Chapter 4
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.'*
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> *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

1. Casmir Chanda (2004) Improving the Teaching and Learning of English in Zambian Secondary Schools: Teachers' and Pupils' Perspectives. PhD Dissertation. University of Cambridge.