

## CHAPTER ONE

### ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The advent of democracy in South Africa, accompanied by the deracialisation, not only of the South African society but of schools as well, has had an impact on the demographics of suburbs in all kinds of ways: racial backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, educational backgrounds and so on (Kogod,1991:8).

As the South African population is diverse, so are the schools in the suburbs in terms of learner population (Du Pont, 1997:6). The fact that the learner population is increasingly becoming diverse in the entire former Model C schools creates an increasing need for school principals to be equipped with the skills appropriate to the management of cultural diversity at schools.

The fact that learners are drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds means that culture, not mandates or structure, is the telling component in educational organisations, such as schools (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993:43). This change from homogeneity to heterogeneity in terms of learner composition at schools compels principals of schools and their staff members to be sensitive as learners need to be served without prejudice. School personnel equipped with the appropriate diversity management skills would understand diversity sensitivity, acknowledges cultural differences and sensitise individuals about stereotyped differences. It places a premium on the promotion of communication and understanding and build relationships among members of the school community from different cultural backgrounds (Kosseck & Lobel, 1996:4).

Principals as heads of schools have to sensitise their staff members about the dangers of cultural stereotypes and should demonstrate skills by focusing on reconciling interests of diverse learners rather than developing compromises among the learners, as it has been proven that common interests serve to motivate and give people a common direction (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993:45). The notion

of common interests is supported by Armstrong (1996:842) as he argues that these common interests could be harnessed by the school management by ensuring that each learner commits himself or herself to the vision and mission of the school. This should be done on the premise that harnessing these differences will create an environment that is conducive to every learner and in which he would feel valued and would use their individual talents towards the realisation of the school vision and mission.

The emerging culture of managing diversity ushers in a hitherto uncommon dimension in the management of schools in South Africa. This new dimension will sooner or later make it obligatory for members of school governance and management to begin to appreciate the cultural diversity of their learners and possibly start to embark on a diversity awareness campaign whereby every member of the school community would be urged to appreciate differences as these imply collective geniuses, talents, and perspectives that when harnessed responsibly and accountably could be to the benefit of the school (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993:44).

Schools like any other organisation have their own culture and the former Model C schools have had an envious "cultural capital". It was this cultural capital, a culture of academic excellence that attracted learners of colour from diverse cultural backgrounds. That very school culture engendered a sense of pride in every member of the school population and a feeling of being a community. Kossek and Lobel (1996:194) contend that for any organisation to effectively manage diversity it requires sweeping changes in terms of organisational culture.

School principals as leaders of school management teams have to instil a sense of trust in every member of the school community so that every one of them plays an active and positive role in managing diversity in the school. Cunningham and Gresso (1993:121) argue that trust is the foundation upon which school effectiveness is built. They further argued that an effective school culture cannot develop unless trust existed within the organisation.

For school personnel to succeed in teaching learners from diverse cultural backgrounds they have to understand and accept that cultural diversity is a reality and have to live with it. They have to encourage a new perspective in the learners in that cultural differences should be appreciated as individual differences bring a variety of ideas and viewpoints in the cultural life of the school (Kogod, 1991:9). This point of view is supported by Reece and Brandt (1996:9), as they argue that the effective school environment was one where every learner was free to realise his/her potential, and where individual differences were not just tolerated but valued and celebrated.

It is incumbent upon principals of schools that everyone in the school community embraces diversity and knows that the best way to deal with diversity in a school setting is to recognise, identify and discuss differences and experiences regarding cultural diversity. Such an exercise would have a phenomenal success in terms of the acceptance of differences (Kogod, 1991:9). This viewpoint is supported by Du Pont (1997:6), as he argues that to succeed in a multicultural society, schools must value the differences as they appear in the diverse learner population. They must respect the individuality of the members of the school community and maintain a climate in which everyone is treated with dignity.

