilities; lack of parental recognition and involvement in the support for education provision to learners; and lack of human resource development, including education and training of teachers and other relevant role players.

There are other disabilities among Zambian children including physical, neurological, psycho-neurological and sensory impairments; moderate to mild learning difficulties in reading, written language and maths; and speech, language and communication difficulties. It appears that only those with sensory hearing and visual impairments have been integrated. The lack of protective legislation and/or a policy to support the development of an inclusive education and training system, and perhaps implementing the integration programme without much preparation, seem to have further disadvantaged pupils.

To some extent the Ministry of Education has realised that something needs to be done to support education, even for special needs children. In *Educating our Future* (1996, p. 69) the MOE policy states:

> *'To the greatest extent possible, the Ministry will integrate pupils with special educational needs into the mainstream institutions and will provide them with necessary facilities. However, where need is established, the Ministry will participate in the provision of new special schools for the severely impaired'.*

More needs to be done to help students with special needs. The development of an integrated and community-based support system aimed at building the capacity of all aspects of the system to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population needs more consideration. Information advocacy and mobilisation is important. This may facilitate a shift in thinking about 'special needs and support' in Zambia towards an understanding of and support for the development of a better inclusive education and training system. It is important the children with disabilities are brought to school and that parents do not feel uncomfortable to bring them.

The provision of appropriate and adequate funding support, which focuses on addressing particular educational needs, with the most vulnerable learners and institutions being a priority in the short, medium and long term is very important. However, can Zambia afford such a programme? There could be better ways of implementing the integration programme. For instance, having teachers who know sign language and Braille in schools where pupils are integrated would assist pupils and perhaps they would learn better. There should also be accessible and safe built environments to cater for the needs of learners with physical and/or sensory disabilities.

Secondary schooling in Zambia

In most previous attempts to improve the quality of education in Zambia, the emphasis has been on inputs, that is, pupils, materials, resources, teaching staff, the values of a school, goals and infrastructure. Kelly (1998) and Lungwangwa (1992) have identified rapid enrolment growth and economic decline as factors that have badly damaged the quality of schooling, whilst Heneveld (1994) argues that factors of support from outside and the deteriorating climate within schools have contributed to the decline in the quality of teaching and learning. Secondary schools have been neglected as a focus for research and for planned improvement. This book may help in bringing out some suggestions for improvements in classroom teaching and learning of secondary English in Zambia.

As mentioned before, there are three types of secondary (and high) schools in Zambia: government, grant-aided and private. In 2002, the total number of schools was 256, of which 208 were government, 33 grant-aided and 15 were private. Most such schools still structured with grades 8–12 (age 12–18), while a few – the high schools – have grades 10–12 (age 15–18).

The challenges facing secondary schooling in Zambia are reported to include funding from the government being unreliable, irregular and

inadequate and most schools relying on community support through fees and other fund-raising methods (MOE, 2002). As a result, resources to maintain the quality of high-school education are extremely limited. Infrastructure and equipment in many schools are in a poor state, and supplies of educational materials such as textbooks are insufficient and out of date. The situation is worse in schools located in rural areas.

The focus of this book is secondary schools. Various problems make teaching and learning difficult for teachers and pupils both in primary and secondary schools. However, secondary schooling cannot wait until the problems of basic education have been resolved before it receives critical attention.

Just as what is happening at classroom level has to be understood, and could perhaps be improved, without waiting for improvement in the overall economy, so what is happening at secondary level has to be understood, and could perhaps be improved without waiting for the impact of improvements at the basic level. It is crucial to understand precisely how inadequate resourcing is preventing good quality teaching and learning in schools. There is need for those concerned with secondary schooling to seek ways in which their current problems might at least partially be resolved, especially in establishing strategies of teaching. It is also important to focus on the opinions of those at the centre of teaching and learning in classrooms – the teachers and students themselves.

Educational crisis: conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the impact of under-resourcing that Zambia's education sector is facing. The country's poor economy and policies such as the structural adjustment programme have impacted on the quality of inputs and outcomes of education, on the health of students, student achievement, teacher morale and the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

The Zambian economy has been in dire straits for 20 years and the government has felt obliged to accept World Bank and IMF directions for structural adjustment, with negative consequences for public health and welfare and the funding of education. Resource inputs to education have been greatly reduced, directly with reduced salaries for teachers and reduced expenditure on buildings and educational materials, and indirectly through parents' poverty and children's poor health. Educational outcomes have also deteriorated significantly.

This book does not dissent from two widely held and documented views. First, most problems with Zambian education are due to grossly inadequate resourcing and second, the national educational priority should be with basic education. However, the quality of secondary education also remains important. There is therefore a need to explore at secondary level, as Kelly and Kanyika (1999) have done at the basic level, the nature of the suspected link between poor resourcing and poor outcomes. Given Zambia's continuing economic problems, it is also crucial to consider what kinds of improvements might be made without, or with very little, increased resourcing.

The remainder of this book will explore these issues, especially as they relate to the teaching and learning of English at secondary-school level. To consider such classroom teaching and learning in an informed way, a wide range of literature is reviewed in the next chapter to establish a tentative best understanding of what good classroom practice in the teaching and learning of English in Zambia would be if there were no severe financial constraints.

Note

1.   Interview with research leader, July 2001, Lusaka, Zambia.

Chapter 3
Developing Good Practice in Teaching English

Introduction

The two general tasks that were concluded from the previous chapter were: first, understanding the processes through which constraints resulting from economic and political policies seem to be undermining the quality of achievement in Zambian secondary schools; and second, exploring ways in which the quality of teaching and learning processes, and the quality of achievement, might be improved without substantially increased resources. The two tasks of this book are enormous and given the limitations of the study it centres around, it is necessary limit them to an extent. Hence the study concentrated exclusively on the teaching and learning of English in secondary schools, because English is of central importance in Zambian education and society.

Given the decision to focus on the *processes* of schooling in Zambia, it is important to reflect on which processes are key and in what terms they should be considered. The first section of chapter 3 discusses research-based models of school effectiveness and improvement, their relevance to schools in Zambia and what can be learned from them. In that section the case for concentrating on classroom processes as a critical perspective is made and will significantly inform the way findings are interpreted and used in the final chapter.

How then can one best study classroom processes, given especially the lack of previous research on classroom processes in Zambian secondary schools? This is the focus of the following section in this chapter. Here is argued the case for seeking the views of teachers and pupils on effective classroom teaching and learning.

As the main official language of the country, but not the first language for many people, English has a rather complicated position. In particular, the teaching of English in Zambian secondary schools cannot be treated

either as first language teaching or straightforwardly as second-language teaching. The following section explains the distinctive place of English in Zambian history, society, education and the consequences of this for the teaching of English in secondary schools.

Finally, there is the problem of what kind of literature of English teaching, if any, might usefully inform research and interpretation of the study's findings. This is a problem because of the distinctiveness of the Zambian English teaching situation and because there has been no previous research on English teaching in Zambian secondary schools and very little literature on English teaching in other similarly situated African countries. This chapter argues first for a broad-based review of the international literature on effective teaching, taking some account of this particular concern with English teaching, but relying mainly on more general perspectives. This is because the English teaching with which this study is concerned does not conform to any of the particular traditions, for example teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) or English Literature, that have been widely researched. The other arguments are that the focus should be on widely-used *strategies* of teaching (Beresford, 1998) and accordingly explore the extent to which there is a broad international consensus on effective classroom teaching strategies.

While a great deal of classroom research from 1975 to 2000 has been directed towards determining the kinds of teaching that are most effective for promoting pupils' learning, there has been a decisive shift in researchers' attention towards a focus on teacher cognition. This shift has come about through recognition that effective teaching is not primarily a matter of well-implemented behavioural strategies, but is rather a matter of teachers' expert *decision-making*, both in their planning and in their classroom interaction with their pupils. In order to be well placed to interpret teachers' perspectives, there is a need to understand what international research has found out about classroom teachers' cognition. Therefore the second area of research literature to be reviewed is on teacher cognition, with a particular emphasis on teacher cognition in second language teaching.

Understanding within school processes

This section argues that this book's research into school processes, which connect inadequate inputs to inadequate outcomes, should be focused on *classroom* processes. Three main arguments can be advanced to support this focus on classrooms.

The first is that in Zambia, as almost everywhere, schools are organisations set up with a view to facilitating teaching and learning *in classrooms*. Whatever else happens in a school is primarily for the purpose of facilitating classroom teaching and learning. The second is that there is ample evidence for the usefulness of research into classroom processes: classroom researchers have been able to reach conclusions, which seem to be both valid and practically useful. The third, the most complex but perhaps the most persuasive argument, is that the many researchers who in the last 20 years have focused on whole school effectiveness and improvement have increasingly tended to the conclusion that it is after all what happens in the *classroom* that matters most (Harris, 2003; Rita, 2002; Heneveld, 1994). Much of this section will be concerned with elaborating on this third argument.

A second purpose of this section will be to consider the relevance and appropriateness for the Zambian situation of the managerial perspective that has dominated school effectiveness and improvement research and thinking. For example, researchers in Britain offer some ways of dealing with the question of improvement. Hopkins et al. (1996) argue that in the research literature on effective schools there is strong evidence that success is associated with a sense of identification and involvement that extends beyond the teaching staff. It involves the pupils, parents and other members of the local community. Pupil involvement seems to be a particularly important factor. At the classroom level, this occurs when pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and, through involvement, to learn organisational, planning, discussion, decision-making and leadership skills. It is therefore necessary for teachers to set conditions that will enable them to facilitate the learning of all students.

The conditions Hopkins et al. (1996) propose may not be in a ranking order, but the notion of the relationship between pupil and teacher seems to be at the centre of what they find to be important. *Promoting the learning process*, or better teaching and learning in classrooms, appears to be the goal for such conditions to be effected in schools. These conditions seem to relate directly to what happens in classrooms. Some of the conditions proposed by Hopkins et al. (1996) are in figure 3.1 below. These conditions seem to influence how teaching and learning in classrooms occurs.

'Authentic relationships', for example, might occur in a school where there may be a culture of 'collegial' relationships, understanding and respect for individuals and groups of individuals within schools.

Before accepting the detailed recommendations of Hopkins et al. (1996) or school improvement writers, one would need to be sure of their

⬥*Authentic relationships*: **the quality, openness and congruence of relationships existing in the classrooms**

⬥*Rules and boundaries*: **the pattern of expectations set by the teacher and school of student performance and behaviour within the classroom**

⬥*Planning, resources and preparation*: **The access of teachers to a range of pertinent teaching materials and the ability to plan and differentiate these materials for a range of students**

⬥*Teachers' repertoire*: **the range of teaching styles and models internalised and available to a teacher dependent on student, context, curriculum and desired outcome**

⬥*Pedagogic partnerships*: **the ability of teachers to form professional relationships within and outside the classroom focusing on the study and improvement of practice**

⬥*Reflection on teaching*: **the capacity of the individual teacher to reflect on his or her own practice, and to put to the test of practice specifications of teaching from other sources**

Figure 3.1: Conditions that may facilitate student learning
Source: Hopkins et al. (1996, p.37) *Improving the Quality of Education for All*

relevance to the Zambian situation. Nearly all the work concerned with models of school improvement and effectiveness has been done in the relatively rich countries of Europe and North America, and it would be unwise to assume that the conclusions of such work would be relevant in the very different context of Zambia. For example, one obvious weakness of importing the Hopkins et al. (1996) framework to Zambia is its underlying assumption that all schools may be well resourced.

Even within the European context, there has been growing criticism of such generalised models for school effectiveness and improvement because of their lack of adequate attention to *context*. While valid generalisations based on significant statistical relationships may be asserted about the importance of certain factors, the translation of such school effectiveness research into school improvement strategies has not been found to be straightforward. Contextual factors of an economic and especially of a cultural nature, including cultural variations relating to criteria of effectiveness, seem to be of major importance in considering how schools can be improved (West-Burnham and Bradbury 2003; Teddlie and Reynolds 2000; Harber and Davies 1997).
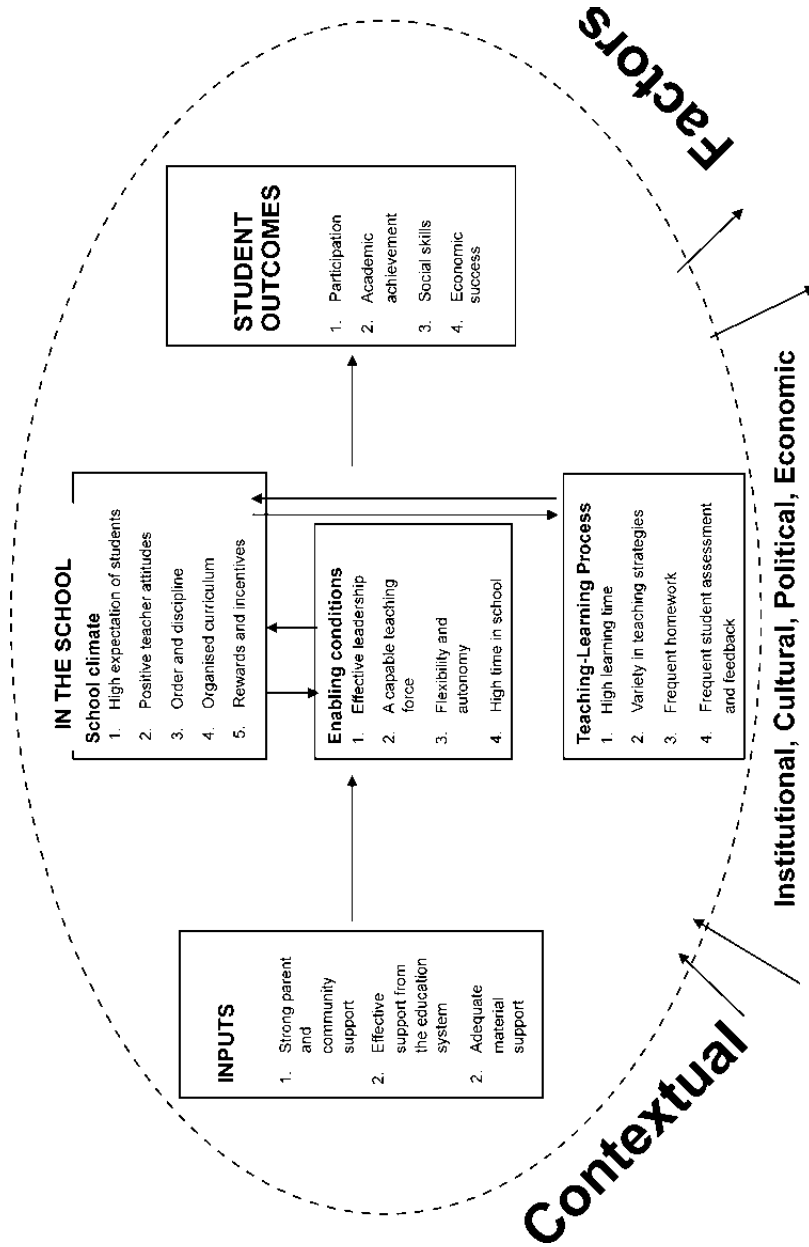
IN THE SCHOOL

School climate
1. High expectation of students
2. Positive teacher attitudes
3. Order and discipline
4. Organised curriculum
5. Rewards and incentives

Enabling conditions
1. Effective leadership
2. A capable teaching force
3. Flexibility and autonomy
4. High time in school

Teaching-Learning Process
1. High learning time
2. Variety in teaching strategies
3. Frequent homework
4. Frequent student assessment and feedback

STUDENT OUTCOMES
1. Participation
2. Academic achievement
3. Social skills
4. Economic success

INPUTS
1. Strong parent and community support
2. Effective support from the education system
2. Adequate material support

Factors

Contextual

Institutional, Cultural, Political, Economic

Figure 3.2: A conceptual framework of factors influencing good quality education (adapted from Heneveld, 1994)

Heneveld (1994) is one of the few writers on models of school effectiveness who has addressed himself explicitly to conditions in sub-Saharan Africa. He argues that there are many factors that influence what happens in the classrooms, and these factors may not be ignored. Heneveld (1994), for example, discusses the external and internal elements that may influence teaching processes and learning outcomes. These are presented in figure 3.2.

The arrows in the diagram indicate that *inputs* flow into a school where the 'school climate', 'enabling conditions' and 'the teaching/learning process' combine to produce student outcomes. The factors influencing a good quality school are embedded in a context that includes institutional, cultural, political and economic factors. These are also surrounded by conditions within, for example, the African continent, sub-Saharan region and within the country itself. Such conditions are also continually being influenced by the international and global conditions. The institutions surrounding the education system, which include the country's ministry of education, may condition how the education system functions. Cultural values and practices condition how the factors in 'inputs' and within the school affect student outcomes. Political and economic conditions may significantly influence how the education system operates and what inputs it receives.

Perhaps one of Heneveld's (1994) strengths is the argument that in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning, all the elements that influence schools and classrooms may have to be considered as they have significant influence on what happens in classrooms. He claims that within classrooms, enabling conditions include a good amount of learning time, a variety of teaching strategies, frequent homework, frequent student assessment and feedback. It seems the reverse may be the opposite of an efficient classroom – low learning time, rigid teaching strategies such as lecturing, lack of student assessment and little feedback. While classroom processes are at the centre of the work of schools, it is important to understand the contextual factors that most heavily impinge on what happens in classrooms. It is also important to note that classrooms are complex places to study (Cooper and McIntyre, 1996).

Heneveld (1994) suggests a model of what quality schools should be, almost suggesting the elements as yardsticks for measuring quality of leadership, teaching and learning and outcomes. Heneveld's model might be valid in its prescriptions for what ought to happen, but it does not seem to be helpful for guiding schools towards that ideal, nor indeed for explaining what happens in practice. It does not, for example, provide an explanation for the type of authoritarian classroom environment that prevails in most developing countries. For example, in Nepal 78 per cent of fifth-grade sci-

ence instruction was through lecturing with less than 7 per cent involving student participation (Harber and Davies, 1997, p. 51). Authoritarian classroom environments have frustrated policies theoretically aimed at greater participation and pupil involvement, and Heneveld's framework seems unhelpful in understanding school cultures or why schools are managed in less democratic ways when most developing countries claim to be democratic.

More generally, the stringencies and contexts observed, for example by Harber and Davies (1997), are not located in generalised school effectiveness models such as that of Hopkins et al. (1996). The lack of contextualisation of ideas of effectiveness and the lack of consideration of economic, resource, violence, health and cultural factors are important. The neglect of contexts may mean that it is not easy to translate school effectiveness research into school improvement anywhere, but especially not in regions that are very different from those in which the school effectiveness research has been conducted.

