Revisiting the effective use of learning support materials to support teaching and learning: evidence from South Africa

ABSTRACT

This paper examines international literature on the use of Learning Support materials and how this applies in an African context. It adopts a critical perspective on the use and promotion of LSMs as a strategy and investment choice for teacher development and learner achievement. This paper will present a number of case studies in different countries to examine some of the issues that facilitate and constrain the use of LSMs (Nag, et al, 2014, Westbrook, et al, 2013, and others). The focus then turns on South Africa which provides an interesting example: the country encompasses a wide spectrum of schools, providing insights into both excellent and problematic practice. The many curriculum changes since 1994 allow for a snapshot of how ideology and implementation create fraught dynamics that often contradict each other. A contentless curriculum based on principles of choice, and learner-centred approaches in the immediate aftermath of apartheid has now given way to interventions of highly scripted and prescriptive policy and curriculum to support learning. This has led to uncomfortable and ambiguous implementation and relationships to LSMs. South Africa allows for close scrutiny of the enactment / implementation distinction suggested by Remillard (2005) where enactment of LSM is linked to teacher autonomy and professionalism, and implementation of LSM is linked to creating ‘teacher-proof’ systems. A major underlying force that creates additional tensions around LSM use is the difficult issue of multilingual classrooms. Conclusions will consider the role of LSM in supporting education for sustainable futures.

INTRODUCTION

Millions of dollars are invested annually by African governments and donors to purchase textbooks and related learning materials such as workbooks and teacher guides. The rationale for such investment is rarely fully explained beyond general statements about the importance of learning support materials (LSMs) for the provision of quality education. In fact, there is very limited empirical research on the nature and extent of textbook use in Africa, the barriers to
textbook use and of how LSMs can be used more effectively to support learner outcomes. Recent evidence has also called into question the often taken for granted assumption that there is a relationship between textbook availability and improved learning outcomes (Glewwe, Kremer and Moulin, 2009; Kuecken and Valfort, 2013).

In the context of increased attention to processes and outcomes of learning, this paper argues that a re-evaluation of core educational inputs, such as LSMs, is necessary. This paper revisits the ways in which LSMs are used and raises some critical questions about a number of assumptions that underpin donor investment and Ministry procurement across the African continent. Following a review of the existing evidence about LSMs in Sub-Saharan Africa, a more in-depth examination of the dynamics at play in South Africa, based on ongoing qualitative research with teachers. The case study focuses on the policy revisions that have had dramatic and contradictory effects on the way teachers are expected to work with LSMs. Conclusions consider the implications for learning through the use of LSMs in more effective and sustainable ways.

EVIDENCE BASE FOR LSMs?

The existence of a positive relationship between textbook use and learner outcomes is often cited in key DfID and World Bank documents (the World Bank, 2001; Hanushek & Woesmann, 2007; DfID, 2010). In fact, the relationship is often discussed in a general manner without reference to the evidence or the contexts from where such evidence has been collected. For example, in the DfID (2010) guidance note practice paper ‘learning and teaching materials: policy and practice for provision’, the relationship between textbook presence in schools and learner outcomes appear uncontested with only references made to two projects from early 2000s. In the 2001 World Bank study, there is a claim that the availability of textbooks appeared to be the single most positive factor in predicting educational achievement. Fehrler, Michaelowa & Wechtler (2009) in their study of 22 Sub-Saharan countries, concluded that textbook investment is cost-effective, customizable and useful, in other words, effective inputs to learning.

However, it has been argued that much of the evidence used to show the effectiveness of textbooks draws on measures for textbook availability or presence in the classroom rather than actual analysis of the ways in which they are used by teachers and learners to support learning. Spaull (2012) has noted that while a number of studies have found that the educational returns to textbooks are large and significant in South Africa (Van der Berg & Louw, 2006) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Fehrler et al., 2009), this refers to the availability of textbooks rather than whether and how they are used. This critique is not new. Twenty years ago, Moulton (1994) reviewed the literature related to how teachers use textbooks in the USA and ‘developing countries’. Moulton (1994) explores whether textbook availability can be used as a proxy for textbook usage, particularly within World Bank studies, and highlights that the links between availability and use are rarely established.