Proponents of cultural diversity in schools argue that diversity itself is not a problem. The problem lies in our attitudes towards diversity (Du Pont, 1997:48). This line of argument suggests that the school personnel that hitherto used to teach learners from a monolithic culture have to alter their attitudes, which are possibly a consequence of a stereotyped upbringing (Du Pont, 1997:50). The changing demographics in suburb schools are such a reality that sooner or later education authorities would have to put principals of schools through at least an orientation course in the management of diversity at schools. This would enable them and their staff members to view diversity as a means to achieving organisational ends, not as an end in itself (Kossek & Lobel, 1996:5).

## **1.2 PERCEIVED NEED FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO UNDERGO TRAINING IN MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS**

The learner population has recently become progressively culturally diverse and so has the need for expertise in managing cultural diversity. The fact that South Africa has a multiracial society suggests that there will be a need for educators, regardless of rank who have been trained in the management of cultural diversity. Consequently they would be acutely aware of the cultural differences of our diverse population and begin to respect and value the individuality of their clients and create schools that have a climate in which everyone in the school community is treated with dignity (Du Pont, 1997:6).

For school principals to undergo training in the management of cultural diversity would indeed sensitise them about the need to maintain and exhibit a positive outlook on diversity and begin to ensure that every member of staff understood other people's cultures and be aware of possible offences against others, recognize blind spots, learn to talk and appreciate differences and similarities. However, they would have to be cautious that too much sensitivity can be bad, just as too much intolerance of diversity would (Du Pont, 1997:6).

Quite often it is the responsibility of principals to account to education authorities and to parents whenever conflict has occurred not only between learners, but also between educators and learners. More often than not such conflicts are due to cultural differences. Unless principals are equipped with the appropriate skills in the management of cultural diversity, they cannot be expected to play a meaningful and ameliorative role when confronted with cultural diversity problems.

The advantage of training for principals in diversity management would be the conceptual understanding of what diversity is all about, namely factors such as:

- Diversity is much more than skin colour, gender, race, or cultural background (Du Pont, 1997:24). It also includes people who hold negative attitudes towards other people's behaviours, including prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination (Du Pont, 1997:48).

- Diversity is not only derived from differences in ethnicity and gender, but also based on differences in function, nationality, language, ability, religion, lifestyle or tenure (Kosseck & Lobel, 1996:2).
- Diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences which include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability, personality, and work style (Armstrong, 1996:842). Understanding the management of cultural diversity will boost the staff morale, foster understanding and harmony among cultural diverse learners and educators (Gerber, Nel & Van Wyk, 1998:466).

To promote an openness to individual differences, principals should encourage every member of the school community to actively value cultural diversity and frequently engage in celebrations of racial, gender, and ethnic differences (Reece & Brandt, 1996:397).

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Having given the perceived need for this study the contextualisation of the problem will now follow.

### 1.3 THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

This research is motivated by the assumption that the occurrence of conflicts, more particularly at schools with a heterogeneous learner population, seem to be due to a lack of skills in diversity management. These conflicts are often between learners and between educators and learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Quite often these conflicts are litigated in courts. According to Mbatha (2000:2), today's society is litigious, particularly the educated members of such a society. Some parents are bent on litigation for aspects such as petty boy-to-boy misunderstandings over a pretty girl. The researcher has been observing such occurrences from a vantage point in a phenomenological perspective and could realise that this was probably due to a lack of skills in the management of cultural diversity.

It is against this background that this research intends to investigate as to what extent do educators including principals of schools with learners of diverse cultural backgrounds understand the concept of diversity management in schools. Furthermore this research intends to establish the causal factors of conflict that often occur at these multicultural schools.

In regard to this question of diversity at schools Potts, Armstrong and Masterton (1995:181) argue that there is bound to be a limit to the tolerance of cultural diversity within a single school but this argument goes further and suggests that a creative middle way could be found so that learners could see themselves being valued by the school despite their differences in whatever respect. Learners who feel that they are valued would pursue their own lives of critical enquiry into the school policies and practices and would feel encouraged to reflect the diversity of their interests without fear of prejudice or discrimination.