However, Harber and Davies (1997) are more radical in their arguments for contextualising school improvement and effectiveness, questioning as they do the value of attempts like Heneveld's to adapt models based on schooling in rich countries to meet realities of developing countries. Harber and Davies (1997) argue that conventional school effectiveness literature has failed to grasp or to transform the nature of school management in developing countries because the models proposed have neither a proper empirical base nor an appropriate theoretical base. They claim that if schools in developing countries are ineffective they may display problems and dysfunctions very different from schools in industrialised settings. Schools are ineffective for different reasons, reasons concerned with the nature and purpose of schooling itself. One of the key reasons why schools operate ineffectively is fear. At individual and institutional levels, it is easier to maintain the current system than to take risks and experiment with challenges to orthodoxy. Conventional effectiveness research and school improvement programmes present no such challenges. What is needed for improvement is just such a challenging of assumptions about school management, something that frameworks such as Heneveld's fail to do.

Harber and Davies (1997) claim that improvement programmes in developing countries that are linked to effectiveness research, which compares schools on examination success, are doomed to failure in that not all schools in a selective system with winners and losers can be 'good'. They argue that research can best feed into improvement programmes: if it is confined to one country or region; if the identified goals are acceptable to

government, teachers, students and parents; if goals are potentially achievable by all participants; and if the goals are turned into relevant recognisable indicators, even if these are not tidy.

Harber and Davies argue that macro theories of development (right or left, capitalist or socialist) all come together to explain why schools in developing countries continue to exhibit features of inefficient bureaucracy. It is not just colonial heritage. Mass schooling is organised in a pyramidal, hierarchical and selective way and is able to maintain a system of natural selection and survival of the fittest so that a society roughly allocates and prepares 'appropriate' people for appropriate slots. For theorists and governments espousing versions of modernisation theory, the streamlined selective school is a deliberate choice; however, even those governments attempting socialist transformation and genuine mass education appear to have been unable to divert systems away from bureaucratic forms. The poorer the country, the more inefficient the bureaucracy becomes. Ironically, the poorer the country and the more fragile its government, the more important it is for it to retain the myths and inefficiencies. Dropouts, wastage, absenteeism, examination failure are all there because the country cannot cope with too much success.

Harber and Davies state that they have little interest in making schools in developing countries (or elsewhere) simply more efficient selective bureaucracies. They have tried to show that finding more efficient ways of getting marginally more children through examinations is not in the country's interest in the long term. This will not help the problems of world peace, poverty or inequality. Instead, they were able to find examples of what they call genuinely effective, post-bureaucratic schools or systems, in schools or countries that have been prepared to take risks. What characterises those initiatives are: a degree of consistency in the goals of all the participants; flexibility in organisation to maximise current learning and enable lifelong adaptability and lifelong ability to learn skills; and a democratic ethos and structure which not only enhances such learning, but prepares children for future political participation in a more sane world. Harber and Davies argue that the failure of conventional (or even bureaucratic) effectiveness research is the emphasis on changing processes instead of changing goals. Post-bureaucratic effectiveness research and school-improvement policy focuses first of all on the goals of all actors in the game in a particular country or culture; only then does it look at processes (including management processes) that may be able to meet or reconcile those goals.

Harber and Davies suggest a four-prong strategy in establishing school management for post-bureaucratic school or society:

1. To establish a range of goals *achievable by the majority of learners*, which match national goals for development. Democracy is now currently one of these national goals.

2. To establish a number of indicators for those goals at the level of the school. For example, if the national goal is health, then the school-level indicators may be health knowledge and application of related health skills; if it is citizenship, then the indicators may be participation in decision-making and knowledge of the political system; if it is mass literacy and communication skills, then the indicators may be students talking with each other to solve problems and ensuring that all can read.

3. To experiment with and to trace through a flexible range of processes, which may achieve particular goals, and to cost out their implications. This part of the strategy includes ethnographic research to establish how and whether participants come to share the same discourses, and what rewards or costs are experienced.

4. To engage in parallel work on 'footshooters', the logics explaining why teachers remain ineffective and why schools retain cost-effective ways of operating. Are these 'own goals' kicked in by the government, by the head, by individual teachers or by students themselves? (Harber and Davies, 1997, p. 170)

Harber and Davies argue that providing 100 textbooks (according to the World Bank-type improvement factors) will not alter the way teachers behave. In the context where teachers turn up irregularly, extra resource provision will not address the question of how or whether these books are used. *Why* teachers act in ways that mean that in the long term their role and status is ineffective should perhaps be discovered. Harber and Davies (1997) offer a theory of relationship between education and development and claim that the democratisation of schools can and should go hand-in-hand with economic and political democracy. Schools cannot transform society on their own, but schools and the individuals within them can help make a start. They claim that democratic initiatives will succeed only with some realism about what material and psychological gains people will accrue from.

Harber and Davies' (1997) work is potentially important for this book at three different levels. First, it argues persuasively for both the need for and the possibility of generating models for school improvement that not only give adequate importance to 'context', but also take as their starting point the realities of schooling in the developing world. Their argument is persuasive, and their attempt to develop a model that starts from African realities points the direction for those of coming after them. A second and more specific level at which their work is directly relevant is that they have suggested that the provision of greatly increased resources may not necessarily be the key to improvement. Third and most specifically, they offer some ideas that might be adapted for purposes of considering how teaching and learning in secondary schools might be improved.

This section has had two major purposes. The first of these was to make the case for concentrating this study on classroom processes. Three arguments were advanced for this. First, in principle schools are there to facilitate *classroom processes*. A second argument is that school improvement researchers have come to recognise that in schools, it appears that it is what happens in classrooms that is most important and a third, that there are several different approaches to studying the effectiveness of classroom processes, all of which have been productive. The second purpose was to emphasise the importance of *context*, and especially the major differences in the contexts for teaching and learning between schools in sub-Saharan Africa and those in the richer countries of the northern hemisphere. Sensitivity to context will need to influence both the means chosen for studying classroom processes and also the interpretation of findings, with any proposals for school improvement needing to be highly responsive to the distinctive Zambian context.

Block et al (1998, p. 5) observed that 'to some extent the expansion of education in sub-Saharan Africa has occurred without anyone examining the content [what is learned] and the *process* [how it is learned]'. There are various possibilities of studying *what* is taught and *how* it is taught within classrooms. Perhaps the proper place on which to concentrate attention is the classroom and the proper people on whom to concentrate are certainly teachers and pupils.

Perspectives of teachers and pupils

Although there are several ways of studying effective teaching and learning, the author is of the view that the best of these is seeking teacher and student perspectives.

The author's overall approach to studying effective teaching and learning in Zambian schools is very much influenced by her understanding of the usefulness and limitations of generalisations about effective teaching and learning. What will be effective in one classroom will depend on the distinctive context and history of that classroom and of the people in it. The best teachers are those who not only understand what is generally effective in their context, but who can judge correctly what they can most effectively do in each specific situation as it arises. It is evident from the research literature on teaching that some useful generalisations about effective classroom teaching and learning can certainly be made, and in a later section of this chapter such generalisations are derived from the international literature. However, all generalisations must be treated with caution because in teaching, cultural and other contextual factors are very important in determining both what is possible and what is effective. Caution is necessary at two levels. First, the Zambian context is clearly distinctive, so international generalisations must be applied only with caution to Zambia. Second, even valid generalisations about English teaching and learning in Zambian schools would need to be applied with caution in the context of particular lessons. Seeking teacher and pupil perspectives on their particular classroom experiences is one way in which the distinctiveness of findings for each classroom, or the 'generalisability' of findings across classrooms, can easily be explored.

A further argument for studying classrooms through teacher and pupil perspectives stems from the argument advanced above about the importance of contextual factors for this study. While the case for concentrating research attention on classroom processes is strong, understanding of these processes and any attempts to ameliorate them must depend on finding out about contextual realities, within or outside school, that influence what teachers and students do in classrooms, or indeed may be influenced by what happens in classrooms. Such significant contextual realities would not be captured at all by approaches to classroom study that relied primarily on observation, experiment or on highly-structured questionnaire or interview methods. On the other hand, a natural component of semi-structured conversations with teachers and with pupils about what happens in their classrooms will be discussion of the reasons and the implications of these classroom practices. Teacher and pupil perspectives on classroom processes include accounts of contextual realities that in their experience impinge on or are impinged on by these classroom processes. Such accounts

are of critical importance in understanding why the classroom processes are as they are and their implications for pupils' lives and learning.

It is also important to complement the tentatively-relevant international generalisations by investigating the realities of such teaching and learning in Zambian schools. The study highlighted here favoured exploration of the insights of teachers and pupils with regard to both good practice and to what actually happens in their distinctive contexts.

Teacher voice

Most researchers like the perspectives of teachers to be included in research as these are the 'active agents' of teaching in classrooms. Oplatka (2002) and other researchers argue that:

> *'Understanding teachers' perspectives towards their roles and responsibilities over the domain of schooling may help school policy makers and school governors in planning the involvement of teachers in policies affecting teachers. Any policy that ignores teachers' perceptions of the impact of educational policy upon their roles and behaviours may fail, for teachers seem to be both protagonists and the performers in any educational reform'.*
>
> *Source:* Oplatka et al, 2002, p. 180.

Cooper and McIntyre (1996) argue that through knowing about teachers' and pupils' classroom practices and the thinking that underlies them it is possible to theorise incisively about limitations of current practice. It may also be possible to educate beginner teachers to plan intelligently for the development of classroom practice. Cooper and McIntyre (1996) have observed that those who study classroom teaching and learning have become increasingly conscious of the complexity of classroom life and the difficulties of making helpful prescriptions for it. They suggest that:

> *'The things that teachers and pupils try to achieve in their classroom teaching and learning, the ways they try to achieve these things and the problems they encounter offer very fruitful starting points for generating hypotheses about effective classroom teaching and learning'.*
>
> *Source:* Cooper and McIntyre, 1996, p. 2.

The argument for teachers to be involved in educational change within schools and classrooms is clear. Teachers need to be considered as partners in any reform process, and it is important they are involved and have a voice in research in classrooms, education, policy and the production of instruc-

tional material, because they are active agents in education delivery at the heart of the school – the classroom.

Value of pupil perspectives

The perspectives of pupils have been investigated for some time, from Hargreaves (1967) to Rudduck (1999), although Hargreaves did not 'advocate' a pupil voice in educational decision-making as Rudduck does. It appears that research up to the 1990s had not yet fully provided the kind of information which might allow schools and teachers to do better. To do this, research involving discussion with students and perhaps comparing student and teacher views is needed. It is observed that after the 1990s research into classrooms tends to increasingly include pupil perspectives (e.g. MacBeath et al, 2003; Rudduck et al,1996; Cooper and McIntyre, 1996).

Pupils are sometimes considered as dependents and in societies like Africa, where the 'elders' are considered as having 'wisdom' and expertise, it is difficult to consult pupils on what they consider important in the teaching and learning processes. Nonetheless, researchers all over the world have suggested the importance of pupils' perspectives in enhancing student learning. Stenhouse (1983) argues that researchers need to focus on pupils' needs because it seems:

> *'...there is more that the school can offer to the pupil apart from the 'cognitive' aspects of learning. Pupils want to feel understood and given that which they expect the school to give. The teachers tend to think that they know what is best for the pupils, but the pupils know what is best for themselves. Pupils' views can be considered even in very important decisions affecting them like education in schools. Perhaps it may be argued that the effectiveness of schooling inevitably depends on meeting students' felt needs and it is only students who can tell us about these needs'.*

More generally, pupils have a lot to tell researchers that is worth considering, and this seems an argument that applies to them with equal or greater strength than to teachers. They can explain which lessons they enjoy and 'understand'; and how some teachers, by using a variety of teaching strategies, make their learning easier or more possible.

There seems to have been some neglect of pupil and teacher perspectives and the new light that these can offer on classroom processes. Erickson and Schultz (1992, p. 476), for example, suggest that 'virtually no research has been done that places student experience at the centre of attention'. In Sweden, Andersson (1995, p. 5) has noted 'politicians who decide about school reforms and the teachers who run the classrooms seldom ask how

students themselves perceive their school.' Levin (1995, p. 17) from Canada notes that 'while the literature on school-based management advocates more important roles for teachers and parents, students are usually omitted from the discussion.'

Nieta (1994, p. 395) proposes that 'one way to begin the process of changing school policies is to listen to students' views about them.' This is echoed by Phelan et al (1992) from North America who argues that 'it is important to give attention to students' views of things that affect their learning, not so much the factors outside school, but those *in school* that teachers and policy makers have some power to change.' Researchers like Rudduck and Flutter (2000) have similarly argued for pupils' perspectives. Rudduck (1999) similarly argues that:

> *'Pupils are not always the same, so we should listen to them. They are observant and have a right, but often untapped, understanding of processes and events. Ironically, they often use their insights to devise strategies for avoiding learning, a practice that can be destructive to their progress over time. Pupils' accounts of their experiences of being a learner in school can lead to changes that enable pupils to feel a stronger sense of commitment to the school and to the task of learning; and commitment can lead to enhanced effort and enhanced levels of commitment.'*
>
> Rudduck 1999, p. 82.

There is need to build more opportunities for pupil participation and pupil voice into the fabric of the schools' structure. It should be noted that it takes time and very careful preparation to build a climate in which both teachers and pupils feel comfortable working together on a constructive review of aspects of teaching and learning.

Some authors, like Krechevsky and Stork (2000), consider learning as *engaging students* cognitively, emotionally, aesthetically and ethically in solving problems and creating products considered meaningful in a culture. This 'culture' is further insulated *within* schools. Hence, it is difficult to change or improve schools from outside by outsiders, but this improvement can best work *within schools*, by schools and at the heart of each school – the teaching and learning process and by *those affected* by this process: the teachers and pupils.

Cooper and McIntyre (1996) argue that:

> *'Learning directly from pupils, about how their learning has been facilitated by other teachers, could be a powerful stimulus to teachers in en-*

couraging them to extend, and perhaps to reflect on, their own teaching repertoires.'

Source: Cooper and McIntyre 1996, p. 94.

Conclusions drawn by Cooper and McIntyre (1996) may be worthwhile and relevant, but the schools in Cooper and McIntyre's study were not under-resourced like Zambian schools. The important lesson one may draw from such studies and others is the importance of asking and listening to teachers and pupils' views about what they consider effective or practical to improving teaching and learning in classrooms.

English language in Zambia

An important part of the context of any subject teaching is the culture of the society and the way the particular subject relates to that culture. In the particular context of the teaching and learning of English in Zambian secondary schools, that is especially so because of:

- the distinctive linguistic and cultural context the teaching and learning have to deal with;

- the distinctive political, historical and economic place of English in Zambian society; and

- the total absence of previous known research directly relevant to the good practice in the teaching and learning of English in this kind of context.

According to the provisions of the Education Act 1966, the official language of instruction in Zambia was English from year one of the primary school; this was adjusted in 1996 to begin with a local language in the first two grades. Local languages such as Cibemba, Cinyanja, Citonga, Silozi Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda are 'official' Zambian languages approved for educational use in designated regions. They are used in specified situations such as school broadcasting, parliamentary debates, law courts and administration. English is used in education as medium of instruction, in the law courts, parliament, administration and commerce and trade (Kashoki, 1978; Mwanakatwe, 1974). It also serves as a lingua franca for intra-national communication purposes.

English being the key subject and language of instruction seems to be at the core of teaching and learning in Zambia. The quality of the teaching and learning of secondary English is likely to be a major factor influencing

levels of learning achievement and later access into the working world. The centrality of secondary English in any English-speaking country and the distinctiveness of the Zambian situation are significant reasons for this book's concentration on English learning.

History

Zambia, like many sub-Saharan African countries, is multilingual. Individuals in the country speak one or more local languages besides their own mother tongue. In the absence of a single, dominant or indigenous language, such as Swahili in Tanzania, Tswana in Botswana or Swazi in Swaziland, it is argued (Kashoki, 1976) that English is a unifying language. Zambia continues to use English both as a medium of instruction and subject throughout primary and secondary schooling and post-secondary schooling. There has been some debate on the use of English as a medium of instruction from as early as 1911, but at that time it appears there was almost no debate on *how* English was taught in schools.

The providers of education in the early 1900s in Zambia were mainly missionaries. Lungwangwa (1987) notes that between 1895 and 1923 there was no school system in Zambia to talk of. What existed were 'sub-schools' or 'village schools' organised by evangelists who, besides giving religious instruction, taught what they knew of the 'three Rs' (reading, writing and arithmetic) and a little English to irregularly-attended classes of both sexes and all ages. It is also reported that there were some missionaries who saw education as being synonymous with western civilisation and culture. They imposed not only English and its literature upon the African people, but sought to eradicate African culture, which was seen as depraved, degenerate and evil (Oliver, 1952). English was therefore instituted as medium of instruction and as an important language related to Christianity.

Tembo (1973) reiterates the above. He argues that English in multilingual developing countries, for historical reasons, is the chief language of commerce, industry, administration and most important of all, the education system. English is used for both intra- and international purposes of communication and in many countries is recognised as a lingua franca intended to promote national unity.

English as a school subject was based on what the British colonial government perceived to be best for the native population. In 1911 and 1923 there were the first and second imperial education conferences held in London. The 1923 conference was especially concerned with the problems

of bilingualism and the use of English as a medium of instruction. A memorandum on Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa (1925), a report submitted to the secretary of state for the colonies in March 1925 entitled *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa*, stated that:

> *'During the elementary and primary stages we regard it as essential that the medium of education should be a native language and that English should be introduced only at a later stage. In the secondary and further stages, English and English alone should be the medium of instruction. When English is taught at all, it must be taught thoroughly and completely and only to such pupils as are undergoing a period of school life long enough to enable English to be learnt properly'.*

A memorandum on 'the place of the vernacular languages in native education' (1927) underlined the recommendations of the earlier report and pointed out difficulties related to the multiplicity of languages and dialects; the implications of language pedagogy; and the economic implications of producing teaching materials, textbooks and literature in more than a limited number of native languages. The committee also remarked:

> *'There can be no doubt that one of the main incentives if not the incentive of African parents in sending their sons to school is for them to acquire knowledge of English. They naturally regard knowledge of English as the principal means whereby they can attain economic advance in later life. Any attempt therefore, to delay unduly the introduction of English into African schools would be regarded as the attempt of Government to hold back the African from legitimate advance in civilisation'.*

A memorandum on language in African school education (1943) reaffirmed the two principles stated in 1925 and 1927 reports. First that education should begin in the home language of the child and second that the teaching of English is essential. The country's recent policy (MOE, 2000) is similar to this. It states:

> *'In Grade 1, literacy shall be taught in a familiar language, and English as well as Zambian languages are additional language subject... The reforms in terms of language instruction have two purposes: 1) to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and 2) to increase the respect and fluency in Zambian national languages. The ministry's intention is by no means to diminish the importance of English. English is the official medium of communication and remains the gateway to higher education, to international training and to the international labour market. It is also a very important lingua franca in the Southern African region'.*

Source: MOE, 2000, p. 23.