Kuechen and Valfort (2013) highlight the lack of evidence for the impact of textbook access on learner achievement before analysing the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) data. They find no average impact of textbook access (ownership or sharing in the classroom) on achievement for primary learners. Glewwe, Kremer and Moulin (2009) also highlight that much of the evidence for the relationship between textbook use and learner outcomes should not be taken for granted because of the way in which variables have
been identified and included. For example, they point to the Heyneman and Jamison (1980) study which showed positive correlations between textbook access and student test scores in reading and Maths but they argue that these are at risk of bias because of omitted variables.

Opoku-Amankwa (2010) laments the few empirical studies that have explored the use of textbooks in classroom situations and their mediation by teachers. He goes on to argue that most of this evidence is quantitative and does not look at the processes of learner textbook use or the socio-cultural factors that may influence why/why not textbooks are used in disadvantaged and lower socio-economic communities. Across 60 classroom observations in a school in Kumasi, Ghana, Opoku-Amankwa (2010) highlighted that although the national textbook policy expects 1:1 textbook-to-learner ratio, classroom norms do not allow for textbooks to be used regularly. These include teachers’ attitudes towards the textbook policy, the large class sizes and the seating arrangements in the classrooms which force learners to share textbooks on one work bench.

In all the authors’ work across Sub-Saharan Africa, we can draw on many anecdotes of textbooks’ presence in schools that support some of the observations drawn by Opoku-Amankwa (2010). These include that the books are often locked away, infrequently used in classroom teaching and very rarely available for student independent learning. Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p 320) claim that the availability of a textbook gives a learner (where that learner can comfortably relate and interact with the textbook) stakeholder power in their education. Milligan (2012) conducted research for the NGO – Education Partnerships Africa – in the Uganda towns of Mbarara, Masaka and Jinga. Many of the secondary schools visited had received a shipment of core curriculum textbooks funded by the World Bank and there was little evidence of the books being used. Three principals explicitly stated that they were keeping the textbooks safe and clean in their delivery boxes rather than allowing teachers and learners to use them.

The evidence for the effectiveness of LSMs for all learners is also contested. A DFID funded study (Lewin and Stuart, 2002) into teacher training in low income countries is widely cited in DFID literature in the rationale for investment in teaching and learning materials since the findings suggest that the impact of textbooks is greatest in the poorest countries where teacher quality may be low and where facilities and resources are scarce and generally of poor quality. However, apart from this project, there is little evidence of improving learning outcomes for most disadvantaged. Glewwe et al. (2009) and Kuecken & Valfort (2013) both show textbook use only shows positive impact on learners with higher socio-economic status. Furthermore, Glewwe et al. (2009)'s study finds little correlation between textbook sharing in classrooms in selected rural Kenyan primary schools and improved test scores with the only significant improvement being learners who were already high achievers prior to the intervention. If LSMs are to support learning for all, the enablers and barriers to their effective use needs closer examination in a range of contexts. This is arguably particularly important for disadvantaged learners such as those who do not have access to reading materials or opportunities to speak in the Medium of Instruction (MoI) at home.

It is widely argued in the field of English as a Second language (ESL) that materials specifically designed to support the development of ESL contribute to effective learning (Sheldon, 1988; Brown, 2007; Kasule, 2011; Gandara, Maxwel-Jolie & Driscoll, 2005; Hugo & Nieman, 2010). In African contexts, where English (or another European language) is usually taught in primary schools before it shifts to the MoI, there is a real need to understand (1) the impact that language has on LSM use; and (2) how LSMs can effectively support language development. This needs to
be seen against the backdrop of considerable unevenness of African language resources. It is also important the deeply rooted inequalities between English language resources and African languages resources (Mwepu & Chetty, 2008). However, resources are the lesser part of the picture. Cummins (2000) sets out to show that in as much as there are several debates and experimental methodologies and practices relating to the implementation of second language teaching, many of which are promising, it is the relationships between teachers and second language students, the educational environment and the validation of the first language in minority language speakers that are the final determinants of success.

Even under the most adverse circumstances (dire poverty, p17) or the teaching of children with learning disabilities (p14) remarkable levels of proficiency could be attained when sensitivity to, and affirmation of, first language ‘collaborative relations of power’, as well as appropriate strategies of implementation were used (Cummins, 2000). The question that requires urgent attention is that of ‘appropriate strategies’. One such appropriate strategy has been implemented within the Innovation for Education Fund in Rwanda. ‘Improving learning outcomes through language supportive textbooks and pedagogy’ trialled the use of textbooks in Primary 4 (the transitional year) which were both language appropriate and sought to develop learners’ English while in Maths, Social Sciences and Science lessons (Milligan, Tikly and Clegg, forthcoming). The authors argue for the potential for language supportive textbooks for improving learner outcomes. However, this is only when in conjunction with appropriate pedagogy, and teachers trained in this, and in classroom contexts where textbook-use is the norm.