For educators and principals to be trained in diversity, management should be treated with urgency by the Gauteng Department of Education. Such training should occupy an integral part of the educational reform initiatives (Potts *et al.*, 1995:181). Gutmacher (2001:16) contends that the principal should not be the sole person responsible for driving the diversity management initiatives. The staff too should be equally responsible as they are the ones that are always faced with learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Now that the problem has been contextualised, it is now appropriate to give the statement of the problem.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem to be investigated in this research is the management of cultural diversity as an aspect of school effectiveness. It has emerged in the recent past that the problems of managing cultural diversity in schools are manifold, especially those that have been hitherto monolithic in their learner population. It therefore stands to reason that unless the management of cultural diversity receives urgent attention in the overall strategic management of schools that the situation is

potentially explosive with a possible litany of disastrous consequences not only to the school effectiveness but its domino effect to national reconciliation.

The concept “diversity” is so complex in that it means different things to different people hence a comprehensive comprehension of this concept will be in the national interest of education. Among other things the concept “diversity” means differences in respect of: Age, gender, racial backgrounds, education and physical ability (Kogod, 1991:8). Race, cultural background, personality type (Du Pont, 1997:8). Race, gender, function, nationality, language, ability, religion, lifestyle (Kossek & Lobel, 1996:2). Sex, age, race, disability, personality and work type (Armstrong, 1996:842).

The question of managing cultural diversity will be grappled with for generations to come especially in South Africa for it is factually a “rainbow nation”. In the whole scenario schools are likely to bear the brunt as they more often than not have to manage naïve learners who are products of a stereotyped society.

This is against the backdrop that the apartheid era created and institutionalized an environment of separate development, which resulted in a lack of understanding between people from different backgrounds and cultures. Therefore as apartheid legacy, leaders in various fields, including educational institutions may not have adequate skills to manage diversity effectively.

In view of the above account that captures the central problem of this research, the following questions encapsulate the problem at hand:

- What is the essence of cultural diversity and how should the school encompass it in its strategic plan?
- Which aspects of cultural diversity cause the most negative conflict in the effective management of schools?
- What is the perception of educators as to which of the identified aspects of cultural diversity enhance negative conflict?
- What guidelines could be provided to improve the management of cultural diversity and enhance school effectiveness?

Now that the research problem has been delineated and explicated, it is necessary to state the objectives and aims of the study.

### **1.5 OBJECTIVES AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The general aim of this research is to investigate problems of cultural diversity at schools. In order to realise the general aim, the following serve as specific aims or objectives, namely to:

- investigate the essential aspects of cultural diversity and how they should be included in the school's strategic plan;
- explore those aspects of cultural diversity that cause negative conflict in the effective management of schools;
- probe the perceptions of educators as to which of the identified aspects of cultural diversity enhance negative conflict in schools;
- provide management guidelines that could be used to improve the management of cultural diversity and school effectiveness.

Having sketched out the general aim and objectives of this study, it is now necessary to state the assumptions of the research.

### **1.6 THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The assumptions of this research based on statement analysis are the following:

- Conflicts at multicultural schools are due to a lack of skills in managing cultural diversity.
- Stereotypes both on the part of learners and educators are the fundamental causes of conflicts at schools.
- The non-visibility of educators of colour seems to be a major contributory factor to these conflicts, which are of course to the detriment of the school effectiveness.
- Educators of colour on the staff could enhance the school effectiveness.



The assumptions stated above highlight a fundamental need for school personnel to be put through a skills training programme in managing cultural diversity not only in schools in the suburbs, but in all schools in the country. This would have a significant impact in enhancing the process of national reconciliation in South Africa.