Other earlier reports emphasised the use of a child's home language initially in school, but emphasised that English was to be the medium of instruction in schools. *The East African Royal Commission Report* (1953) revised the 1925 recommendation of the advisory committee on the use of a child's home language as the language of instruction in the primary school. The report stated:

> *'We think that the teaching of English should begin in as low a class as possible and should become the medium of instruction as early as it can be followed by the pupils.'* (p. 184)

There have been sharp criticisms in the past of colonial teaching of English language and culture: Nkrumah (1964) observes:

> *'Our pattern of education was formulated and administered by an alien administration, desirous of extending its dominant ideas and thought processes to us. We were trained to be inferior copies of English men, caricatures to be laughed at with our pretensions to British distorted standards betraying us at every turn; we were neither fish nor fowl. We were denied the history of our own past and informed that we had no present; we were trained to regard our culture as barbarous and primitive. Our textbooks were English textbooks telling us ways of living, English customs, English ideas, English weather etc.'*

Source: Nkrumah, 1964, p. 57.

Leaders promoting patriotism like Nkrumah may be seen to be counteracting the 'negative' experiences of English and policies that may have seemed to be erasing the African languages and their culture. It appears that initially the concept of introducing English may not have included encompassing the culture and customs of the African or Zambian people. Most if not all textbooks at that time were simply imported from Britain to classrooms in Zambia and other colonies. However, English textbooks have now been modified and adapted to include Zambian situations and contexts.

Teaching English in Zambian schools

McGregor (1968) argues that teachers of English in Africa have the chance to help pupils to develop and use *skills* of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Through the exercise of these skills, pupils may learn to *think* and *feel*. Some essential aspects of good teaching according to McGregor may include teaching skills not facts, moral awareness and expectations,

confidence through *explanation, co-operation* and fruitful *silence*. McGregor argues that listening, discussing, debating, arguing and above all reading, provide children with the chance to make value judgments and choices. He argues that secondary-school pupils may need all these skills by the time they leave school, if they are going to be equipped to go on educating themselves. English courses must provide opportunities for practising such skills in a variety of enjoyable and purposeful situations.

Extensive reading, intensive reading and writing are important. In relation to intensive reading, McGregor (1968) advised that pupils should not be called upon to read aloud without careful preparation and until they have had a great deal of practice. Teachers should help them to prepare for reading aloud, recording meanings so as to improve standards, as often as possible within a limited and loaded English timetable. A pupil should certainly read aloud to the class, and practise him- (or her-) self until he (or she) can do it well. That children will enjoy this greatly is reason enough. On teaching writing skills McGregor argues:

> *'If we are going to presume to teach children in Africa how to write English, we ought to make ourselves aware of the possibilities, by knowing the best that Africans have already written in English. We should do this by buying much of what has been written by African writers, by lending it to our pupils and seeing that copies of suitable books by African writers are in the main school library and in the form/grade libraries'.*
>
> *Source:* McGregor 1968, p. 98.

What is assumed in this context is that libraries and reading books are made available to pupils. He stresses that:

> *'We are* not *primarily training pupils to write for any examination. We want them to write because writing is a valuable form of self-expression and because language being very closely related to thought, there is some chance that writing clearly will help to think clearly. All this is closely linked to the confidence flowing from the teacher and pupil. It is important for teachers to share with pupils the knowledge that writing is difficult, as it is. And for us to share the knowledge that we, like them, forget most of what we write. If we do not share these truths, then we simply ensure that the learning process is an extremely depressing one'.*
>
> *Source:* McGregor, 1968, p. 9.

McGregor's arguments were based on the newly-independent Zambia of the late-1960s, where perhaps many expatriate teachers were providing education to Zambians. Some of the constraints experienced in schools after 1980 may have been absent or minimal in McGregor's time. However,

the skills McGregor (1968) elicits are important for secondary school graduates not only in order to educate themselves, but for purposes of further education, communication, business and other careers that students may undertake in future.

Most discussions and debates about the teaching and learning of Zambian secondary English have focused more on what teachers ought to teach in order to help pupils to learn better. There has been very little research conducted to investigate the prevailing situation inside Zambian classrooms or to investigate the teaching-learning process and *how* teachers and pupils perceive the activities within classrooms, what is helpful or the constraints they face in realising the student outcomes expected of them.

Zambian secondary school English appears to have the same goals as those listed by McGregor (1968). The emphasis on learning English is on gaining, developing and using *skills* of listening, speaking, reading and writing while in school and later in life (MOE, 2000). One of the aspects noted about the English learnt in Zambia is that of deep ambivalence – the acceptance of English as the main official language of the country, despite all the negative connotations of English as the colonial language. Such a conflict of values may lead to contradictions in educational policy, in parental attitudes and in student motives (Serpell, 1980, p. 1).

The role of English in enabling individuals participate in the institutions of the country creates a dichotomy between those who can participate by virtue of their education and those who cannot for lack of it. English appears to have become a symbol of power, since it is associated with powerful institutions and the prestige inherent in those institutions. Most 'working-class' and 'middle-class' individuals possess the language. For most people, it seems knowing English and passing it in exams secures one's future. English is capable of conferring 'power' upon the individual who speaks it, including the power to pass examinations in other subjects, get into further education and embark upon a good career in order to survive.

In Zambia, it is observed that where two languages exist side by side, the relationship between the mother tongue and English is based on a functional division between two languages. It is argued that:

> '...the local language appears to express traditional values and behaviour and the other (English) modernity and a new set of role-relations based on education and socio-economic status. Mother tongue may be associated with home and other intimate and non-formal situations, while those of English may be associated with those of the formal. However, the formal and non-formal domains overlap in their use'.

Siachitema, 1986, pp. 231–233.

In Zambia such distinctive and overlapping differences may be drawn, but in English-speaking countries like the United Kingdom, where English is the mother tongue, first language for most individuals and the medium of instruction is in English, English may not have the 'power' connotation when spoken outside the school or at home. The skills taught may be similar, but there are also major differences – including the availability of teaching and learning material in English schools and the lack of them in Zambia. In the two contexts, English can be seen as having the same goals and strategies. English in Zambia may also be viewed as the teaching of English as a second language in that it is not the first language for most students.

The components of English, like grammar, composition or essay writing, summary writing, listening and speaking are at times taught as complete separate lessons in Zambia. In the United Kingdom, this pattern seems to have been modified to some degree with recent innovations such as the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy (Davison and Dowson, 1998; Brindley, 1994; Department for Education: www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/literacy). Furthermore, the major differences in the linguistic starting points of students make the learning and teaching tasks very different. Nonetheless, there are distinct similarities in the teaching of English in the two contexts.

Yet the question still remains: How can Zambian secondary English be taught to improve or enhance student learning despite the economic and material constraints experienced by schools in Zambia? The following section discusses strategies that may be helpful in the teaching and learning secondary English.

Strategies for English teaching and learning

Previous research has identified quite a large number of what seem to be generally valid conclusions about effective teaching for various purposes in language classrooms, but none of these can be treated as automatically valid for any particular context. They can, however, provide useful hypotheses from which to explore what makes for effectiveness in one particular context.

This section reviews some of the methods or strategies most commonly used in teaching. The argument here is for a very broad-based review of the international literature on effective teaching, taking some account of this book's particular concern with English teaching, but relying mainly on more general perspectives since the English teaching in this study does not con-

form to any of the particular traditions. The focus will be on widely-used *strategies* of teaching.

'Strategies' in this section refer to the broad kinds of purposive activities in which teachers and their students engage in order to promote learning. The review is based on evidence about kinds of strategies that are very widely used and favoured in practice by teachers internationally (Beresford, 1998; Good and Brophy, 1987).

In English teaching, the language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are interrelated and the learning context in English lessons may usually be planned to create situations in which students are given instruction and practice in using these skills in a variety of situations. In teaching these language skills, a teacher may employ different strategies in classroom teaching. These are the methods or strategies that will be discussed in this section, which include explaining, questioning, reading, writing, marking, group work, drama and role-plays, quizzes and games.

These strategies of teaching, like language skills are not used separately in teaching, but they appear to be used at different stages or even at similar times in one lesson depending on the activity. The aim of this section is to gather evidence of useful and good practice in teaching secondary English that may be helpful in improving the teaching of English in Zambian secondary schools.

Explaining

Explaining appears to be employed in most lessons and subjects in school. Wragg and Brown (2001) define explaining as 'giving *understanding* to another'. They claim that, after comprehensive review of research on explaining, teachers in classrooms appear to explain things every day of their professional lives and the ability to do this well is one of the things that makes a successful teacher. Effective explanation is the foundation on which sound learning is built, and it is a core teaching strategy that may improve teaching and learning for teachers and their pupils.

Wragg and Brown (2001) seem to take a very broad view of 'explaining', including the use of a variety of teaching methods, using methods which cater for the diversity of pupils' learning styles, and generally **anything** that is aimed at giving learners understanding. But not everything with this aim is 'explaining'. Explaining means trying to enhance someone's understanding through direct communication with them, in speech, on paper, using verbal or visual means, to encourage them to explore the issue through practical work or using reference materials.

Effective explaining according to Gage (1968) is getting to the heart of the matter with just the right terminology, examples and organisation of ideas. Other explainers, on the contrary, get pupils mixed up, use terms beyond their level of comprehension and draw inept analogies.

Conditions for effective explaining

- *Clarity*. The principal purpose of an explanation is to give understanding to the learner. Clarity in explaining any topic is important. Clarity includes a clear structure, clear language, clear voice, fluency and strategies such as questioning, use of examples/analogies, use of practical work and management of classrooms. Class management involves arranging discussions, activities and seating so that optimum conditions for learning and understanding are established and a high degree of attentiveness and involvement is maintained.

  Wragg and Brown (2001) note that researchers have identified clarity and fluency, emphasis and interest, use of examples, organisation and feedback as elements of explaining that appear to be related to pupil learning. By giving understanding to others, explaining things clearly, teachers can develop their own understanding and ultimately their own professional skills.

- (ii) *Empathising with learners*. The ability to empathise with the learner is the hallmark of an effective explainer. The ability to see concepts, issues and processes from the learner's point of view means that the choice of language, examples, points to emphasise, review questions and so on will be apt. Teachers spend a lot of time talking – explaining things. A question-based approach, combined with the need for variety in methods of classroom working, may stimulate learners. Part of the aim of every teacher must be to switch teaching methods in order to sustain interest of learners.

  It seems that pupils may learn a lot from one another if teachers explain things clearly to them so that they can do them later among themselves. In an environment where there are few teachers, such strategies seem to be more effective than teachers' explanations seeming to be rushed and brief in order to complete the syllabus.

- (iii) *Explaining the right things*. Teachers need to know the subject content well before they can explain it. Modern language teachers,

for example, are expected to be right up to date with contemporary spoken and written language, and able to cover non-fiction as well as traditional fiction. Knowledge of subject matter and strategies for explaining are often closely connected. If a teacher has a good grasp of what is to be taught (the content), it puts him/her in a better position to determine appropriate strategies (how to explain the topic). This idea of 'pedagogic content knowledge' is important: the expert explainer is one who not only has mastery of the content knowledge, but who also has the expertise to represent that content knowledge in ways that make it easily understandable to learners.

Teachers are also reminded in their explanation to find out what individual pupils already know and understand about a topic or concept; to use an appropriate language register with choice of words and phrases appropriate to the context; and find out about misconceptions which need to be unlearned because the pupils' perspectives are especially important (Wragg and Brown, 2001).

Goal: improving pupils' learning

The main goal of explaining in classrooms is to give understanding to students. There are certain points to bear in mind when talking of the pupil's perspective, as exemplified by Wragg and Brown (2001). In summary these can be expressed:

- *Understanding*: During the explanatory process, pupils' understanding should be growing and the teacher should be able to predict roughly the final expected level of attainment, given the capabilities of the child or group concerned.

- *Involvement*: Pupils themselves need to be involved in the process, rather than merely act as the passive recipients of an explanation, i.e. participating in discussion, asking and answering questions, making suggestions or observations and helping to shape the process, wherever this is appropriate. This is not to say that every explanation should be interactive, but that there should be sensitivity to the active role that members of the class might play.

- *Mutual explanation*: Opportunities should be provided for pupils to explain to teachers and also for pupils to explain to one another.

- *Listening*: Teachers must listen to their students and respond to what they hear, while pupils listen to the teacher and to one another. People sometimes say that they are listening, but they have often already decided what they are going to do next, or they think they know what pupils are going to say, so they 'listen' with closed ears.

- *Using and extending ideas*: It is important to secure some degree of involvement, but a further step is to weave pupils' ideas into the discussion or activity and then extend these.

- *Humour*: There are many kinds of humour, and studies have shown that children like humour, although they dislike sarcasm. Humour related to the concept(s) being explained, as opposed to gratuitously humorous asides not relevant to the topic, may help learning, since it can aid recall and, in certain cases, enhance understanding. Humour should appear natural and spontaneous because forced humour can have a much less positive effect.

- *Further appetite*: Try to create a feeling that something interesting and worthwhile has been learned and thus whet pupils' appetite for learning more (Wragg and Brown, 2001, pp. 55–56).

Aids to explaining

Audio visual aids have a significant purpose in classroom teaching and learning (Woods, 1996). They aid explaining, add concreteness and realism, complement verbal explanations, add interest, promote curiosity and break up a long explanation with something more tangible. Woods argues that much of pupils' learning in school is alienated because it consists of other people's knowledge purveyed in transmission mode. It seems that a good deal of Zambian political 'wisdom' on educational issues stresses the formal (lecturing) approach to teaching. However, one aspect of the teacher's role is to give effective explanations; **part** of the pupils' commitment is to listen to them. The more effectively explanations are constructed, the more learning is expected to occur. Nevertheless, explaining should not be divorced from its wider contexts. Explaining is one of the weapons in the armoury of the teacher and occupies only part of the teachers' time.

The next strategy is questioning.

Questioning in classrooms

Questioning is a teaching strategy or a set of strategies that is used frequently (Cooper and Hill, 2000). Both in theoretical debate and in practice, there seem to be several different purposes for using questioning in teaching. Perhaps the most common purposes are:

- to find out about learners' knowledge, understanding or views;

- to pose problems for learners to challenge their thinking; and

- to provide models for the kinds of questioning involved in successfully pursuing an intellectual task, such as making sense of a text.

Much debate about questioning as a teaching strategy is implicitly concerned with which of these or other purposes should be pursued, while research on teachers' questioning has not tended to be very conclusive. Much of the debate and of the research has been conducted in terms of different types of questions. Of the many ways of categorising questions, the distinction between 'higher order' and 'lower order' is probably the simplest and the most popular.

Low- and higher-order questions

The distinction between low and higher order questions is in terms of the tasks that students are asked by the questions to undertake. 'Higher order' questions are those that seem to require more intellectually demanding tasks, corresponding to the second and third of the three purposes suggested above – for example, tasks of reasoning or problem-solving. 'Lower order' questions are those that seem to demand less intellectually demanding tasks, such as expressing opinions or recalling previously-learned facts. The distinction is a crude and imperfect one, and embodies a built-in preference for the 'higher-order' type of question.

Most questions that teachers ask in classrooms are among the lower order questions, mainly of recall. The value of higher order questions may have less to do with passing examinations, and more to do with developing pupils' cognitive and critical faculties. Some researchers have suggested that higher order questioning in classrooms does not have a measurable effect on pupils' abilities to pass examinations. The evidence that higher order questioning falls off in examination groups suggests that passing examinations requires more repetitive and conformist skills of students.

There is some evidence (Davies, 1996) to suggest that teachers use the same repertoire of questioning skills, and the same patterns of questioning,

lesson after lesson. The number and type of questions used by an individual teacher tends to remain constant from one observed occasion to another. Teacher questions reveal the kind of thinking that person expects from students; it also sets the whole tone of learning in that class: enquiry, conformity, regurgitation, speculation and so on.

Common types of questions in English teaching include:

- What did we talk about yesterday?

- What does ……… mean?

- Who is the writer referring to?

While all these questions might well be recall questions, only the first of them is ambiguously seeking recall and not a higher order question. What the other two questions certainly seem to do is to focus the attention of teacher and students on the same intellectual task. They seem to be the 'staple diet' of classroom questioning in the teaching of English. What these questions share is that they are all designed to help students recall or revise material that has already been covered. They are useful as a starting point to a session or a topic because they focus the student's mind on the subject matter before the teacher tries to move on. In the teaching of English literature or literature in English (literature not necessarily being English, but could be West African, American or Caribbean), the communal reading of a text exemplified by the particular questions quoted earlier, with the teacher working through the text by asking questions and elaborating on the most helpful answers, seems a very common type of activity in English teaching.

Recall questions

It seems teachers want to establish some common intellectual ground, some shared knowledge with pupils before the lesson moves on. Recall questions are valuable in serving that function. Sometimes these questions are also used during lessons as a means for the teacher to obtain feedback on how learning is progressing. Different kinds of questions are likely to be appropriate for different purposes.

Although learning of more ambitious and open kinds may be significant, it appears that low-order questions are important for teachers and pupils when it comes to passing examinations. Many academic commentators wish to promote more higher order, more open, problem-solving questions, while most teachers, faced with the real task, implicitly value a larger

proportion of lower-order and more closed questions (Wragg and Brown, 2001).

Reading

In learning to read, factors such as reading material, its use and availability, level of difficulty, silent or loud reading and support may contribute to the quality of the interactive learning context available for learners and teachers. A behavioural interactionist perspective comes into its own as a powerful model for understanding aspects of the process of learning to read and, more importantly, how to structure a responsive social context for more effective tutoring of reading. The emphases for reading in both Zambian and British English classrooms/lessons are to encourage pupils to:

- Read an increasingly wide range of different types of texts, or genres;

- Respond critically to this range of genres;

- Read voluntarily for pleasure;

- Become independent in their selection and evaluation of books and other materials as sources of information;

- Develop conscious control over their own reading and study strategies; and

- Develop sensitivity to an increasing awareness of the linguistic selections and patterns which distinguish one genre from another and which are used to achieve an almost infinite range of literacy, persuasive and communicative functions.

    Source: Davies, 1990

The difference in the United Kingdom and Zambia may be that in Zambia reading material is scarce, thus affecting the achievement of the aims of reading in secondary schools.