The latter point refers to the fact that in the baseline study for this project, the uneven presence of textbooks in primary classrooms was a key finding (Milligan and Tikly, 2013). The research found that in some schools, teachers were frequently using the textbooks as both key pedagogical tools and for learners to draw upon for their own learning. However, there were also examples of schools where textbooks were locked in cupboards or non-existent despite a recent drive by the Ministry of Education to provide textbooks to all primary schools. This qualitative data suggests varied responses in schools mediated by individual principals and teachers to a uniform and centrally implemented policy and challenges the assumption that textbook presence in schools can be equated with textbook use. Importantly, it does not give insight into the structural and individual barriers that teachers experience in using textbooks as a support for their teaching.

**ENACTMENT VS. IMPLEMENTATION**

Remillard (2005) in an extensive review of studies on the way teachers work with LSMs creates draws the important distinction between the enactment and the implementation of materials. Enactment presupposes that teachers have strong interpretive skills and that they engage with LSMs through a reasoned process that interrogates LSMs for the most effective pedagogical strategies for knowledge transmission. Implementation places emphasis on raising student achievement levels; uses standardised testing as baseline for measuring achievement; is associated with low SES; sees the textbook seen as teacher development tool / substitute for teacher; and aims to design ‘teacher-proof’/ ‘remote-control’ LSMs. Needless to say, the attempt to create ‘teacher-proof’ systems is the unrealistic ideal of policy makers, and some curriculum and materials developers. It has long been established that even where there are serious efforts at close fidelity to materials, teacher enactment is inevitable. Sosniak & Stodolsky (1993) cites the patterns of textbook use described by Schmidt, Porter, Floden, Freeman & Schwille (1987), namely
conscious attempts at fidelity; selective use influenced by the students that are being taught; and selective use in support of curriculum objectives. Whether or not a specific teacher has a leaning towards one or other of these forms of textbook use, there are invariably times when determinants like student population or pressure to conform to curriculum objectives will lead to some deviation – in other words where the teaching environment shapes textbooks use (Stodolsky (1988); Valencia, et al. (2006); Crawford (2004); Kauffman (2002); Remillard (1999).

The review of the literature thus far has suggested that the evidence used regarding LSMs is often assumed. This suggests that LSMs are used in the same way in different classroom contexts. Rather, it can be argued that how LSMs are used is dependent upon the competence and confidence of the learner, the pedagogical approach of the teacher and/or that promoted in teacher training, whether teachers have been trained in the use of LSMs and the classroom environment (Fuller, 1991; Glewwe, Kremer & Moulin, 2007; Opoku-Amankwa, 2010). These studies have particularly contended that textbooks are of limited value unless effective teacher mediation takes place, and/or pre-existing competence on the part of learners is present. Researchers in the field of ESL similarly argue that the use of materials written for the ESL markets is important for language development. However, this is only if they are used in classrooms by teachers that are specifically trained to teach ESL and who are proficient in English (Sheldon, 1988; Brown, 2007; Kasule, 2011; Gandara, Maxwel-Jolie & Driscoll, 2005; Hugo & Nieman, 2010). Given these different factors, and the potential impact they have on the effectiveness of LSMs to support learning, it raises significant questions about the suitability of using textbook availability as a proxy for textbook use. However, it also calls into discussion the policies that drive LSM production, procurement and use.

The notion that the textbook can substitute for lack of teacher knowledge and skill, suggests that teacher enactment is either immaterial or of relatively minimal importance (Crossley & Murby, 1994). Studies that look at standardised test results before and after the provision of textbooks have had mixed results. The most convincing conclusions have been that unless learners are able to engage with textbooks independently (i.e. they had the language facility and were already embedded in the subject issues) textbooks are of limited benefit (Kremer & Moulin, 2007). An evaluation done by Fleisch et al. (2011) of an intervention using custom-designed workbooks versus a conventional textbook in grade 6 classrooms in mathematics showed marked improvement in post-test scores of all participant learners, leading to a conclusion that the training of teachers on LSM use that accompanied the evaluation was far more influential than the materials themselves. The message is that teachers matter, and their expertise usually matters more than LSMs (Fleisch, et al, 2011).