One other crucial step that the powers-that-be should take as a matter of urgency, is to make it mandatory that educators of colour are an integral part of all multicultural schools. This could be done without compromising standards and quality for which ex-Model C schools are popular. This would significantly improve the public image of former Model C schools in the eyes of possibly all their clients and would doubtlessly enhance the effectiveness of these schools in terms of managing diversity.

Now that the assumptions have been outlined, the discussion of research design and methodology will follow.



## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

In a research of this nature an analytical approach had to be used to develop a conceptual framework. This framework was aimed at illuminating the complexity of the concept “diversity” within a school setting. This will be done through a literature study and empirical research.

## **1.8 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

A survey of the literature dealing with the concepts “diversity and cultural diversity” will be conducted. This literature will be used to anchor a structured questionnaire intended to determine the perceptions of principals and educators as to which diversity problems impact negatively on school effectiveness.

## **1.9 DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH**

The data for this research will be collected in the Gauteng Province. A quantitative research method will be used, namely a structured questionnaire will be utilised. The population targeted for participation in this research comprises principals and educators, from schools in two districts in the Gauteng Province.

### **1.10 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF RESEARCH**

The deracialisation of schools as a consequence of the democratic elections of 27<sup>th</sup> April 1994 opened the flood gates for people of colour to move into suburbs that were previously for Whites only. Ipso facto children of colour moved in droves for admissions into the former Model C schools. Therefore the question of the management of cultural diversity is experienced at these former Model C schools and to a lesser extent at independent schools.

This research will mostly be confined to those schools that were previously known as Model C schools, in the Gauteng Province. Thus of the 44 schools sampled 34 were ex-model C schools and 10 were from the previously disadvantaged communities or the Department of Education and Training (DET) schools. It is in the ex-model C schools that one would expect to find cultural diversity and where conflict among cultural groups would have the greater probability of occurring. According to the media reports sporadic conflicts have been occurring at these schools as they have learners from heterogeneous cultural and racial backgrounds. However, it must be noted that all schools do experience some conflicts from time to time, as this phenomenon is part of becoming mature.

Now that the field of research has been demarcated, it is now logical to define its limitations.

### **1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The South African society is radically pluralist, with race and ethnicity being the most common visible dimensions of diversity. Many cultural differences exist

between ethnic groups such as Euro-Africans, Coloureds, Asian-Africans and Blacks (Smit & Cronje, 1997:432), and within each group there are differences. Smit and Cronje (1997:436) thus argue that successful diversity, management depends on the accommodation of many aspects of diversity. In order to manage cultural diversity effectively, one needs to consider aspects such mindsets about diversity, organisational culture and cultural differences.

South Africa can be described as a democratic pluralist society with schools having members from different cultural backgrounds. Management needs to recognise these cultural differences and equip themselves with the necessary skills to manage this diversity of cultures. Because cultural diversity is an aspect of diversity as it contains numerous similarities with organisational culture, it was decided to concentrate on the management of cultural diversity. Also investigating the management of cultural diversity could provide answers regarding the ideal organisational culture as aspects of culture are strongly interwoven with organisational or school culture.

The limitations of the research have been highlighted and it is now necessary that certain concepts used in this study be elucidated.

## **1.12 ELUCIDATION OF CERTAIN CONCEPTS**

In order to ensure a common understanding of certain concepts used in this study, it is quite important that they be briefly explained in the context of this study:

### **(a) Diversity**

- Diversity means the state or quality of being different or varied (Hanks, 1981:430).
- Diversity can be defined as differences which are much more than skin colour, gender, race, or cultural backgrounds (Du Pont, 1997:24).
- Diversity is not only about differences in ethnicity and gender but also about differences in function, ability, nationality, language, religion, lifestyle, or tenure (Kossek & Lobel, 1996:2).

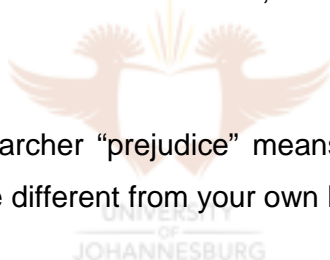
- Diversity is about differences, which might be visible and non-visible, and these include factors such as sex, age, background, work style (Armstrong, 1996:842).