A widely-agreed goal of education is to foster in students an affinity for books and reading. Yet surveys show that children read comparatively few books and spend only a small amount of time reading (e.g. Farquhar, 1987; Garvey and Hegarty, 1987; Whitehead et al, 1977). For example, the 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) found that 13 per cent of children in England disliked reading compared to an international average of 6 per cent. The report claims that children in England spent more time watching television and playing computer games[1] . Inter-

est in reading requires the cultivation of a reading ethos, of the teacher reading alongside students and promoting an interchange of opinions about reading, allowing students to explore their own reading interests, making recommendations as an adult reader and demonstrating one's own enthusiasm for reading. A wide range of reading materials should be available for independent reading, such as prose, poetry, dictionaries and language reference books.

As a teaching strategy, reading is distinctively important for language teaching and specifically English teaching in this context, but perhaps distinctive in its purposes and in its nature. Further complications arise from the differences between first and second language teaching, and from the linguistic realities faced by teachers in Zambian secondary schools.

Below the author considers conditions that contribute to effective reading.

Conditions for effective reading

- *Opportunity*. For pupils' reading, the most important setting event is regular opportunity to read meaningful passages from interesting books to an interested listener. This view is supported by authors such as Smith (1978), Clay (1979) and McNaughton (1987).

  The level of difficulty of books is clearly another antecedent influencing teacher and child interaction in reading. Books that are too difficult to read present so many new words that they become contexts for word-by-word reading and for excessive attention to graphonic cues. They offer severely limited opportunities for children to employ semantic and contextual strategies to solve unknown problems.

- *Guidance*. A related antecedent event in learning to read that teachers easily provide is a preparatory introduction and discussion of the material to be read. Research in New Zealand by Wong and McNaughton (1980) demonstrated that a seven-year-old reader improved her accuracy and self-correction of errors on occasions when the teacher carried out in advance a simple discussion of the story to identify events, outcomes and unfamiliar words and concepts. These results have been confirmed in two further studies (Singh and Singh, 1984; Knott and Moore, 1988).

  It seems clear that one-to-one reading sessions may well make more effective learning contexts if the tutor takes the time to introduce

the material to read, perhaps by discussing the story and by pointing out words the child is unlikely to have encountered before. This antecedent procedure may provide a more effective means of improving reading accuracy than the more intrusive and time-consuming method of the teacher responding to errors as they occur.

• *Level and variety of reading material.* Wharton and Race (1999) argue that reading is both a matter of quality and of quantity. Pupils need to learn the skills of target language reading and need a rich exposure to a variety of written texts. Such exposure will contribute to general language improvement, as well as fostering reading competence itself.

Teachers need to supplement the readings in the textbook. Extra readings are usually easy to get hold of and may be an opportunity for the teacher to respond to pupils' particular interests and to bring new ideas into the class. Learners could also be asked to bring in texts for use in class. In these ways, the teacher can give pupils exposure to a wider variety of texts.

Wharton and Race (1999) propose ten tips on enhancing effective learning through reading. Some of these include:

— Using comprehension questions carefully;

— Using reading as an input to other tasks, for example, writing summaries of texts;

— Talking about good reading strategies such as skimming;

— Talking about text structure, the parts of texts that carry important information;

— Teaching dictionary skills: practice in looking up words and understanding the information and examples will give learners confidence to read outside class. By studying its explanations and examples, learners can gain a richer picture of the meanings of words they do not know; and

— Encouraging reading for pleasure: including this as a class activity, occasionally with short texts, and helping learners to choose suitable books, magazines etc… and sometimes asking them about their reading.

- *Other methods to support reading.* Other strategies proposed by Davies (1996) may include: cloze procedure, where certain words are deleted from a text and pupils read aloud predictions for the missing words and explain the reasoning; a sequencing of events in a prose extract; predicting events by the look of the cover or during reading in class; questioning the text to understand it better and make meaning; teacher reading; shared reading in groups with good readers helping the less able; supported reading by classroom assistants; individual reading; dramatic reading from texts; and games and ice breakers such as those proposed by Davison and Dowson (1998). Other strategies suggested include still images of a group posing for a scene from a book and later bringing the characters to life; hot-seating, where pupils choose to represent a character in a book and other students devise questions to determine how the character feels at a particular moment; and plays reconstructed from the events in a text. All such strategies could be used to motivate students to read and develop other skills related to reading.

  Use of a good proportion of authentic texts is encouraged. Successful reading of texts from the world outside the classroom is motivating and exposure to such sources can provide language development opportunities on conscious and unconscious levels. Teachers may adjust the task associated with the reading to make the text accessible. Wharton and Race (1999) argue that one of the most important factors that predetermine success in learning of any kind is *confidence*. Language learning is particularly dependent upon confidence. Teachers need to give learners every chance to develop this confidence, and one of the best ways of assisting them to do this is to help them to gain greater control over the *processes* they apply during their learning.

Writing

This section focuses on writing as a strategy for teaching English, what teachers use writing to achieve and how best they can use writing to achieve such goals.

The role of writing in thinking and learning has been widely emphasised by Langer and Applebee (1987) and Langer (1986). For many students, writing in school consists of laborious handwriting, copying information from textbooks or note taking dictated by the teacher or written on the board. Different subject teachers may have differing expectations regarding

the content and style of written work, but some may emphasise features such as neat handwriting, tidy presentation and correct spelling of words already learnt in primary school (Langer and Applebee, 1987).

For English, the purposes of writing may be partly for examination purposes, yet there seems more to it than that. Davies (1996) claims that:

> *'In everyday life, we are more likely to use writing not only to remember things, but also to organise our ideas, reflect on experience, communicate with others, clarify ideas, report events, share opinions, entertain, inform and persuade. We use a variety of forms to transfer our inner thoughts to an explicit recorded form, ranging from notes and diagrams, to diaries and formal reports. If we are writing to inform, or entertain, we choose from a variety of literary and non-literary formats: plays, poetry or leaflets'.*

Davies, 1996, p. 120.

There are certain conditions needed for effective writing. Some students may need peace and quiet, while others prefer background music. Resources such as dictionaries, a thesaurus, a word processor or spell-checker help to make writing easier. Students as writers appreciate a constructive and tactful response to their work.

Kinds of writing

The kinds of writing in English lessons depend on what objective the teacher would like to achieve. The National Curriculum in England and Wales proposes a variety of types of writing, which include accounts, stories, lists, captions, posters, instructions, letters, poems, invitations, play scripts, descriptions, reports and essays. Teachers and students should be aware of a clear sense of purpose for writing, and students need to realise that as writers in control of their writing, it is they who should decide upon the format and style that is most appropriate for the intended readers. It is argued that:

> *'Students are more motivated if they are asked to write with a genuine say in what they are to write about and if there is a genuine purpose for writing. Teachers may need to help students where they can write to appropriate people such as local politicians, to express their own views on genuine local issues. They can be encouraged to write to newspapers, magazines and television as an outlet for their views. Writing is easier if it is based on some form of reality, so if students are writing in the form of a report or survey, it may be more relevant if they actually carried out the research'.*

Davies, 1996, p. 121.

The National Writing Project (1993) in England carried out several action research projects investigating effective practice in teaching students about writing. Their research identified the structure of the developmental writing process as:

1. Motivation to write
2. Brainstorming
3. Reflection
4. Making preliminary notes
5. Drafting
6. Revising
7. Editing
8. Writing final copy
9. Publishing/display
10. Response from readers

Source: Davies, 1996, p. 121

Whatever kind of writing a student is presenting, the above seems workable and likely to produce better writing skills than one where students just write one draft and submit for marking. Langer and Applebee's (1987) analysis of the effects of different writing tasks (e.g. note-taking, answering questions, essays) on different learning tasks (e.g. recall, argumentation, composition) yielded three main findings. First, all types of written response lead to better performance in learning tasks than reading without writing. The more the material to be learned is manipulated, the better it is understood and remembered and the more stable are these effects. Second, the benefits derived from writing tasks are situated; that is, the writing process only involves ideas and information dealt with in the context of a specific writing activity, and its effects cannot be generalised. Third, the various learning tasks differ according to the breadth of the information to be processed and the depth of its processing. Different writing tasks promote different kinds of learning.

In English, composition writing of descriptions, essays, reports, articles or stories help promote better writing skills. Grammar, comprehension, summarising and other shorter exercises may also enhance better writing skills in composition.

Purpose of writing

Tynjala and others (2001, p. 16) propose that writing may be a useful and effective strategy too for domain content learning, provided that certain conditions are met. These are:

- Writing tasks should promote active knowledge construction. They should induce students to engage in knowledge transforming processes, rather than in reproductive activities.

- The tasks should make use of students' previous knowledge and existing conceptions of and beliefs about the topics they are studying (free writing before studying the topic).

- The tasks should encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and conceptualise and theorise about them.

- The tasks should involve the students in applying theories to practical situations and solving practical problems and problems of understanding.

- The tasks should be integrated with classroom discourse and other schoolwork, such as small group discussions and reading.

Sometimes writing may be helpful if conducted collaboratively to enhance better learning. Collaborative writing, in pairs or groups, may be useful in classrooms. It seems that the Zambian context provides opportunities in classrooms for this (Kelly, 1998). Using collaboration in learning to write has been argued for on the basis of the Vygotskian view of the social nature of learning on the one hand, and on the basis of the process-based approach on the other hand. The literature in this field (Slavin, 1994b; Crook, 1994; Littlejohn and Light, 1999; Speck, Johnson, Dice and Heaton, 1999) suggests that collaborative writing may be:

- More efficient, because different aspects of the task can be shared out;

- Of better quality, because different individuals can contribute different ideas and different expertise;

- Better thought out, because each individual has to take into account the others' points of view;

- Written more quickly, because the less-able contributor is helped by the more able; *or*

- Written more slowly, because the less-able contributor holds back the more able ones.

Collaborative writing may generally provide a good context for learning to write and writing to learn.

Traditionally, different forms of class activities in English may be separated from each other. For example, separate reading and writing classes may be needed in order to teach and practise basic skills, but once students have acquired them, integrating different classes and combining different

activities may open new avenues for learning better. This idea has been applied, for example, in the writing-across-curriculum movement (e.g. Young and Fulwiler, 1986) and seems to have yielded good results. Some studies carried out on different school levels have shown that combining reading and writing tasks or reading, writing and group discussions is a promising approach and may enhance the positive effects of these activities; it may also produce more desirable learning outcomes than when the activities are used as separate methods (see, for example, Dysthe, 1996; Gaskins et al, 1994; Lonka and Ahola, 1995; Mason, 1998; Tierney, O'Flahavan and McGinley, 1989; Tynjala, 1998 and 1999).

Marking (feedback and assessment)

Marking is a task frequently carried out in private, away from the classroom. Dunsbee and Ford (1980, p. 1) argue that marking has always been a thorn in the educationist's flesh, one they wish would go away because it has nothing to do with 'real teaching'. Dunsbee and Ford conducted an investigation into correcting pupils' work and they advance their arguments after an investigation of everyday practice.

Problems in marking

It is important to consider the problems of assessment and correction that have been discussed and raised before. The Bullock Report (1975) raised a concern that:

> *'...there has been a welcome increase in opportunities for teachers to discuss the assessment of children's written work. This has ranged from the experience of inter-school assessment and moderation in 16+ examinations to the informal study of primary school children's writing in teachers' centres. We should like to see such opportunities taken up more widely, for we have no doubt that the understanding that grows from them can have a considerable influence on the development of children's writing'.*

An assumption prevails to the effect that genuinely enlightened teachers do not 'mark' extended pieces of written work. This emerges from a study of books about the teaching of English, in which the desultory 'marking' most serving teachers would recognise as being close to reality is roundly condemned. Instead, other kinds of feedback, calculated to contribute more effectively to students' learning are preferred. Marking does constitute a major teacher-activity, which consumes hours of their time. Despite new

teaching methods, 'marking' continues to represent virtually the sole means of written mediation between teachers and their pupils. Indeed, in schools where classes are large and the average teaching commitment is heavy, like the schools in Zambia, it may be the sole regular means of communication of any sort between teachers and pupils.

Goal: modifying pupils' written work

One key assumption underlying 'marking' appears to be that a pupil's subsequent writing will be modified for the better. In practice, this is an unrealistic aim for something so often ill-conceived and more of a pain than a pleasure for most teachers; indeed, it seems that when children eliminate mistakes in their writing, this does not follow directly from the teacher's drawing attention to them. *Correcting, marking, grading, assessing, evaluating* – these are all terms used relatively indiscriminately to describe what most teachers do when they collect in pieces of writing from their classes. What is implied is primarily the evaluation of aspects of what has been written.

One would expect that awarding of marks might be helpful to most pupils. It is even more helpful when the teacher and pupils agree beforehand that a finite number of marks may be gained by completing certain specified tasks satisfactorily. There is no doubt that marks used selectively can encourage further learning. For instance, a child is set ten sums to do and, having done them and had them marked, finds he or she has been given 18 out of 20. By studying the accompanying 18 ticks and two crosses on the paper, it will not take the child long to see that two answers were wrong and to begin to puzzle out why. Similarly, if a pupil is tested on ten spellings and gets seven out of ten, then he or she can set to work to locate and learn the three that were wrong.

At first sight, grading offers a teacher more flexibility, its comparative lack of precision often being seen as its saving grace. Yet the very fact that a single grade can be assigned to a broader spectrum of work than a single mark is also the system's greatest weakness. If 10 out of 20 is hard to interpret across the curriculum, it is much more difficult to relate a C+ in history to a C+ in science or English to B- or higher. Is the standard according to a pupils' level of achievement or in comparison with other pupils? How capable are teachers of unravelling such distinctions? Richard Atkinson (1975) has been:

> *'...tempted to wonder just how frequently members of a department sit down and discuss the criteria by which they propose to mark the third*

year English essays or the second year History essays. They may well discuss how certain components of their course are to be weighted... but this is not the same thing. Criteria, therefore, might be explicit or implicit; they might find common utilisation within a department or they might not be discussed at all'.

Atkinson's point cannot be taken lightly. If a pass/fail concept is additionally built into a marking or grading system, then it is only justifiable if the system itself and its sub-divisions can be defended on strictly rational grounds. Thus one moves from discussing an apparently simple classroom practice, to discussing what constitutes ethical behaviour on the part of a teacher. Of course, genuine doubt about the objectivity of either marks or grades, even at the highest levels of academic study, has existed for many years. For example, Sir Philip Hartog *et al* (1935) note:

'There seems to be a fundamental difference between the two systems. The literal system indicates only an order in classification, not ratios of proficiency. It would appear that the literal mark indicates in the examiner's mind a certain 'quality'. The question of 'quantity' probably enters into his estimate only in a subordinate degree. With the numerical system, marks for questions are added up to furnish a total, a procedure which is convenient, though it is based on hypotheses which it is not perhaps easy to analyse and justify'.

Perhaps one may regard the 'marking for impression' as superficial marking. According to Creber (1972) superficial correction may often be symptomatic of a poorly-developed teacher-pupil relationship. Superficial correction may also reflect a teacher's narrow conception of what constitutes an appropriate response to the pupils' writing.

Britton et al (1975) thoughtfully compared writing by students in school with writing in other contexts:

'In schools, it is almost always the teacher who initiates the writing and pupils expect that. The teacher also defines a writing task with more or less explicitness and nominates himself as audience. He is not simply a one-man audience, but also the sole arbiter, appraiser, grader and judge of the performance. He becomes an audience to whom pupils must focus a special kind of scrutiny in order to detect what they must do to satisfy him. The peculiar feature of this relationship is that the pupil will see his teacher's response as a means by which his progress is being charted. It is part of a larger and more elaborate system of making judgements and not simply a question of the reader's pleasure or insight. Indeed the writer is frequently placed in the position of telling the reader what the latter already knows more fully and more deeply'.

It may be argued that these points have no direct bearing upon the secondary school's function of preparing pupils for examinations. Taken together, however, they ensure that every academic lesson becomes testing in both senses of the word for the pupils and, as a result, pupils' attitudes towards writing in particular can be drastically modified. In secondary school, great variation in both presentation and reception of 'correction' tasks across the curriculum is unavoidable. How teachers deal with mistakes, in particular, often conflicts with the guidance pupils themselves feel they ought to receive. If the most effective learning does follow on from making mistakes (or at least false starts), then the alienation of so many pupils from the writing process may largely stem from a sense of frustration with teachers who ride rough-shod over the gaps in learning that mistakes signify.

Some comments may be helpful to some pupils' written work, while others may not. It may be helpful for a teacher to offer comprehensive corrections to be copied out and perhaps explain how they should be done. For instance, pupils could copy instructions into their exercise books at the beginning of the year:

- *Spelling mistakes – write the word correctly* three *times.*

- *Any other sort of mistake (punctuation, words missed out, bad choice of words) – write the* whole *sentence again.*

- *Rewrite the paragraph that has more three structural errors.*

All the above emphasise the technical mastery of language. Through writing, pupils may learn different styles and perhaps become better in writing skills. What pupils *learn* may be seen to a large extent in the use of the language and written work. It has been suggested that:

'We need to select examples that tell pupils, appropriately to their age and experience, what use man makes of words. There are some of the uses of language that pupils will encounter themselves. In asking pupils to use language, again in ways appropriate to their age and experience, a teacher has a particular function. He needs to specify the kind of use, for whom it is intended and its purpose. He may need to tolerate, and to expect tolerance of, degrees of hesitance and uncertainty in language, and to encourage co-operative work with it. At the same time he needs to prepare for linguistic intolerance, and for attitudes to language that may conflict with those which he is encouraging'.

Source: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education report, 1977.

One may ask at this point: Do teachers help pupils refine their use of language by helping to see the kind of use for whom it is intended and its purpose? Is there tolerance in the kind of feedback teachers give to students? An examination of marked written scripts in Dunsbee and Ford (1980, pp. 41–50) reveals that a high proportion of the corrections teachers make relate to minor technicalities, because they are easiest to correct. In terms of the individual progress of pupils, writing should be appropriate to any given circumstance is more crucial factor than technical accuracy. Students need assessment of learning as well as assessment for learning, the latter referred to as 'formative' assessment (James, 1998).

Student feedback can be seen to have two or more purposes. It can give them formative feedback on their successes and guidance on those areas where they need to improve. It can also provide a summative assessment of the standard achieved in a particular task. In addition, perhaps it may be useful for teachers to encourage pupils to perfrom the same kind of marking of their peers' written work, because the giving of grades alone can undermine the formative intention of narrative comments. According to Black and William (1998), all feedback must be primarily formative: to improve learning and performance. Thus involvement of students may be helpful. Teachers may engage pupils actively and encourage them to review and criticise their peers' writing with a view to enabling *pupils themselves* to make comparative assessments of merit on a regular basis (James, 1998).

The way written work is marked may have a direct effect upon the kinds of writing that pupils actually produce. The *way* teachers *teach* in the classrooms may also have an impact on the kinds of writing and *learning* that takes place in classrooms. For significant change to take place, there must be the will *within* a school not only for radical action by the individual teacher, but also by departments and ultimately the whole school to enhance pupils' learning through constant feedback on their written work.