At present there is no evidence that more sophisticated and deliberate enactment practices have a direct bearing on learner results; it does, however, on learner engagement. Stodolsky (1988, p 94-96) discusses at some length that although there is a direct and “completely consistent relationship between student involvement and cognitive complexity in both Maths and Social Sciences. As the cognitive complexity increased, so did children’s average involvement”, regardless of socio-economic background. However, yet again, there was no evidence that student involvement necessarily led to improved performance.
A desire for social redress dominated the agenda for curriculum makers in a newly democratic South Africa which needed to undo the harm done by apartheid education. Curriculum developers envisaged that through a skills-based approach, learners would be prepared for the international and national economic pressures that would require self-starters and entrepreneurs. Hand in hand with this idea went the recognition that considerable developmental gaps needed to be filled and that the complexity of South African society would have to be negotiated by strategies that considered these gaps. The principles of egalitarianism, democracy and social responsibility featured very strongly in the formulation of all the curriculum statements that have emerged over the last few decades (C2005, RNCS, 2003, CAPS, 2011, Chisholm, 2005a). The curriculum had to fulfil a difficult mandate: to maintain the relatively high standards in historically white schools (despite decidedly unprogressive curriculum content and pedagogical approaches); and to raise the standards of education for the race groups that had been deprived of education or, where there was teaching, of positive learning experiences. The result was a highly sophisticated ‘contentless’ curriculum that demanded of teachers that they create materials and content for the specific learners they were teaching based on specific skills that needed to be learnt. This outcomes-based education system actively discouraged teachers from the systematic use of textbooks in the name of progressive education: ‘progressive’ in both a political and pedagogical sense (Carrim, 2013).

The meticulous use of textbooks in white schools under apartheid education, together with tightly constructed syllabi, made for a highly structured and regimented system which could measure to an extensive degree what teachers taught, and how learners internalised the specified teaching (Stoffels, 2005b, p 532, citing Jansen, 1999). In schools of other race groups, textbooks were in scarce supply and in African schools it was not unusual for there to be almost no textbooks at all. Those that were available had to be shared, were often antiquated and were used by teachers to provide notes on a blackboard for learners to copy (Stoffels, 2005b, p 253, citing Ntshinga-Khosa, 2001 and Christie, 1993). The legacy of these two strands of textbook use is that teachers in high functioning schools had developed particular strategies that relied heavily on consistent and systematic textbook use and concomitant assessment. In most of the rest of South African schools, little or no knowledge of the possibilities of textbook use had been developed at all. The introduction of a ‘contentless’ curriculum and the expectation that teachers would develop and choose own materials soon led to the realisation of the unworkability of such a directive and after many revisions (Chisholm, 2005a), South Africa has now returned to a curriculum (called CAPS for Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements) that is a highly prescriptive, systematic and clear curriculum that demanded that teachers work to a fixed schedule, covering the same curriculum material in the same week. Aside from the content, it is intended to ensure appropriate pacing and sequencing (DBE, 2011). In the Gauteng province, an intervention was introduced in poor-performing schools which provided them with scripted lesson plans, specific materials and coaches who monitored and supported their classroom work on a weekly basis. Complementary to the CAPS document, are the government produced workbooks, intended to be available for every teacher and learner for use in every classroom. These take the form of worksheets that systematically follow the CAPS curriculum and which form the basis of the kinds of questions used in the Annual National Assessments (ANAs).
UNDER OBE

For teachers in former white, well-resourced and well-functioning schools, the implementation of OBE meant that their political credibility rested on the whole-hearted adoption of the new curriculum. In newly integrated classrooms where multi-lingualism was suddenly a phenomenon, and where a great deal of remediation was required to create some uniform standard, many teachers abandoned both old and new textbooks and tried to find materials that would meet the needs of their learners. Such materials would be a selection from a large number of different sources, often cobbled together around a theme and it tended to be the combined efforts of a number of teachers who worked together in a grade or in a subject area. The standards of these materials were highly variable but for the most part, consistent and fairly systematic education took place.

For teachers in previously disadvantaged schools a strong message was sent that professional autonomy and progressive teaching was interwoven with the OBE approach. The ‘freedom’ the new curriculum gave to determine content and materials became a license to photocopy worksheets from textbooks to which they had access through old stock, libraries, and promotional copies of textbooks handed out by publishers. The result was, for the most part, a haphazard and uncoordinated array of materials and teaching and learning experiences that left both teachers and learners confused and unmotivated. In many classrooms, very little teaching took place as teachers felt unable to implement the new curriculum and unwilling (or ashamed) to return to teaching methods that had been condemned as poor and unprogressive.