For the purposes of this study “diversity” means differences between individuals. However, because the definition of diversity can refer to a wide variety of aspects such as biodiversity, this thesis will confine itself to cultural diversity.

### **(b) Prejudice**

- Prejudice means preconceived notion, prejudgment, predetermination, an opinion formed beforehand, especially an unfavourable one based on inadequate facts (Hanks, 1981:1155).
- Prejudice is a preconceived feeling or bias. Prejudice against people is the belief in the superiority of one’s own race, culture, class, or other group (Du Pont, 1997:50).

In the opinion of this researcher “prejudice” means to be negatively opinionated about other people who are different from your own kind.



### **(c) Stereotype**

- Stereotype is a standardised image or conception shared by all members of a social group (Hanks, 1981:1426).
- Stereotyping occurs when we apply our biases to all members of a group. If you were raised to think that all members of a particular ethnic group are stupid, you may still hold this stereotype, no matter what your day-to-day experience tells you (Du Pont, 1997:50).

According to this researcher “stereotype” means to doggedly hold a negative view about other people.

**(d) Acculturation**

- Acculturation is a process in which there is an assimilation of cultural traits of another group (Hanks, 1981:10).
- Acculturation occurs when two or more distinct cultures come into contact, and is the process through which the resulting conflicts are resolved (Kossek & Lobel, 1996:181).

In the opinion of this researcher “acculturation” signifies a situation wherein individuals are subjected to dominant traditional cultural values and wittingly or unwittingly absorb such traditional cultural values.

**(e) Assimilation**

- Assimilation is a process of absorbing or incorporating a minority cultural group into a dominant cultural group (Hanks, 1981:86).
- Assimilation occurs when the dominant culture in an organisation remains intact as members of the non-dominant group or culture are expected to adapt to the norms, values, and behaviours of the majority group (Kossek & Lobel, 1996:181).

In the opinion of this researcher “assimilation” refers to a situation wherein individuals are absorbed by the dominant culture.

**(f) Culture**

- Culture relates to the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action (Hanks, 1981:364).
- Culture can be understood as the socially and historically constructed framework that creates meaning in our lives. Culture in an organisation could be described as “the way we do things around here“, practices unique to the organisation (Smit & Morgan, 1996:330).

According to this researcher “culture” signifies the way things are done or a way of life in a given community.

**(g) Collegial leadership**

Collegial leadership refers to the recognition that influence, power, and ability are best utilised if they are widely distributed among professionals within a given institution (Ngobese, 1999:4).

**(h) School effectiveness**

- School effectiveness refers to a whole functioning of a school as a well-oiled machine and this is characterised by good results, particularly at Senior Certificate level, good discipline, excelling in sports and a demonstration of commitment to the realisation of the vision and mission of the school by educators, learners, and parents (in the opinion of this researcher).
- Grisay and Mahlick (Mdletshe, 1999:28) argue that analyses of school effectiveness based on results or outputs alone are not helpful because they tend to neglect the question of how schools operate on a day-to-day basis. Effectiveness is in fact part of the larger concept of efficiency in the sense that an output is related to a set of inputs and processes (Mdletshe, 1999:28).
- Holmes and Wynne (Dimmock, 1993:93) define “school effectiveness” as a school functionality meeting the following criteria: high expectations, a focus on learning, effective use of time, professional development for staff, safe and orderly environment, use of consistent discipline, regular monitoring of achievements, rewards for performance, involvement of the community and strong leadership.
- According to Turban and Meredith (1991:29) “effectiveness” is the extent to which goals are achieved. It is concerned with the results or the output of a system. In this way “effectiveness” is synonymous with performance.
- Effectiveness in the school context refers to the size and the stability of its staffing, the principal’s leadership style, the school ethos and culture, and the availability of resources (Bradley, Conner & Southworth, 1994:12).