Differences in register have to be consciously taught. It is a false supposition that the English department will somehow always act as a 'language service unit' to the rest of the school, and that pupils' presumed inadequacies in written self-expression across the curriculum will continually be referred back to their English teachers. It is neither in English lessons nor at the instigation of English specialists that pupils are ordinarily required to write in registers of history, geography or science. However, the marking of English written work may help pupils in writing better in other registers.

Group work

For both teachers and pupils, group work appears to be a useful activity in classroom teaching and learning. Plenty of material is covered and most pupils participate in the discussions. Sutton (1981) argues that:

> *'Children learn by talking and listening, and should be given more opportunity to talk. Children talking in small groups are taking an active part in all their work. Tentative and inexplicit talk in small groups is the bridge from partial understanding to confident meaningful statement. Present talking is future thinking'.*
> Sutton 1981, p. 2.

Tarleton (1988), for example, points out that, 'we cannot expect children to improve in oracy without making explicit the skills behind the words'. He emphasises that pupils have to realise that talking is a way of learning. They have to know that what they say will vary according to the audience, the purpose of the talk and the style of the talk, for instance discussion, formal debate and so on. The role and presence of a teacher is therefore crucial in classrooms.

Purpose of group work

Communication in classrooms. Pair work and group work have become almost synonymous with the modern 'communicative' language classrooms and many teachers have found that these techniques have a lot to offer. Because they provide an opportunity for a genuine information and opinion exchange, they encourage very useful language practice. They also help learners to get used to working co-operatively and helping each other (Wharton and Race, 1999, p. 21; Slavin, 1997). Pupils may learn a great deal from each other. In small group situations, teachers can capitalise on this and help pupils to derive the maximum benefit from each other. It is claimed (Wharton and Race, 1999, p. 17) that group work will:

- Promote self esteem
- Promote cognitive challenge
- Provide a feeling of security
- Allow personal expression.

Motivate students. Teachers may need to use groups for learners' areas of interest. They can also help learners to be more engaged in the learning

activity by sharing the rationale for what they (teachers) are doing. Teachers are encouraged to discuss learning strategies explicitly and encourage learners to think about the sorts of activities that best help them to learn and to involve learners in decision-making.

Group work is one way to improve the students' active participation in class. The important point is that any improvement in teaching and in conditions of learning can better be achieved in a joint venture. Pupils learn to become more self-determined, to assume responsibility for class discussions, and the teacher learns to yield 'power' to the students, to give up his or her domination of class management, developments which greatly improve the work and also the social atmosphere (Hermes, 1999). Learner autonomy may be achieved in groups that work better when pupils take different leadership roles within them. It may be argued that learner autonomy is achieved most effectively through individuals working on their own. Holec, provides the most comprehensive definition of 'learner autonomy' as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' and elaborates on the decisions concerning 'all aspects of this learning', that is:

> *'Determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition; properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.); evaluating what has been acquired'.*

> *Source:* Holec, quoted in Nunan, 1995, p. 193.

The comprehensiveness of this concept seems to be somewhat dangerous. It is an illusion to assume that even mature adult students would be able to reach such a degree of autonomy. The basis for each step towards more autonomy is discussion with the pupils themselves, in order not only to make them familiar with the advantages of group learning, but also to make them aware that the path to responsibility and self-determination is an arduous one that requires more motivation and dedication as well as persistence than they are normally used to.

Previous research into student interaction has shown clearly that the overall structure of a session has to be imposed by the teacher (Hermes, 1999, p. 199). This sounds counterintuitive, but it makes sense that the teacher pre-structures the session in order to save time for the pupils' learning processes.

Drama and role play

Drama and role play involve the use of language in enacting scenes or playing characters the students themselves may not necessarily be. In English, this promotes language use in a role that is not one's own and may be seen as one way to motivate students and perhaps promote better understanding of texts, books, grammar, listening and speaking English; it also provides practice for the wider use of English.

Goals of drama and role play

One of the goals for use of drama is to get students actively involved in their own learning of language styles, expressions, debate and so on. In addition, other overtly active methods, which Boekaerts (1997), for example, distinguishes are discussed here.

Active learning. Recent research on learning stems from a large variety of different approaches, all of which emphasise the learner's activity (Boekaerts, 1997; Boekaerts, Pintrich and Zeidner, 2000; Simons, 1997; Niemi, 1997). In modern learning, many concepts, such as authentic learning, self-directed learning, self-regulated learning, independent learning, autonomous learning, problem solving and active learning, have a common purpose, although they originate from somewhat different theoretical frameworks. The common feature is the learner's active impact on learning and the learner's involvement in the learning process. This active role may be manifested in individual and co-operative learning strategies (Simons, 1997; Slavin, 1997; Niemi, 1997).

Drama and role-play may help pupils to be active learners in classrooms. Active learning is one of the most important goals in the European scenarios. The important characteristic of the learning society is the learners' own initiatives and responsibilities for their own progress. Learning has been acknowledged lately in Europe to be the very core of economic development (e.g. Lundwall, 2000; Oliver, 1999; White Paper, 1995; Cochinaux and de Woot, 1995). Learning and the acquisition of competence and skills are the most important tools for achieving individual or organisational goals, and may be gained in classroom activities such as drama, role play and group work. However, achievement of the goal of active learning is not easy or self-evident. Teachers are considered as key factors in promoting active learning in classrooms. All pedagogical arrangements should improve the quality of learning, enhance the equality of opportunities for different learners and help combat social exclusion.

Active methods in teaching and learning have been requested in many educational debates at national and international levels (Randi and Corno, 2000; Stern and Huber, 1997). Monique Boekaerts (1997), as a researcher of self-regulated learning, describes a recent situation in schools and societies in the following way:

> *'Most classrooms are still populated with students who are not self-regulating in their learning, and most teachers are not yet equipped to turn students into self-regulated learners. In most cases, teachers are still steering and guiding the learning process, a situation which does not invite students to use or develop their cognitive or motivational self-regulatory skills. Usually, students are expected to reproduce and apply the new information that the teacher has presented or made available'.*

> *Source:* Boekaerts, 1997, p. 162.

Pupils' talking in groups is not the only kind of speaking and listening in which they need to engage. The school environment is inevitably artificial and every opportunity should be taken to let pupils go out in groups into the world outside the school and talk with as many different people as possible. In this way, pupils may be actively involved in their own learning. In English lessons, such activities may also help in producing some language that may be suitable for different registers.

One way of conducting such activities is through role play and drama. Pupils may experience or act out roles that they imagine or are directed by the teacher. Incidents could include: a council of elders disagreeing on something; a woman with three children wrongly accused of shoplifting; the local newspaper interviewing a teacher about an incident; discussions in parliament; and many more instances closer to the lives of the children involved. Role-playing activities seem enjoyable to pupils. One important aspect of talking and its importance to English teaching is the diversity of gifts it offers in the use of speech. Role-plays may help pupils of social backgrounds with different levels of language competence to mix easily. The teacher as facilitator is, therefore, expected to perform good management skills.

Peer and Teacher support. Promoting active learning in classrooms has a clear influence on teachers' roles (Grimmett, 1994). Case studies from different countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Active Learning Project (Stern and Huber, 1997) revealed that teachers who wanted to tutor their pupils to become active learners had a new pedagogical role. They became facilitators who gave more responsibility to students; they were more democratic; and they nego-

tiated more with students about aims, methods and control of learning. They saw, more than they had before, all learners as resources for one another.

Stern and Huber's (1997) study revealed that new teaching methods, which consisted of more independent learning, more collaborative arrangements, and more open tasks and projects, enabled students to collaborate with each other, but often with a teacher also as a partner in a learning team. The teacher's position was no longer in front of the classroom, nor in the centre of the classroom, but s/he was a circulating expert, learning together with students and trying to give them as much space as possible.

Quizzes and games

The main aim of using quizzes and games in English lessons may be to motivate pupils and make learning lively and as informal as possible. At the same time, the students learn different language skills that may be taken for granted, such as listening and speaking skills, expressions, spellings, authors, characters, scenes, plots in literature and so on. Such activities also contribute to the development of essential skills such as listening, observing, trust, attention and concentration. Quizzes and games are also a means to help students remember and use language in a relaxed atmosphere, which may not be marked for examination purposes and may be graded to groups rather than individuals.

Davison and Dowson (1998) stress the need for the teacher or leader to choose games that match the developmental level of the group. Such games could also contribute most to learning when linked to the topic of the lesson or scheme of work.

Beresford (1998), commenting on strategies most frequently used in classrooms, states that:

> *'Students of all ages tend to dislike the lecture as a teaching strategy. This may be because it remains the most common form of teaching strategy used in secondary schools. Students tend to like an element of activity or practical work in a lesson. They favour well-structured lessons with clear rules of conduct laid down by the teacher or negotiated with them'.*
>
> *Source:* Beresford, 1998, p. 24.

It may be argued that quizzes and games are most useful in primary schools, but in secondary schools such strategies may also motive pupils' learning when they are actively involved and competing in language games and quizzes.

Teacher cognition in language teaching

Researchers have increasingly recognised the importance of understanding teachers' cognition as a necessary basis for any kind of theorising about good practice. In keeping with that development, the following aims to summarise research findings on teachers' decision-making when planning and engaging in their teaching. The focus here is on teacher cognition primarily in language teaching.

The term 'teacher cognition' refers to the unobservable or revealed cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe and mentally carry out. Mainstream educational research in the last 30 years or so has recognised the impact of teacher cognition on teachers' professional lives. In the early 1960s, authors like Ryans argued that

> *'…A major drawback to the improvement of teaching [and, hence, learning] has been the lack of understanding of teacher characteristics and the ways of estimating them. The effectiveness of teachers depends on the social or cultural group in which the teacher operates, the grade level and subject matter taught'.*

> Ryans, 1960, p. 9.

All these 'suggestions for improvement' reside somewhat outside of teachers' own thinking. More recent research has concentrated increasingly on teachers' beliefs, their thinking and the nature of their expertise. In contrast to Ryans' (1960) studies, later studies place the locus of improvement *within* the teacher. Bussis (1976) and other researchers, for example, assume that student learning will improve when teachers change their beliefs about the students and the curriculum.

Language teaching involves decisions about classroom activities, which are aimed at engaging students to learn a language.

Decisions about classroom activities

Teaching involves decision-making at each stage in a lesson. What is the nature of these decisions and why are certain decisions made? Studies of language teaching have attempted to identify reasons commonly cited by teachers in explaining their instructional decisions. In Breen's (1996) study, a concern for the cognitive processes that facilitate learning was the most common reason given. This means that techniques were chosen by teachers in the belief that these techniques would engage the cognitive processes of pupils that teachers felt were most conducive to second language learning. Johnson (1992) reported that the pre-service teachers in her study made

most decisions to ensure student understanding and motivation, as well as for instructional management reasons.

Nunan (1992) found that teachers' decision-making did not seem to take account of the distinctive issues involved in language teaching. In this case, teachers' concerns related mostly to pacing and timing of lessons, the quantity of teacher talk and the quality of their explanations and instructions. Richard's (1996) analysis of data from teacher narratives and interviews suggest that teachers accounted for their pedagogical choices with reference to maxims, that is, personal working principles. Similar principles were reported in Bailey (1996): for example, departure from lesson plans to deal with a question perceived to be 'for the common good' of learners or planned activities in order to maintain student's engagement and interest levels.

What is striking about these studies is the lack of consistency of their findings. In particular, there seems to be variation in the extent to which teachers' decisions are primarily influenced by thinking about pupils' learning processes. Because of such variation, researchers have been led to focus on factors that influence teachers' decision-making.

Factors influencing teachers' decisions

The factors that influence teachers' decisions can be external or internal. Borg (2003) claims that teaching practices are also shaped by the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom. These factors include parents, principals' requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, tests and availability of resources (p. 94). There is evidence to suggest that such factors may also hinder the ability of language teachers to adopt practices that reflect their beliefs (Richards and Pennington, 1998; Burns, 1996; Johnson, 1996; Crookes and Arakki, 1999). For example, Richards and Pennington's study in Hong Kong reveals that teachers trained in a version of the communicative method almost without exception diverged from the communicative principles. This was due to the impact of large classes, unmotivated students, examination pressures, a set syllabus, pressure to conform from more experienced teachers, students' limited proficiency in English, students' resistance to new ways of learning and heavy workloads.

Other factors may also account for teachers' decisions in language teaching. Golombek (1998), for example, explores tensions in teachers' work. In one case, the tension is discussed in terms of a teacher's desire to achieve a balance in her lessons between attention to both accuracy and fluency. How-

ever, her own negative experiences of language learning discourage her from attending to accuracy as much as she would like to, for fear of making her students feel bad. The multi-faceted nature of this teachers' personal practical knowledge surfaces as she articulates and attempts to make sense of this tension. Golombek concludes that classroom practice and personal practical knowledge exert a powerful and continual influence on one another:

> *'The teachers' personal practical knowledge informed their practice by serving as a kind of interpretive framework through which they made sense of their classrooms as they recounted their experiences and made this knowledge explicit. Because teachers use this knowledge in response to a particular context, each context reshapes that knowledge. In this way second language teachers' personal practical knowledge shapes and is shaped by understandings of teaching and learning'.*
>
> *Source:* Golombek, 1998, p. 459.

Woods (1996) attempted to distinguish teachers' knowledge and belief by conducting a longitudinal study of planning and decision-making in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms in Canada. Drawing on interviews, observations, video-based stimulated recall, teachers' logs and document analysis, his study tracked a group of teachers as they went through the process of planning and teaching their courses. The work provides detailed insight into teachers' decision processes and the factors shaping these processes. These factors relate not only to immediate antecedent conditions, but also to influences stemming from teachers' professional lives as a whole, for example, their prior language learning experiences – external and internal factors. An example of the complex range of external factors which impact on the decision-making process include:

- Number of students turning up
- Availability of photocopying
- Knowledge about students' prior course experience
- A recent conversation with another teacher
- Estimation of the complexity of a task
- Estimation of how well the students are moving forward as a group
- Estimation of what the group can handle

- Estimation of how well particular individuals in the class are moving forward
- Estimation of what particular individuals can handle
- Class dynamics and individual dynamics in class

Source: Woods, 1996, p. 129.

Internal factors relate to temporal and logical relationships amongst instructional decisions. Teachers need to organise instruction chronologically and hence to make decisions about what comes first, what follows and so on. Logical relationships refer to the different levels of generality at which planning occurs (e.g. course, lesson, activity, text); teachers' decisions are thus shaped by their understandings of relationships among different levels of course units. Woods highlighted the problems inherent in attempting to distinguish between constructs such as belief and knowledge. He proposed the notion of BAK (beliefs, attitudes, knowledge) to reflect his view that beliefs, assumptions and knowledge are points on a spectrum of meaning.

Approach to language teaching

Teachers' strategies or methods of teaching are likely to vary according to their beliefs and knowledge. To exemplify teachers' cognitive beliefs and knowledge in language teaching, Borg (2003) cites the teaching of grammar. He quotes as an example the research of Brumfit et al (1996) showing contrasting connections between cognitions and practices in grammar teaching in secondary English and modern foreign language classrooms. Foreign language teachers viewed knowledge about language largely in terms of sentence-based explicit grammar work, something they felt made a 'direct contribution to development of pupils' target language proficiency' (Brumfit et al, 1996, p. 77). English teachers, in contrast, adopted a text-based, functional approach to language work, rarely conducting explicit grammar work, reporting that this was of marginal relevance to the development of students' overall linguistic ability.

Borg states that research into language teachers' knowledge about language is needed. For although it is clear that effective instruction depends on much more than a mastery of subject matter, the relationships between declarative subject matter knowledge and practice in language teaching are still undeveloped. Johnston and Goettsch (2000) examined the knowledge base underlying the grammatical explanations of four experienced English

second language teachers in the United States of America. They observed that 'the way experienced teachers give explanations of grammar points in class is pedagogical content knowledge par excellence' (p. 449). Their analysis showed that grammatical rules did not feature prominently in the explanations of any of the teachers. Rather, the teachers placed much more emphasis on using examples during explanations and on the importance of student input in facilitating explanations. Teachers believed in encouraging student questions and devoting significant time to student-oriented discussions.

Reading and writing

Apart from speech, language teaching mainly involves reading and writing. The studies that Borg (2003), Johnson (1992) and Collie Graden (1996) examined on teacher cognition of teaching reading did not report actual reading practices in language teaching. Teacher behaviour and practical knowledge were not examined. However, the studies revealed low appreciation for reading comprehension and instances where most teachers questioned the importance of reading comprehension. Burns (1996) and Tsui (1996) examined teachers' cognitions and practices in the context of writing instruction. While it may seem useful that process writing produces better writers, Tsui's study illustrates changes in teacher's cognitions and practices over time and highlights the manner in which institutional and curricular factors can constrain teachers' capacity to implement practices they feel are desirable. Tsui's study illustrates the value of longitudinal research in tracing and making sense of changes in teachers' cognitions and practices over time. Borg's analysis of the studies conducted on reading and writing instruction in language teaching suggests that teachers' voices are somewhat lacking (p. 104).

Perhaps Borg's question is important here: Can language teacher cognition be usefully studied without reference to what happens in classrooms? The study highlighted in this book suggests that it is important to seek teachers' perspectives about what happens in classrooms in order to change or improve what teachers do in classrooms. The additional voice of pupils may also yield useful insights into what happens in language classrooms.

A central issue that has emerged in school effectiveness and improvement research as well as in language teaching is the role of context. Greater understanding of contextual factors such as institutional, social, political, economic, instructional and physical factors, all of which shape what language teachers do, are central to deeper insights into relationships between

cognition and practice. Any study of cognition and practice, without an awareness of the contexts in which these occur, may inevitably provide partial, if not flawed, understandings of teachers and teaching. In global terms, the range of contexts studied appears to be only partially representative of the actual range of language teaching settings. There appears to be minimal insight into state school settings, especially state schools in developing countries where languages are taught by non-native teachers to large classes and to students who may not be first speakers of English.

Nonetheless, previous research in other contexts has made it clear that it is possible to generate valuable understanding of the kinds of classroom processes and teachers' knowledge that contribute to effective teaching and learning. It is on such classroom processes that this book focuses in order to understand how inadequate inputs to schooling in Zambia led to inadequate outcomes, and in order to explore ways of improving schooling.

Summary on teacher cognition

It is clear that teachers' cognitions are significant in contributing to what happens in language classrooms. Teachers are responsible for what happens in the classroom, for dealing with the complexity of classroom life and handling large and diverse amounts of information. In the context of classrooms, teachers also experience various factors that influence their thinking and the decisions they make. Some external factors such as parents' expectations, curriculum mandates, and classroom and school layouts may hinder or support teachers in adopting practices that reflect their beliefs. Teachers may diverge from language-teaching principles, which they accept, because of the impact of large classes, examination pressures, their experience in teaching, students' limited proficiency in English and heavy workloads.