Many of these teachers have internalised a sense of their own autonomy over the curriculum – even though this is an uncomfortable and highly problematic kind of autonomy, derived from the emancipatory discourse that dominated in the first decade post-apartheid. The terms freedom and autonomy were always tacitly underscored by the phrase from oppression, leading to a mindset that the unconditional following of precepts, guidelines, regulative systems, were oppressive and ran counter to independence and autonomy (expressed by a number of teachers in interviews for Koornhof’s PhD work). During the period when teacher autonomy was prized, so was the notion that many and varied teaching resources needed to be used.

Those teachers who had access to a variety of materials interpreted and circumvented the directive to produce own materials by making ‘worksheets’, drawn from a variety of different textbooks. In many instances, teachers became heavily dependent on textbooks, but only insofar as these could provide ready-made worksheets for learners to fill in (Stoffels, 2005b). Fleisch (2008, p 132) cites the observation made by Taylor & Vinjevold (1999) that “very few teachers are using textbooks in classes in any systematic way. This is even the case when textbooks are available at school”. The key word here is systematic. In the international literature, while there is consensus on the variation and modification that takes place when teachers use materials, studies show that teachers textbooks value the systematic way in which the curriculum is set out. In South Africa, this pattern was either never established or broken with the introduction of OBE.

Stoffels (2005b) in a study on how two science teachers use LSMs discusses the contradictory dynamic that plagues South African teachers: teachers believe simultaneously that textbooks carry authority and have many benefits (saving time, reducing workload, creating uniformity, fulfilling parental expectations and providing valuable content) but that it is unacceptable for them to use textbooks. It would appear that by either consulting the textbook in planning and/or by selecting worksheets from textbooks, teachers felt they had achieved a satisfactory compromise. A
worrying further finding is that teachers do not read textbooks interpretively, (ibid, p 535) and that teachers use worksheets to engage in ‘defensive teaching’ because they have difficulty in engaging with the curriculum (ibid, p 536). This is in line with the findings of Hart (2002) who, in her study on grade 7 classrooms found misconceptions of what the curriculum requires (“We’re doing it already”, (ibid, p 88)) and that despite available resources, these “are not exploited because teachers’ conceptions of learning do not allow them to recognise the need for a wide variety of information and learning resources” (ibid, p 92).

The haphazard use of materials and the insecurity that teachers feel in relation to their own teaching and the role that LSM could or should play in this (Stoffels, 2005a; 2005b; Adler, 2000; Hart, 2002; Lemmer, Edwards & Rapule, 2008; Koornhof 2011); the unavailability of suitable LSMs (Fleisch et al. 2011; Adler 2000; Fleisch, 2008); the difficulties teachers (and learners) have in reading materials (Kariem, Langhan, and Mpofu, 2010; O; Connor & Geiger, 2009; Fleisch, 2008; Koornhof, 2011; Edwards & Ngwaru, 2011) all speak to problems that have arisen because of contextual features.

The vast majority of South African teachers are not English Home Language (HL) speakers. They teach learners for whom English is often a third or fourth additional language. There is evidence that teachers use mainly vernacular languages to teach, while learners are tested in English (Hugo & Nieman, 2010). In multi-lingual classrooms, there are occasions where learners and teachers can only understand each other through English, a language that neither party is able to use competently (Hugo & Nieman, 2010; Brown, 2007; Fleisch, 2008; Heugh, 2000). Issues of language proficiency and multilingualism become pertinent in LSM enactment. In a school environment, the experience of both teachers and learners may be restricted to that of words alone. When encounters with curriculum are purely in the realm of the linguistic, and divorced from experience, emphasis falls on knowledge of language, rather than any topic or concept under discussion (Rogoff and Lave (1984) citing Roth and Bowen (1999)).

Currently the policy regarding the introduction of English to children for whom it is not a home language has been revised, so that English is now introduced from grade one, alongside a Home Language. LSMs in both languages need to be used alongside each other, until in grade four, when the MoI becomes English. Hugo & Nieman (2010) citing Aukerman (2007, 634) states that “English-language learners often receive decontextualized language from teachers and text.” In a questionnaire completed by 84 South African teachers, frustration with their own lack of understanding of English, making the use of materials problematic at times, were reported widely (Hugo & Nieman, 2010, 65).