Given the foregoing review of teacher cognition, it is clear that teachers necessarily respond to the great complexity of the classroom situations they face. Certainly they have their own professional beliefs and priorities, which differ according to their self-conceptions, their training and other factors. In addition, however, they have to deal with innumerable externally-imposed constraints and practical contingencies of classroom life, so they adapt to these realities with a necessary emphasis on what is practically possible.

Scholars of classroom teaching have noted this complexity and the ways in which teachers respond. Doyle (1986), for example, articulates six intrinsic features of the classroom: first, multi-dimensionality – there are

many different people in any classroom, with different preferences, needs and abilities, in addition to there being a restricted range of resources used for different purposes in constantly changing circumstances. A teacher's choices are, therefore, never simple. The second feature is simultaneity: many things happen at once in the classroom and the teacher must monitor and regulate several different activities at the same time. The third feature is immediacy – that is, the rapid pace of classroom events: teachers are engaged in successive quick interactions with pupils, giving directions, explanations, questioning or answering questions, praising and reprimanding. In most instances teachers have little time to reflect before acting. Fourth is unpredictability: it is difficult to predict how any activity will go on a particular day. Detailed long-term planning seems counter-productive and even short-term plans need to be flexible. The fifth classroom feature is publicness – all pupils observe whatever teachers do in classrooms. What teachers do on any occasion can have important future repercussions. Finally, there is history – a class meeting the same teacher over many months establishes shared experiences, understandings and norms which inform its future activities; planning and decision-making needs to take account of a class's history.

Teachers must be able to deal with the unpredictable, immediate, public, simultaneous, multi-dimensional demands of classroom life in ways that win and maintain respect from their pupils, their colleagues, their managers and themselves. Experienced teachers tend necessarily to rely heavily on intuitive decision-making within a framework of priorities and simplifications geared to effective classroom teaching.

The central implication of the intuitive nature of teachers' expertise is that when conditions change, it is difficult for teachers to stand back far enough to see whether their practices are well attuned to the new conditions. Instead, they tend to seek the conditions for which their expertise is appropriate. Teachers need to be provoked to recognise that these desired conditions are not going to magically reappear; rather, they need to think about what would be best in the real conditions they face, including the possibility of their developing new kinds of expertise.

Developing good practice: conclusion

This chapter has focused on classroom teaching and learning, pupil and teacher perspectives and on good practice in teaching English. Some strategies of better teaching to enhance pupils' learning have been discussed. There appears to be a greater focus on interactive teaching and providing

pupils with some form of quality learning environment in terms of what they may get out of it. Student feedback is encouraged, as are interactions between teachers and students, motivating students to learn and assisting them to learn better through various strategies. Some classroom activities, such as explaining, reading, writing, feedback, group work, drama, quizzes and games have been discussed in this chapter to elicit how such activities could be useful in teaching English.

In view of the discussion in this chapter, the two overarching purposes of this book – seeking to understand the impact of economic and other government policies on the quality of secondary school achievement in Zambia, particularly in English, and seeking to explore ways in which the quality of teaching and learning might be improved, despite economic constraints – were pursued through investigation of the following research questions:

1. *What classroom activities/strategies do teachers use in English lessons?*
   (a) Which of these activities are frequently used?
   (b) Which of these activities are rarely used?
   (c) Which of these activities would pupils like their teacher to use?

2. *In what ways are some classroom activities helpful or unhelpful to pupils as learners?*
   (a) How do pupils talk about these strategies as being more helpful?
   (b) How do pupils talk about teaching and learning strategies as being less helpful?

3. *How far is teachers' use of teaching strategies, which they consider helpful to learners, limited by practical constraints?*
   (a) How do teachers talk about the teaching activities that are helpful to learners?
   (b) How do teachers talk about the constraints in teaching?

4. *What suggestions do teachers and pupils offer as ways of improving the teaching and learning of English?*

Chapter 4 analyses the factors that are useful or a hindrance to improving classroom teaching and learning, in order to understand the constraints experienced by teachers and pupils, as well as poor achievements. This final chapter also offers a way forward in improving teaching and learning of secondary English.

Note

1. *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 April 2003.

Ways of Improving Classroom Teaching and Learning

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the fieldwork carried out by the author[1], and in particular relies on the views and possible ways forward offered by pupils and teachers as part of that study. In so doing, it aims to discuss some ways of improving the teaching and learning of secondary English in Zambia. Attempts are made to make clear some constraints that were identified in the research findings, leading to possible solutions, and to show how these fragile leads could be made into robust leads for solving problems of education in Zambia in general and in the teaching and learning of English more particularly.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on understanding how economic constraints lead to poor achievements at secondary school level. The major constraints discussed here include teacher absence, large classes, unmarked pupils' work, lack of teaching and learning resources, prefects, the integration programme and poor conditions of service for teachers. The second section explores ways in which improvements can be made, despite the constraints discussed in the first section.

Understanding constraints and poor achievements

The major economic constraints identified in chapter 2 seem to stem from the overall economy and changing policies in Zambia. Some economic factors influencing the financing of education include Zambia's dependency on copper from the early 1900s until the early 1970s, when the copper prices went down and oil prices went up. With a population that was over 70 per cent illiterate and few skilled workers at independence in 1964 (Kelly, 1991), it was an enormous task to provide education to all citizens and to

train as many skilled workers as possible. The economic constraints have, however, been felt most keenly since the early 1980s, when the government could not provide adequate basic services like health and education to the Zambian population.

Policies such as SAPs (structural adjustment programmes) may have helped Zambia's economy to stabilise and adjust to a high level of discipline, brought the government's budget deficit under control and reduced inflation (Klees, 2002; Kelly, 1999a; World Bank, 1996). However, the Zambian government had to meet certain conditions to continue borrowing from the IMF and World Bank. These included: freezing of salaries for civil servants (including teachers and nurses – earning between £30–£50 per month, when the living standard is about £300 per month); cost sharing for basic services like education and health; privatisation; removal of subsidies; and working on a cash budget – meaning that government should only spend what it has. Implementing such policies, which was a choice for the Zambian government, appears to have affected education in the following ways: it has reduced funding for education, enabling fewer children to go to school because secondary education (and primary education up until 2003) is no longer free in Zambia; it has undermined the preparation of an educated work force; it has led to gender discrimination in education, because in times of hardship boys and men are usually given preference; and it has aggravated poverty instead of eradicating it (Klees, 2002; Selvaggio and Henriot, 2001; Kelly, 1999a).

Given the above scenario, the quality of inputs to education seems inadequate. People are required to pay for education and health, and the Zambian people are too poor even to afford basic needs (Selvaggio and Henriot, 2001). Inputs to schooling include parental and community support, effective support from the education system, adequate material support such as teacher-development activities, textbooks, reading materials and facilities like buildings, desks, chairs, chalk, paper and exercise books. The country's minimal provision of various inputs likely impacts on student achievement: that is, the quality of *outcomes* is lower in circumstances where inputs are inadequate or very low. Indeed, evidence suggests that the quality of outcomes is weak in Zambia. However, while other research assumes the connection between poor inputs and poor outcomes, this book argues that this connection, while plausible, is to some extent not inevitable.

Teachers' working conditions desperately need attention. When factors such as large classes, poor working conditions, low morale, illness and

death caused by HIV/AIDS and other related illnesses are considered, the enormous amount of work needed to bring teachers to a level where they actively and voluntarily engage cannot be overstated. The author is inclined to believe that resources should be spent in remedying or lessening constraints under which teachers and pupils work, while at the same time arguing that something could possibly be done about improving the teaching and learning of secondary English without the need for enormous financial resources.

It seems that there are schools in Zambia that perform better than others, while teachers receive the same meagre salary and may be living away from the cities (Kelly, 1999). The present study was told that in Zambian government schools some pupils from poor backgrounds who entered at grade 8 with low reading levels went on to improve and achieved better results at O-level than other pupils with better reading levels and perhaps from wealthier backgrounds (Chanda, 2004). The connection between poor outcomes and inadequate inputs may be a complex one, therefore. While external factors are likely to be crucial in shaping what happens in schools, there is a need to look inside schools to understand the detailed processes through which these external factors, together with internal factors, influence the quality of teaching and learning.

Zambia's schools and classrooms experience extreme shortages and absence of teachers, lack of teaching and learning resources, large classes, heavy workloads and poor conditions of service for teachers – leading to inefficient teaching and learning. The impact of these severe shortages on teachers and pupils is mediated by the *culture* of the schools, an inherited culture that is, among other things, highly authoritarian and conventional. In reviewing the major constraints, this book does not assume the effects are inevitable; rather it tries to understand why teachers and pupils think as they do in such circumstances.

Teacher absence

Teacher absence is widely viewed as a major factor undermining the quality of Zambian education. This section focuses on the impact the present study found teacher absence to have on the processes of teaching and learning.

Teachers' presence in the classroom is crucially important, yet it appears that low salaries sometimes force teachers to be absent from class. It is important to note that low salaries have a major impact on teachers' recruitment, morale and commitment and, therefore, on their punctuality, presence and preparation of lessons.

Teachers may be absent from school when they are tutoring or conducting other business to supplement their incomes (Oxfam, 2001; VSO, 2002). At other times, absence could be due to illness, a funeral or taking care of a sick relative, spouse or child. Female teachers do not attend classes if their husband or child is ill because, in the absence of a good health system, women are expected to take care of sick relatives. Teachers and pupils and other members in the community fall ill due to various illnesses including HIV-related illnesses (Kelly, 2002; Seshemani, 1998; Swainson and Bennell, 2002). One of the main reasons given for teacher absence, in addition to teacher shortage, is heavy workloads (Kelly, 2000; Ndawi, 1997; VSO, 2002).

Additional factors leading to teachers' absence are sometimes internal, where teachers may be engaged in administration or attending to some other business within the school such as timetabling or giving priority to examination classes. One teacher involved in school administration commented during an interview that on average there were usually two out of 25 teachers who fell sick every day; that is, 10 teachers off sick in a week and 40 in a month (Chanda, 2004). If each teacher of English takes 5 classes for English, this means that there are no teachers present for 10 periods on any school day and 50 lessons in a week are missed for English alone. The scale is alarming when such absence is translated into what teachers and pupils miss in terms of teaching and learning.

The study that this book focuses on reveals teacher absence to be one of the major constraints on pupils' learning: it appears that pupils do very little work when teachers are absent from class (Chanda, 2004, p. 208). Another reason for absence within schools, some pupils suggest, may be teacher irresponsibility.

Consequences of teacher absence

Learning time lost

While it may appear from the records of a school calendar that teachers and pupils are in school for more than 90 days each term, the actual learning time is shorter due to teachers' absence. This is one major consequence of teacher shortages in Zambia. In the absence of teachers, pupils may be academically disengaged. One of the strongest findings from American classroom research is that 'academic engaged time' by pupils is consistently a very strong predictor of academic achievement (Marzano, Pickering and Pollock, 2001; Anderson and Togneri, 2003). If learning time is used effectively only when teachers are present, teacher absence is likely to have a negative impact on achievement.

As observed by pupils and teachers, few pupils use the time when teachers are absent for 'academic purposes' such as completing notes, studying or reading (Chanda, 2004, pp. 208, 260–261). Since no teachers (supply or student) replace the absent teachers, it can be assumed that the time lost is never made up by pupils or teachers.

Schools in Zambia seem to work on the assumption that when teachers are absent from class, little learning takes place (MOE, 1992a). Neither teachers nor pupils challenge this assumption. Nobody seems to have suggested otherwise to teachers or pupils, nor have they discussed with pupils what they could usefully do without teachers. Nobody has taught pupils skills and attitudes for independent learning, and teachers do not spend time when they are present providing frameworks to support pupils' work when they are absent. Schools seem to work on an old (and false) assumption that teachers will be present. The link between teacher presence and useful pupil work is to be expected. However, such a link could be fruitfully broken, perhaps by providing frameworks for pupils to work independently.

Emphasis on examination classes

It is clear that when there is a shortage of teachers in schools, priority is usually given to examination classes; attendance of teachers taking examinations classes is also better (Chanda, 2004, p. 207). This means that other non-examination classes are left without teachers for many weeks and even months. It also appears that non-examination classes feel that they lose learning time to such an extent that they are not well prepared for the next grade or two when they have to take examinations themselves (Ibid, pp. 207–208). At the end of secondary school, both teachers and pupils want the pupils to pass examinations, especially in English as a key subject, so that they might proceed to further education. Passing examinations is part of the reason for final-year pupils' concern about teachers' absence. Pupils argue that their earlier lack of preparation for examinations may not be compensated for effectively. They think that if teachers' attitudes towards teaching across all grades changed for the better, perhaps they would learn English better.

With limited resources and energies, it is possible to understand why teachers concentrate on examination classes. Schools assume and encourage seriousness in teaching in all classes, yet teachers tend to focus on examination classes. Is it sensible to concentrate more on pupils in the final year of study? The assumption that the most efficient use of teacher time is to leave the greatest effort until the final year seems unrealistic. Pupils may

not know *how* and *what* to learn in earlier grades. If pupils are neglected in earlier years, an enormous amount of learning time is lost. Pupils who are educated gradually over four years to use their time effectively in the absence of teachers would be much less dependent on teachers in their final year.

Teacher lateness and heavy teaching workloads

Another consequence of teacher shortages is the heavy workload on available teachers. Apart from total absence from class, teachers often attend classes late. There is evidence suggesting that sometimes teachers do not attend to their classes even when they are in school (Ibid, pp. 205–207). One of the reasons that pupils give for teachers' late attendance includes their administrative duties, heavy workloads and teacher shortages (Ibid, pp. 203–205). Teachers also report that they travel long distances to come to school, that they may be timetabled for more than one class, could be collecting textbooks from another class or may be 'recuperating' from a series of classes (Ibid, pp. 204, 240).

Faced with being timetabled for more than one class at a time, having administrative duties that conflict with teaching duties, few textbooks and a heavy teaching load, teachers individually give up on trying to do what is asked of them and seem to have no clear norms for carrying out their work properly. In addition, it is difficult for teachers to cater for all classes and pupils, since everybody in the school takes English, they have other 'duties' apart from teaching and they are exhausted for much of the time.

Under these circumstances, it may seem acceptable for teachers to be sitting in the staff room marking or doing nothing at all when there are classes waiting for them, and new teachers may learn that to be the norm. The lack of clear and realistic guidance for teachers leads to demoralised behaviour, and in particular to an exacerbation of the absence problem and to a failure to take any compensatory action, such as giving pupils directions about what work to do while a teacher is away. That being the case, the problem is replicated at the pupils' level: not knowing what to expect and not being given guidance, students waste their time when the teacher fails to turn up. Sometimes, pupils are also absent from school.

Pupil absence

Without a policy in place to deal with pupil absence, some pupils may rarely attend classes. Some pupils argue that it is 'a waste of time to go school where there are no teachers' (Ibid, p. 206). It may therefore be critical

and important to deal with teacher lateness and irresponsibility first, and to make sure that teachers attend classes so that pupils find it worthwhile to also attend.

Since most pupils simply chat when the teacher is absent, those who would like some quiet to study or otherwise feel bored may leave the school. Another reason for pupil absence could be because there are no measures taken when pupils abscond from school at certain times of the day. The lack of guidance for pupils, and lack of reading material and study tips, could also lead pupils to abscond from classes.

Waste of time and money

Families spend a lot of money in the form of cost sharing. In addition, families have to pay for uniforms, books and other materials in order to attend even government secondary schools. So when pupils spend money on transport to get to school, in addition to other costs such as uniforms and learning materials, and there are no teachers to teach them, they feel that their money is not well spent because they expect teaching to take place in school. For students, the cost of transport is 'money wasted' (Ibid, p. 206) if they are not taught. Most pupils travel long distances to get to school and when they do not learn, they are disappointed.

As explained in chapter 2, most Zambian families live on less than US$1.00 a day. Hence, $1 US per day spent on transport to school is a lot of money. When pupils stay in school on their own doing little academic work and without a teacher facilitating their learning, they consider the journey to school 'a waste of time and money' and they are demoralised.

Lack of teaching and learning resources

The lack of teaching and learning resources was reported by both teachers (Ibid, pp. 245–247) and pupils (Ibid, pp. 176–178). They thought one of the major causes of the decline in the quality of teaching and learning of English to be the lack of varied and suitable reading books. It is argued (e.g. Kelly, 1999a; Harber and Davies, 1997; Ndawi, 1997; Nyirenda, 1981) that a critical shortage of resources is experienced in most developing countries, and this affects the quality of teaching and learning. There are too few text-books, exercise books, classrooms, laboratories, pencils, chalk and so on.

Teachers and pupils themselves suggest that a supply of suitable and varied reading material would lead to better vocabulary and structure in reading and writing English, and to pupils being more fluent in silent

reading and reading aloud (Chanda, pp. 236–237). It appears that the lack of resources hinders such desired outcomes.

Consequences of lack of teaching and learning materials

Less fluency, vocabulary and structure in writing

A supply of varied and suitable reading material leads to better vocabulary and structure in writing (Langer and Applebee, 1987; McNaughton, 1987; Wharton and Race, 1999). The opposite seems true in the absence of reading materials. Some students whose composition books the author read during fieldwork, appeared to possess a lower vocabulary level than was appropriate for their age. Structure in writing is also affected, because pupils are not exposed to a variety of reading materials. Apart from the reading books that they come across at school, some pupils have no other books to read at home. One girl said that the few books available in school helped extend her English vocabulary (Ibid, p. 178). It seems evident that varied reading books help improve pupils' vocabulary.

It was also claimed that books bought for schools in the past are not easily replaced when they wear out. Sometimes teachers try to keep the books that are available in good condition by not lending them out to pupils (Ibid, p. 236). With few or no books to read at home or in school, and with little time to spend on reading, students' interest in reading seems low and they may hardly read at all (Ibid, pp. 237–238). A varied supply of reading books might increase pupils' interest and engagement in reading, and this in turn could lead to improvements in writing.

Another consequence for lack of teaching and learning materials is low teacher morale.

Low teacher morale

It is argued that the provision and availability of teaching and learning resources may motivate teachers and help in their teaching (Ndawi, 1997). Similarly, lack of resources lowers teacher morale. With few textbooks for pupils and few teachers' books to work from, teachers find it increasingly difficult to teach.

Teachers report that they find teaching uninteresting, especially when pupils have to share one book between three or four. Lessons are not well prepared and teachers find it difficult to be resourceful when most materials – including paper, pens, pencils, markers and folders – are unavailable (Chanda, 2004, p. 247). For example, there may be no photocopiers, writing

paper, textbooks, exercise books or support staff to help teachers work with the materials they do have. It seems unrealistic to ask teachers to develop teaching resources in the absence of basic materials like paper, pens, markers and perhaps other books to photocopy from. As an added constraint, the lack of teaching and learning resources further lowers their morale to teach. It is possible to understand why they may decide to stay away from class given such working conditions.

The next sub-section discusses Zambia's integration programme and the consequences of its implementation.

Integration programme

Zambia adopted a policy of inclusion in 1996 under what is called 'the integration programme'. There was international consensus about integrating pupils with special needs into mainstream classrooms, and some of the necessary conditions were met in richer countries. Some of the arguments for integrating pupils with special needs are valid and important. Children have a right to learn and play together, regardless of their disability; they should not be excluded because of their disability and there seems no legitimate reason to separate them (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education [CSIE] 1996; Campbell and Oliver, 1996; Florian, 1998; Macmillan et al, 1996). The process took some time to implement. There was debate, research and later teacher training was provided and continues to be provided for those who would like to teach children with special needs. In special needs schools, classes are small, with specialist staff usually present for those pupils with learning disabilities. However, Zambia could not afford and was not able to fulfil all the conditions; yet the policy was implemented to conform to the changes taking place internationally in education.

It seems clear from the findings of the present study that the programme was not properly implemented. Teachers were not sensitised and pupils and parents did not know what they were getting into (Chanda, pp. 250–254). It appears that given the country's lack of teaching and learning resources, coupled with teacher shortages, this policy has negatively affected pupils integrated in mainstream classrooms in Zambia.

Consequences of poor implementation of the Integration programme

Pupils more disadvantaged

Few pupils with a visual or hearing impairment who are integrated in mainstream classrooms in Zambia receive the attention they are supposed to. In

some cases, there is no teacher present in the class and there are seldom teachers available to 'translate' the teaching into sign language (Ibid, pp. 225–226). It is evident from the opinions of pupils and teachers that such students are more disadvantaged through this integration programme than they were in special schools. Teachers seem to find it difficult to cater for pupils with special needs and sometimes go about their lessons as usual. They claim that it is because they have no knowledge or training in special education. Nonetheless, it may be argued that where teaching and learning resources are available, the programme may be more successful.

A greater workload for teachers

According to the teachers interviewed for the study highlighted in this book, the integration programme has added more to their workload because some teachers have to set aside time to dictate or set work for students with a hearing or visual impairment. Teachers feel they are not able to provide the help such pupils need to learn better or achieve good results. They find it difficult to cater for students with and without a disability in one class, and argue that if specialist teachers were available, teaching English in 'an integrated classroom' would be easier. Another challenge is that English sign language is different from Bemba or Nyanja sign language (local languages), so pupils coming from basic schools where English is rarely used find it difficult to immediately start using 'English sign language'. This also adds to the workload of teachers in both integrated and specialist schools, who not only have to teach English, but also teach English in sign language (Ibid, p. 254). Students with a visual or hearing impairment integrated in mainstream schools depend on reading and writing, and yet some do not hear and others do not see illustrations when teachers explain things. It is clear that these pupils miss out during teachers' explanations (Ibid, 225–226).

The next section discusses conditions of service for teachers, which include low teacher morale, little support from inspectorates, ineffective teaching and the teaching becoming less attractive as a career.

Poor conditions of service for teachers

The conditions under which teachers work in Zambia seem very different from what is laid down on paper in General Orders (1964) or the MOE national policy on education (1996). The teachers interviewed complained of low living wages, and lack of inspections and in-service training (Chanda, 2004, pp. 225–259). These aspects have an adverse impact on teacher

morale. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, many teachers find it necessary to spend time in small businesses to make money in order to feed their families.

There are many challenges facing teachers. These include operational difficulties, such as those arising from lack of teachers; teachers working under difficult conditions; some teachers having insufficient, up-to-date training in English teaching; and the lack of rudimentary materials needed for constructive teaching. As pointed out by Coombe (1997) the conditions under which teachers work in many African countries appear to be similar. Coombe notes that:

> *'In many African countries teachers are expected to work under the most difficult conditions; they endure overcrowded classrooms, unsafe and unsanitary schools, abysmal housing, and the absence of the most basic classroom tools. As professionals they are often not able to access skills development opportunities of their own choice; they are at the mercy of bureaucracies, which they perceive to be irrational, unpredictable and unresponsive'.*

> *Source:* Coombe, 1997.

The argument raised here is that inter-related interventions need to be addressed coherently and consistently if teacher performance is to be improved significantly. Coombe suggests four areas of intervention: salaries and conditions of service; better management of the teaching service; appropriate systems of teacher support; and a properly-equipped school environment. It seems possible that such improvements are not only absolutely necessary, but might be achieved quite cheaply through better management of the teaching service and appropriate systems of teacher support at school, regional and national levels.

Consequences for poor conditions of service

Low teacher morale

At the time of writing, teachers received £29–£49 a month, while it was estimated that £300 a month was needed for a family to live on. An educational consultant who worked in Zambia more than eight years said, 'I have never understood how teachers in Zambia survive. When I was working there, I used to earn 100 times more than them'. Most teachers' unions have worked with the government to help raise teachers' salaries. Teachers sometimes strike to make their grievances heard, but it seems the Zambian government does not respond. 'Increasing salaries may increase inflation and is

not good for Zambia's economy', advised one economist. Meanwhile, the low wages continue to impact on morale, recruitment, commitment and classroom teaching and learning. In Zambia, teachers' living wages fell sharply over a decade and this has led to widespread demoralisation and dissatisfaction (Kaonga, 2001; Kelly, 1999; VSO, 2002).

Lack of incentive to maintain high standards

Lack of inspection in most subjects implies that teachers go on teaching without any consistent support or assessment from the education system. As a result, most teachers tend to restrict their teaching to some explanation, discussions, reading and writing. Teachers' motivation is also low because they feel their teaching is not assessed or valued. It is difficult to monitor teachers' and pupils' work without the inspectorate going into the classrooms where the teaching and learning is expected to take place.

Ineffective teaching

Lack of in-service training and inspection implies that most teachers are being left behind in their teaching methodologies and strategies. They teach what they already know and how they know it. The resourcefulness they are expected to exhibit may not come about easily without in-service training and support from the education system. Teachers may learn a lot from in-service courses, yet because this is not offered to all teachers, they may be restricted to teaching from textbooks only.

Teaching no longer attractive

The number of applicants for teaching has dwindled, and it is possible that those applying to teach are taking the career as a last option because there is nowhere else to go. Most teachers in the study observed that new teachers do not seem to have the enthusiasm they had when they first joined the profession (Chanda, pp. 257–258). Perhaps one way to improve this situation could be to make more widely and systematically available the in-service training programmes started by the Action to Improve English, Mathematics and Science (AIEMS) project and further teachers' participation in such programmes.

Studies and surveys have revealed that few teachers in Africa receive a living wage (Kelly, 2000; VSO, 2002). As a result, they moonlight and they shirk their professional responsibilities: they cannot cope and nor can the system. Inadequate remuneration of teachers in Africa affects the

attractiveness of the profession and its capacity to retain good professionals. Departure rates from teaching are high and the effects on the system are apparent. In particular, teacher absenteeism, neglect of duty and indiscipline are known to contribute directly to increased pupil indiscipline, absenteeism and repetition.

The next section looks at the consequences of large classes and heavy workloads, and how they interact with the culture of schools. The consequences include poor pupil-teacher relationships, unmarked work, that teaching is not enjoyable and increased use non-interactive teaching strategies.

Large classes and heavy workloads

While all children have a right to education, it is evident from the study highlighted in this book that the there are not enough schools in Zambia to cater for the school-going population (Kelly, 1996; Kelly, 1999b; Mwanakatwe, 1974; Lungwangwa et al, 1998). Classes usually have 60 and sometimes 70 pupils in one class. It seems the education officials have not accepted the reality that there are not sufficient places for all pupils. What seems even more challenging for teachers is that pupils who fail are nonetheless pushed up into higher grades in school.

Meanwhile, schools have no autonomy in selecting students. Government schools take on pupils referred to them by the education officials, even after selection is over. Hence enrolment rates escalate until class sizes are unmanageable, with inevitable effects on pupils' learning (Chanda, pp. 240–245).

Consequences for large classes and heavy workloads

Poor pupil-teacher relationship

Teachers argue that they can help pupils learn better when they know them well, know their weaknesses and any social problems they face outside school so that they can use such knowledge to cater for individual needs (Chanda, 2004). Yet knowledge about students is difficult to access in large classes and where teachers have heavy teaching loads of up to 55–60 hours a week. Teachers seem to be ready to work with pupils to improve their English, but simply do not have the time. For some teachers, large classes and other duties in school make it even more difficult to help weaker pupils or those that may need extra attention.

Lack of feedback on pupils' work

One of the major constraints to learning that pupils report is unmarked work. Pupils argue that this has adversely affected their improvement in English, because they are unable to correct their mistakes (Ibid, pp. 190–191).

Lack of formative assessment affects pupils' learning because fluency in writing in English may not be achieved. At the root of all these problems appears to be the shortage of teachers, large classes and heavy workloads (Ibid, pp. 194, 231). Teachers start their work at 7.30am and may finish around 9.00pm if they have to take afternoon and evening classes to supplement their meagre salaries. Teachers, especially female teachers, also have to care for their families and be present for their children and husbands (Ibid, pp. 249–250). As a result, they have no time to prepare work or mark books.

Strategies used in teaching

It is evident from the author's fieldwork that teachers mainly use explaining, reading aloud to pupils, writing exercises and discussions in their classrooms. Interactive strategies such as role plays, pair work, quizzes and games are rarely used. Perhaps teachers are too tired to employ such methods to make lessons lively and interesting. The author observed several lessons which followed the teaching sequence: introduce lesson, explain and give exercise. On a few occasions pupils were involved by answering questions.

The main interactive teaching strategy used is group work. The following paragraphs present teachers' and pupils' comments about the frequency and quality of such discussion and the benefits they claim in the Zambian context.

Most students (61 per cent) and teachers (90 per cent) reported that they used group discussions in English lessons. Pupils reported that group work was useful because of clarity in understanding different topics, practice in speaking English and learning more from their peers (Ibid, pp. 196–197). It seems pupils appreciate well-organised and planned class discussions. However, some pupils argued that individual effort is overshadowed when groups perform well or badly. In addition, where class discussions are used frequently, pupils may practise less writing and may not enjoy the discussions (Ibid, p. 198).

Teachers contend that they have goals in using class discussions, which include fostering self-expression, memory work, more fluency in speaking English, covering more material in the syllabus, learning more from their

pupils and usefulness for different topics (Ibid, pp. 231–233). Teachers seem to manage large classes well when they are divided into smaller groups, they select appropriate group topics and give a clear explanation of what they intend to achieve. However, there is a tendency for some pupils to use a local language in discussions. Group discussions are useful when pupils write essays, because they must remember what was discussed, consult with other group members and in this way receive initial feedback on their work. For teachers, group discussions are useful when they are tired or when they take place at times of the day when pupils may also be tired.

Prefects

In Zambia to elect students as prefects, names are proposed by pupils and selected by members of staff. Prefects take an active role in the day-to-day running of the school. They are in charge of organising assemblies and sometimes 'supervise' a class in the absence of a teacher. Prefects in Zambia also have some 'authority' to instil discipline among pupils, for example if pupils are late for lessons or not in correct school uniform, they receive detention. However, pupils experience problems when it comes to dealing with prefects. Prefects demand all pupils 'to acknowledge the presence of their authority' (Ibid, pp. 222–224). Sometimes girls are beaten when they refuse to respond or stop what they are doing to listen to the prefects. In boys' classes, fights break out because boys will not easily accept being beaten or humiliated. It seems that with the shortage and absence of teachers, lack of class work for pupils when teachers are absent and the lack of any clear policy on the role of prefects in schools, such 'authoritarian' behaviour goes unchecked. In some cases, girls develop a form of group defence, reporting such matters beyond the school to the victim support unit at any nearest police post.

There are three main interacting issues from conditions of service for teachers on the one hand and consequences of large classes and heavy workloads on the other. The first is economic: the lack of schools and teachers to cope with the demand for schooling. The second is political: the failure of the Zambian government to face up to its own economic realities and to plan realistic education policies in the light if the demand. The third interacting issue is the difficulty recruiting sufficient teachers given the current salaries and working conditions.

Understanding constraints and poor achievements: conclusion

The fieldwork central to this book reveals that teachers conduct themselves in certain ways perhaps because of the constraints they experience in the teaching of secondary English. They work under poor conditions and yet continue to teach whenever the circumstances allow. They have little support from the inspectorate, and receive little or no in-service training, even to help them cater for pupils with special needs. In addition, teachers have inadequate resources, heavy workloads, teach large classes of between 50–70 pupils, and are expected to give work and mark English books on a daily basis, as well as testing pupils regularly. Such constraints weigh heavily on morale and reduce the effectiveness of English teaching.

Given the constraining factors, it seems unrealistic to expect much enthusiasm from teachers. Sometimes they are absent or late for English classes, and they may concentrate on examination classes so that pupils obtain full certificates at O-level (similar to GCSE in the UK system), which leads to access into university or further education. In Zambia, full certificates at any examined level – grade 7 (age 11–13), grade 9 (age 13–15) and grade 12 (age 16–18) – are only awarded to candidates who pass in English plus five other subjects. Hence, English as a subject is key for further education and employment.

In order to cater for all classes, and especially examination classes, teachers frequently use one main interactive teaching strategy – that is, group work – along with explanations, reading and writing. Other interactive strategies useful in English teaching, such as role play, drama, quizzes and games, are not used. This is perhaps because they are demanding for one teacher to prepare and monitor in English lessons. It is possible to understand why teachers mainly use non-interactive strategies.

Apart from the use of non-interactive strategies, the consequences of large classes and heavy workloads affect pupils' learning adversely. There exist poor pupil-teacher relationships, lack of feedback on pupils' work (an important activity in improving the structure in English writing), and social relations among pupils seem unhealthy where prefects are involved.

The fieldwork that this book centres around seems to demonstrate that poor inputs, together with the existing culture of schooling in Zambia, explain the country's poor outcomes. A good understanding of the nature of in-school processes, which lead from poor inputs to poor outcomes, has also been achieved. However, while these processes clearly seem to follow from poor inputs, it is not the inputs alone that explain them: it seems rather to be the interaction of the inadequate resources with the inherited

cultures of schools and of the education system that leads to these processes.

The following section focuses on suggested improvement strategies.

Some suggestions towards improvement

From the above discussion, there would seem to be a direct link between poor inputs and poor outcomes. Major constraints experienced by teachers and schools impact on pupils' learning. The major constraints affecting the teaching and learning of secondary English in Zambia include teacher shortages and absence arising from their being engaged in 'business' activities to supplement their incomes, illness and death or attending to either of these, other duties within the school and large classes and heavy workloads, which leave teachers exhausted. Zambia is committed to making teaching and learning better (MOE, 2000), yet a lot needs to be done in this area.

A truly satisfactory solution to Zambia's educational problems, like so many of the country's problems, appears to depend on a transformation of its economy. It is difficult to see how improvement in schools can be achieved without a transformation in global economic thinking and practice. To date, Zambian education has been planned on a model that assumes very much better financing than has been available. It is a model for a prosperous country superimposed on a country that is far from prosperous. How then can Zambian education be delivered to improve student learning despite the economic and material constraints experienced in schools?

The purpose of the following section is to suggest reforms that would make a significant difference – all of which could be effectively achieved with an increase to the national education budget of around ten per cent. The reforms the author suggests here are within the frameworks of democracy extrapolated by Harber and Davies (1997), but adapted to inside secondary schools and the framework on teacher cognition discussed in chapter 3. The proposed model, like other models or frameworks that have been developed in the past, may be changed or adjusted depending on schools, cultural and political factors.

Towards more democratic schools and classrooms

It is proposed that changes could be made at two levels within the school: the first, concerned with school management and teacher leadership, and the second with the effective mobilisation of students' own learning capacities. The model proposed here will involve a lot of new learning for

students, teachers and especially school managers: it will not work as an instant solution, but first requires that people learn to use it. Since it cannot be anything more than a hypothetical model in the first instance, it will need to be critically implemented and investigated, as well as being adjusted to take account of practical and cultural realities. At the same time, it must be recognised that no useful change will be possible without challenging and changing some of these cultural realities.

Many aspects of the situation in Zambian secondary schools and documented here might be summarised by contrasting the severely inadequate numbers of demoralised, ill-equipped and underpaid teachers who are struggling hopelessly with the total responsibility that the school gives them for the education of students, and the large numbers of intelligent, ambitious, eager young people who are cast in roles of total dependence on their teachers and who are therefore frustrated by the inadequate quality of the service provided for them. Surely part of the solution might be to rethink this situation in terms of the roles and responsibilities of teachers and pupils.

First, school management needs to support and encourage the mobilisation of pupils as teaching assistants or educational workers, and support both teachers and pupils by systematic listening, setting realistic goals and imposing a strict pragmatic code of high service standards on the part of teachers. Second, mobilisation of the students' learning capacities could be effected via strategies which develop skills for independent learning and help students to become responsible, independent and confident learners, corporate and efficient team players in facilitating their own work or that of others. Students would become better speakers and writers of English and other subjects, giving them increased access to further education with higher levels of academic achievement. Ultimately, this would make them active participants in public and civic society and economically successful candidates.

Partnerships and 'democratic' ways of conducting schooling may lead to effectiveness in teaching and learning (Harber and Davies, 1997). It is also important to understand contexts and school cultures or why schools are managed in less democratic ways. The stringencies which Harber and Davies discuss are similar to those identified in the present study: lack of teaching and learning resources, fewer teachers, drop outs, absenteeism, poor infrastructure, de-motivated teachers and so on. How can schools be transformed into more efficient institutions, where effective teaching and learning can take place? Schools seem to run as inefficient bureaucracies and do not bring about desired results – successful learners.

In seeking to adapt Harber and Davies' ideas to help solve the problems this book seeks to tackle, the author is conscious that their concern was with whole national educational systems and the contribution that these should be making to the development of nations. The ambitions here are more modest, though radical enough. This book is not seeking to question the current functions of secondary schooling within Zambia, but is simply concerned with how that schooling can become more effective in doing what it is expected to do.

There is, the author believes, general consensus within Zambia that the function of secondary schools is to provide a relatively small core of highly-educated people so that they can undertake key jobs within the national state, and especially in its economy. Harber and Davies' concern that education systems should be re-thought within a consensual framework of shared goals does not, therefore, seem directly relevant to this project. On the other hand, their concept of 'inefficient bureaucracy' sums up in a very telling way many of the problems that the fieldwork undertaken here found within Zambian secondary schools. The task is to consider how best such inefficient bureaucracy can be reformed, and Harber and Davies seem to offer a possible solution within their emphasis upon a democratic system.