The few studies done in South African classroom on textbook use suggest a great need for teacher training and development in this area. Most South African publishers report that Teachers’ Guides are scarcely used – even when these are made freely available as part of a package of materials (Koornhof 2011). In the School Development Project done by the MML Foundation, it was reported that teachers generally avoid Teachers’ Guides and choose only those activities that require minimal effort – both for the learners and the teachers. Part of the reason is that teachers find the materials ‘unfriendly’, too dense, and difficult to read (Kariem, Langhan, and Mpofu, 2010).
Teachers interviewed spoke of the conflict they felt between the kind of autonomy that had been introduced to them and the kind of close monitoring that the CAPS and GPLMS programme now required of them. On the one hand, the imperative to produce better results and the evidence that such standardised teaching seems to produce this, keeps teachers committed to the programme, but at the same time they often rearrange, transform or supplement the programme in ways that are not always productive, but gives them a sense of autonomy. In South Africa, as in many other parts of Africa, the majority of teaching environments have the problems associated with poverty, poor resources, language proficiency problems amongst both learners and teachers, and underqualified teachers. In addition, many South African teachers are grappling with their identity as they are constantly pitted against well-performing schools in middle-class areas and the dread of standardised testing. In attempts to conform to ideals of ‘good teaching’ which directs them away from systematic use of materials, many teachers have fallen into the highly problematic practices of either subverting the curriculum by rearranging it in ways that are less coherent or by the fragmented and haphazard use of materials. (Shalem, de Clerq, Steinberg and Koornhof, in print).

When Hoadley (2012, 11) in her review of the classroom-based literature research in South Africa finds that one of the dominant descriptive features of primary schools is “a lack of print materials in classrooms, especially textbooks”, it is largely because of teacher choice rather than lack of provision. Teachers withhold materials from learners in order to provide ‘worksheets’ in line with what they want to teach. These worksheets in learner books serve as evidence of the work that is being done in the classroom to government officials; but it is also testament to a way of teaching that has become entrenched as a result, in part, of ideological and identity issues. There are, of course, other interesting sociological possibilities for such practice, not least of which is technology and the way such fragmentation is part of internet experiences. This is certainly one of the reasons teachers in middle-class schools give for the same pattern in which learners are not given textbooks, because teachers decide what materials to provide for them in the form of photocopied booklets and worksheets. As a result of greater teacher skill and pedagogical knowledge, better resources, greater uniformity in classroom composition as far as class and language is concerned, and far smaller class sizes, learners do not seem to suffer adverse effects from the lack of books given to them if test results can be used as a measure (Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Rather than seeing LSMs as tools for implementing the curriculum, findings suggest the need to open up the discussion to include the ways in which teachers enact LSMs. Findings from this case study suggest that Ideological and cultural factors are strong determinants for how teachers enact LSMs. This is something which is rarely discussed in studies that focus on LSM availability and effectiveness. There are important implications from the studies that show that training on materials (regardless of the materials) can have a marked effect on content delivery (Fleisch, 2011) and that textbooks can increase learner engagement, even if it did not necessarily raise test scores (Stodolsky, 1988). These suggest the need for more evidence about the ways that learners can access and use materials and the role of teacher training and development in the more effective use of LSMs.
Another interesting finding is that materials play several roles in the classroom. Aside from content delivery, prescribed tasks and activities, the basis for assessment, and teacher support in the way of explanations on how to teach, LSMs are also a classroom management tool. This is seen clearly in the way teachers in South Africa control what is given to learners and how these should be used. Working with these dynamics when training and guiding teachers on LSM enactment, may provide greater sustainability in learner and teacher commitment to education. The creation of materials that are specifically written to the kind of language needs of the market they are to serve needs to be prioritised. Together with that needs to be training of teachers on, not only what the principles of ESL teaching is, and the rationale for these, but also how to recognise these in the materials they are working with.

Finally, the case study suggests the importance of widening the lens through which LSM effectiveness is studied to include qualitative work that examines teacher enactment of LSMs. Only through an understanding of contextual factors – ones that go beyond measurables like class sizes and income levels of parents, literacy levels established through test scores, specific resources, etc., and by examining how teachers think about and use materials might it be possible to increase the usefulness of materials.

REFERENCES