The other framework the author seeks to adapt here comes from literature on teacher cognition in language teaching, discussed in chapter 3. However, it is striking that all the solutions teachers offer for the problems they confront seem to be solutions that take for granted the traditional classroom teaching system (cf. Borg, 2003; Richards and Pennington, 1998; Burns, 1996; Johnson, 1996; Crookes and Arakhi, 1999; Johnston and Goettsch, 2000) – a system that cannot work effectively without massively increased resources. While teachers in the study under consideration here were informative about the problems, the knowledge base of how they believe and have learned to do things may need to change. This change may be difficult. It is hard for teachers to observe whether or not their own practices are well attuned to new or changing conditions: they are more likely to seek the conditions for which their current expertise is appropriate. Thus, teachers may be very resistant to their own 'de-skilling'. Solutions must enable them to use their established expertise to the maximum, but within a system where their use of that expertise can be more effective.

Teachers have a crucially necessary and distinctive kind of expertise for facilitating learning, although they will need to learn how to teach pupils to work independently. If democracy is to be pursued in schools, teachers' existing skills must be put to best use. One of the important aspects to

consider here is that, to improve the teaching and learning of English in Zambia, management needs to pay attention to the beliefs and knowledge of teachers. To develop a democratic environment where teachers do not feel afraid to ask or contribute, management may need to involve teachers (and pupils) in decision-making at all levels.

The author would therefore like to propose three principles:

- First, making use of pupils' expertise as educators;

- Second, moving towards a flexible and democratic regime; and

- Third, maximising the use of teachers' expertise and existing skills.

In practical terms, if the first and second principles are used together, they would be more powerful in providing much-needed resources in classrooms, with teachers (and pupils) offering support to other learners. School management will need to work in democratic ways and recognise students as educational workers. However, the central solution will be combining all the three principles in a democratic way by involving teachers and pupils.

It is important to point out here that each school will have to work out how best these principles could be achieved. The following section discusses and offers some suggestions on how these three principles may be implemented by individual schools.

School management and leadership of teachers

First of the principles then is the need to change the roles and responsibilities of teachers and students, so that those of teachers are more realistic and the intelligence, energy and ambition of students are more fully utilised. Second, there is the need to reform the 'inefficient bureaucracy' that has resulted from maintaining old practices, and to replace it with more democratic approaches within which the demands on people are agreed through debate on how best everyone's interests may be served. Third, is the need to take into account the nature of teachers' cognition, and especially of the hard-won classroom teaching expertise that they have developed, making maximum use of what they do best and what cannot easily be replaced.

These three principles cannot fruitfully be used independently of one another. It is by using them together in combination that effective solutions to problems will be found. The more specific suggestions that follow seem to be potentially useful in themselves, but their importance lies equally in their value in exemplifying the use of the three principles in combination.

Realistic workloads for teachers

Teachers adapt to the reality situations, even where the structures within which they work have not been adapted. Teachers' adaptation to doing what is manageable and to protect themselves is entirely justified. They have adapted in the only way possible given the inflexible system. However, teachers in Zambia are far from satisfied with this necessary adaptation, which together with other things has contributed to their low morale. There is good reason to hope, therefore, that if it were possible to adapt not only to protect themselves but also to enhance teaching for better learning, teachers would grasp such an opportunity. It is crucial for school management to change to make that possible.

It is evident that teachers' workloads are so heavy that they experience challenges in marking books every day, correcting pupils' work, preparing for lessons and being physically present in all lessons. The consequences include poor teacher-pupil relationships, unmarked work and frequent use of non-interactive strategies in teaching English (Chanda, 2004, pp. 226–228). Teachers' choice of teaching methods depends on their workload. They seem to adapt to doing what is manageable: to protect themselves rather than enhance their teaching.

This book therefore suggests the following principles for teachers' work:

- That no teachers should be scheduled for any task not requiring their professional expertise; instead all such tasks should be redirected through, for example, privatisation of the school tuck-shop; mobilisation of pupils; use of voluntary bodies of parents or other community members; or senior management doing the tasks themselves;

- That no teacher should be scheduled to carry out two tasks (such as conducting two lessons) at the same time;

- That it be made acceptable for some classes to be scheduled to work without teachers;

- That it be made acceptable for significant periods during the school day to be scheduled for teachers to prepare lessons and mark pupils' work; and

- That a large measure of delegation be provided to teachers in each department to work out with their pupils how best they can mobilise themselves within the given total time allotment to optimise teach-

ing for learning: variations include class size, tasks to be done by classes without teachers, time for marking and so on.

In schools there is also a need for a different career structure that does not drive 'good' teachers away from the classroom. It is usually the good teachers with high-achieving pupils who are given other responsibilities in 'running' the school – for example, being made teacher in charge of careers and guidance, head of department, deputy head teacher, the teacher in charge of pupil enrolment and so on. In Zambia, such teachers are still expected to teach and perform other responsibilities effectively. In most cases it is the pupils who suffer, because these teachers no longer have the time to attend to their classes.

What is needed is for schools to reorganise themselves in ways that take realistic account of the constraints under which teachers work. This could be done by maximising the contribution that teachers, who are in promoted posts, make to pupils' learning:

- First through promoting excellent teachers to remain as exemplary classroom teachers;

- Second through maximising the extent that other duties (for which people are paid extra) are undertaken as after-school duties;

- Third through treating the mobilisation of teachers and students to creatively develop optimal processes of teaching and learning as the prime duty of heads of department; and

- Fourth applying the principle that no promoted teacher should spend time during the day on duties that do not require their professional teaching expertise.

Developing a collaborative, but demanding ethos

All members in schools need to promote high standards of achievement for pupils and high service standards among teachers. The school ethos in Zambian government schools needs to improve, by implementing and acting upon what already exists. Among the things that need to change radically are:

- That discipline for pupils, as well as for teachers, should be within a framework that they themselves have played a very major part in creating;

- School values should replace competitiveness and authoritarianism with democracy and collaboration, in the interests of all learners and of the nation as a whole;

- All stakeholders need to accept much more responsibility, again in the interests of all;

- There needs to be much less fatalism and much more confidence in the school community's ability to put things right for itself; and

- There needs to be much more confidence in pupils' capacities to succeed if the school does what it can for them.

Management needs to discuss these values with teachers; it needs to ask what they mean to them, whether teachers feel they have achieved them and, if not, what they feel they could do to make the ethos their own.

One way of doing this could be to give a written version of such aspirations to teachers and later discuss with them what they want to achieve as a school. This is a serious challenge to head teachers, in-service teacher educators and those who are responsible for curriculum planning. It is necessary to create a strong cultural change from the already-existing norms to *real responsibility* and ownership of the school ethos as active members and leaders of a school. A school ethos could start with a statement like this:

> *'The ethos is one of mutual concern and respect for others. We aim to provide secondary education for all pupils who are selected to this school. There is a positive emphasis on praise and encouragement. We have rules, and we expect these rules to be kept...'*

Here, the 'we' is explicitly the whole community, all members of which together decide what needs to be done in the interests of all, provide education for all and accept responsibility for the success of all.

Efficient and sensitive mechanisms for holding teachers accountable

Pupils' descriptions of the conduct of some teachers include accusations of irresponsibility and an overly carefree attitude (Chanda, 2004, pp. 197–199; 243–245). Such perceptions are not entirely reliable, since they seem to take little account of teachers' working conditions and salaries, or of problems that flow from that. On the other hand, pupil perceptions are clearly not entirely false. The behaviour that students attribute to teachers is indeed what one might expect from a mistreated, undervalued, demoralised profession. The suggestions that have already been made, especially those

relating to teachers' working conditions, should do much to enhance teacher morale. However, it would be over-optimistic to expect that with such reforms in place, there would be no need for accountability.

Accountability mechanisms need to be both efficient and sensitive. However, most crucially they must be there to reinforce teachers' professionalism, not to replace it. The specific terms in which teachers are held accountable should be based on arrangements that have been generated corporately by teachers themselves, and teachers should also agree to those accountability procedures. Mechanisms should be efficient, in that senior management needs to be reliably informed of teacher absence or lateness or persistent failure to perform key aspects of work. In principle, it will always be teachers themselves who inform management of any such problems, but where this does not happen there need to be mechanisms whereby management is alerted to problems at an early stage by colleagues, pupils or others.

Mechanisms should be sensitive, in that one of management's first priorities should be to support the teacher concerned in dealing with the problems that have arisen. For example, pointing out to teachers how much teaching and learning time is lost due to lateness and absence may alert them to the seriousness of the problem. Organised break times, where teachers have chance to eat something, may help in boosting their energy and morale to teach classes. This may sound trivial, but has met with success in schools that have tried to organise such 'tea clubs'. In addition, if administrators consider the meagre salaries and poverty of most teachers, such opportunities are important. It is common in Zambia for teachers to share personal problems with those in administration. Administrators may need to talk to teachers as individuals, listen to their problems and perhaps suggest how best they may sort them out. That way, teachers may also feel valued and respected.

Conversely, there may be a need for administrators to deal firmly with persistent teacher irresponsibility and late arrivals. In such cases, teachers should be dealt with on an individual basis outside the staff room, so that they do not feel they are being singled out. Mere talks from management to all staff during meetings and briefings may not be of any use in this respect.

Teachers should be held accountable within a framework they have agreed to. It is important to reach democratic agreements about what are realistic norms. Professional peer pressure would be one such democratic and workable solution, where teachers themselves take responsibility as a team. Accountability mechanisms are important, but their primary purpose should be, with other measures, to confirm in teachers a realistic

internalised sense of accountability to their pupils and especially for the learning of those pupils.

The next section presents another important reform within schools, that is, the mobilisation of students as educational workers.

Mobilisation of students as educational workers

The basic principle here is that students are educational workers, so that in a room with a teacher and 50 students, there are 51 educational workers. That means all students must concern themselves with the successful learning of other students as well as their own. Everyone must support one another, value each other's contributions, work to help one another to understand the content of the lesson and build up each other's confidence. A lot of work has been conducted on co-operative group work in the United States by, for example, Robert Slavin (1997). The extent to which teacher absence and teacher shortage affects pupils and the loss of learning time needs to be discussed with pupils, so that they can contribute to thinking about what they can comfortably and individually do for themselves and how precious teacher time can best be used to facilitate learning.

When students learn in groups co-operatively and develop teamwork, other benefits may follow. They will become corporate and efficient team players in facilitating their own learning and that of others. Thus, active learning should be the most important learning targets in primary and secondary schools. Students should become accustomed to active learning methods, especially to those learning strategies that are needed to seek and process knowledge. They need to develop the social skills necessary in active learning. Students should be coaxed into active learning experiences little by little, from the beginning of their schooling. It is possible to promote this process at secondary level, through learning groups.

Student roles and responsibilities in classrooms

The most basic change in classrooms may need to be one involving encouraging and supporting pupils to be responsible for their own learning. This would involve a radical change in the ethos of classrooms. One major change would be to give pupils a chance to share their learning experiences with educators actively listening to them. Pupils in schools have much experience as to what affects them as learners. They have something valuable to say about the teaching and learning, and education professionals need to listen to students in order to devise ways of improving teaching and learn-

ing. Furthermore, teaching staff and administration should not only listen to pupils, but should seek to provide a genuine response to their requests and anxieties.

Once an atmosphere of listening to one another develops – that is, with administrators listening to teachers and visa versa and teachers as well as administrators listening to pupils and visa versa – a culture of attentive listening may result. This culture will in turn build confidence and a sense of belonging for teachers, administration and pupils alike, fostering better relationships among the three. Such relationships will have a positive effect in the classroom, where pupils will not feel shy to speak in English or read aloud in English, because the culture will be one of genuine responsiveness and supportiveness.

Most pupils in the study highlighted in this book had experienced only one teaching system. Their suggestions are within the culture or system they have experienced. Pupils' needs may realistically be delivered. Engaging students democratically in decision-making could well be helpful in problem solving.

Developing skills for independent learning

If the environment described above is to work properly, pupils should take responsibility individually and collectively for planning, engaging in and evaluating their own learning. That is, they should be *active learners* in their own learning. Teachers should help pupils learn to do this effectively; they may learn how in college, where they may study problem-based learning (PBL) techniques (Russell, Watson and Peter, 2003). Active learning methods imply that pupils should be actively taking responsibility, individually and corporately, for achieving their learning targets. Such methods are directly focused on learning targets, and teacher education may need to provide enough experiences in high-quality learning for student teachers, so that they could be encouraged to apply them.

Pupils could do something in the absence of a teacher to enhance their learning. The emphasis would be on collaboration and mutual support, rather than on individual students taking over the teacher's role. Students could, for example, discuss comprehension passages, short summaries and mark their own work. These skills, as mentioned earlier, need to be taught to pupils.

There are many obstacles to active learning. How to get students to become more active learners is a common problem in many countries (Stern and Huber, 1997). Head teachers and heads of departments in schools need

to take up active learning as an urgent matter to improve the teaching and learning of secondary English. While schools and teacher education institutions tend to change slowly (Cuban 1990; Hargreaves, 1998) what is being advocated here is an urgent, radical change. If that change comes in schools, other student outcomes may be visible. These include better speaking and structure in English writing, more able students in further education who have grasped the art of co-operative and active learning, high academic achievement, participation in public and civic societies and finally economic success that may later feed back into the Zambian economic system.

Despite the fact that people carry their learning culture from the early days of their own school life, and it forming their concepts and ideals, which they regard as aims of learning, this book is seeking new values and practices for learning. The author believes that the model proposed here might be realistic for the Zambian context. This book discusses the reality of low student achievement experienced for more than two decades in Zambian schools, and suggests that it is appropriate for those schools to change. Schools need to have firm goals and flexible process driven by their goals and principles (Harber and Davies, 1997). For example, pupils may welcome much more responsibility in learning if they can see that it would help them to learn more effectively. Giving pupils responsibility will also be attractive to teachers if it helps them move towards a more realistic and less demanding workload, while at the same time allowing them to take professional pride in doing what they can realistically do.

Paid employment for best students

Teacher shortages and absence are real constraints affecting schools in Zambia. When such constraints are understood, teachers can direct pupils to help in conducting 'teaching' or distributing material and exercises that could be attempted in the absence of the teacher. Older pupils may take it in turns or appoint those they would like to conduct the 'teaching' in the absence of the teacher.

With the discipline and motivation to learn that appears apparent among pupils in Zambian schools, teaching pupils to teach other pupils could work well. Presumably, such a measure would be less costly than hiring a supply teacher to conduct a similar activity. Hiring the older and most successful pupils to teach seems a further realistic way of dealing with teacher shortages. Students in examination classes may spend some of their time assisting teachers with younger pupils. The 'monitoring system' which

was widely used in England in the first half of the 19th century may be worth borrowing from and applied to a limited extent in Zambia's current circumstances. Other pupils may also be motivated to work hard so that they can be hired in future to help younger pupils. In such ways, the impact of the absence of teachers may be further reduced.

Developing a strict code of hardworking and non-disruptive behaviour

Zambian secondary pupils tend to take learning very seriously and they seem to favour any method that helps them learn better. They listen attentively in class and most of them complete the exercises teachers give them. Students also listen carefully to teachers' explanations and seem to find them helpful (Chanda, 2004, p. 164). Such attentive listening in classrooms may need to be encouraged and further reinforced.

However, there are some pupils who may be disruptive, even in such an environment. Pupils, like teachers, should also be encouraged to develop their own democratic code of behaviour and should be given the responsibility for generating and implementing most of the mechanisms for dealing with disruptive behaviour, thus taking a further load off teachers.

The prefect system can be replaced by a more democratic class accountability system. Within a framework of democracy, it would be important to get pupils to accept responsibility co-operatively, debating and deciding on reasonable and necessary norms with teacher and managers. With a collaborative school ethos in place and everybody in the school working towards better teaching and learning, especially for a key subject such as English, one may expect desirable processes as a result.

Conclusion and further research

Evidence from pupils and teachers reveal there are possible ways of improving the teaching and learning of secondary English in Zambia. Most of the teachers in the study highlighted in this book perceive some of the ways to improve such teaching and learning to be: a greater availability of teaching and learning resources; support from the education system; use of interactive strategies; and in-service training. Pupils suggest that more responsible teacher behaviour in terms of attending to classes would be helpful to this end, as would a more effective use of learning time, an increased in the learning materials available, and better preparation for their examinations.

This book has revealed that there is more complexity to teaching and learning in classrooms than is suggested, for example, by Heneveld's (1994)

model. First, the research has persuasively identified many of the internal processes and mediating factors that connect poor resourcing to poor outcomes, where other studies may have taken the connection between inadequate inputs and inadequate outcomes for granted. However, the author suggests that some replication of the study (though case studies or a national survey) may be necessary focusing on mediating processes in poorer and more remote parts of the country. In addition, more depth into the nature and extent of differences between boys and girls and the problems they face would be useful.

Nonetheless, the main thrust of further research in the area should be in pursuit of the second issue addressed by the fieldwork of this book: asking whether there are any realistic and inexpensive solutions to the problems. This is mainly justified by the urgent need to solve the practical problems that secondary schools are facing. Action research studies need to be planned, developing and complementing the ideas outlined here, examining their fruitfulness in practice, understanding more fully the difficulties involved in their implementation, revising and further developing them and thus engaging with school managers, teachers and students in an ongoing process of perfecting plans and practices and disseminating successful ideas across the country.

There is need to research further also into reported constraints and practices and the importance attached to improving classroom teaching and learning in various subjects. In rich countries it is possible to try to solve problems by financially trying out projects or programmes to see whether or not successive efforts work. In poor countries, much more informed and careful planning is necessary before programmes can be implemented. For this reason, research is vital as a basis for intelligent policy-making.

In studying the improvement of teaching and learning secondary English in Zambia, more consideration should be given to teachers' cognition, their beliefs and assumptions in language teaching. A study into teacher cognition in English language teaching would provide a detailed database for research on teacher cognition in language teaching in Zambia. A longitudinal study, focusing on monitoring teachers and pupils in secondary English in Zambia, would also be valuable. Such a study should be informative on whether there is improvement taking place and whether it is working. Observations of lessons will be important and will show whether reports of teachers match with classroom practice. Such a study should include in-depth case studies of a wide range of school types, as well as surveys.

Note

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By exploring the ways that teachers and pupils can help to improve classroom practices this book shows how education planners and practitioners can effect improvements in schools even in situations of very scarce resources.

Although the book focuses on Zambia, the experiences presented here will be of relevance to head teachers, school inspectors, teacher trainers and education ministry officials in all developing countries who are working to improve English language teaching and learning.

Commonwealth Secretariat