For the purposes of this study “school effectiveness” refers to a school situation, which is characterised by racial harmony and the acceptance of racial and cultural differences as inherent realities in every society in the world.

**(i) Heterogeneity**

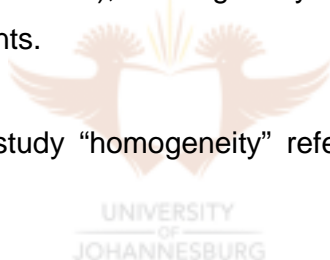
- Heterogeneity means composed of differing parts or elements not of the same kind (Hanks, 1981:689).

In this study “heterogeneity” refers to a school situation with learners from various racial and cultural groups.

**(j) Homogeneity**

- According to Hanks (1981:702), “homogeneity” means composed of similar or identical parts or elements.

For the purposes of this study “homogeneity” refers to learners from the same racial or cultural groups.



**(k) Organisational culture**

- Organisational culture relates to people in a given organisation sharing a common direction, a way of doing things, the clarity of goals, and objectives, the commitment of individuals to achieve them, and the norms and standards of conduct that each expects of all others (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993:53).

In the opinion of this researcher “organisational culture” refers to the way people do things in a given organisation, following the values, norms and standards in that organisation.

**(l) Accommodation**


- Accommodation means an adjustment to new circumstances (Hanks, 1981:9).

- Accommodation is defined as an adjustment to differences, which occurs when members of the majority culture make some changes to allow minority members into their culture (Kosseck & Lobel, 1996:181).

According to this researcher “accommodation” refers to being accepted into a particular cultural group temporarily.

### **(m) Ex-Model C-Schools**

Between 1992 and 1996 the state allowed for additional models of school provisioning, in order to involve parents and local interests in the “financing and management of schools, contributing both to educational efficiency and promotion of accountability (Loock, 1995:35). One of the models that was widely adopted was the so-called Model C. This Model allowed school governance structures a great deal of autonomy in managing their own interests. In accordance with this model, school governing bodies could:

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- act as a juristic person;
  - manage the school finances independently;
  - determine tuition fees;
  - generate additional funding and receive donations;
  - take the responsibility for the maintenance of buildings facilities;
  - appoint and promote members of staff;
  - determine admission criteria for learners, in accordance with the Constitution of the time.

Although staff members were appointed by the Governing Body, they retained their status as government employees and thus received their salaries from the state. These schools received subsidies from the state in order to assist them to run their own affairs. However, after the first democratic elections in 1994, educators of colour have also been appointed to the staff in these ex-model C schools. Further to this, the Gauteng Department of Education have appointed educators of colour to these schools from the list of excess educators without the permission of the Governing Bodies. The composition of the educators in many ex-model C schools



would then also be multiracial and multicultural. Many of the ex-model C schools would thus have one or more educators of colour present on their teaching staff.

### **1.13 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Data obtained from the questionnaires will be summarised and analysed respectively. On the basis of this analysis the researcher will hopefully be able to supply recommendations.

### **1.14 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH**

The research is divided into five chapters:

#### **Chapter One**

This chapter serves as an orientation for the reader and gives the background and the purpose of the research which includes the statement of the problem, and assumptions of the research, the general aim and specific aims, research design, methodology and the organisation of the research.

#### **Chapter Two**

The relevant literature will be reviewed in order to bedrock the theoretical framework for the study. Theoretical perspectives will be given on the management of diversity, cultural diversity, school effectiveness and collegial models of management as strategic approaches to the management of cultural diversity at schools.

#### **Chapter Three**

In this chapter the focus will be on the collection of data for the research study.

#### **Chapter Four**

Findings of the research will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

## **Chapter Five**

This chapter gives the summary of the research, conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the research study.

### **1.15 CONCLUSION**

In a nutshell Chapter One highlighted the problems faced by schools with learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. In brief this chapter constitutes the framework of this research study.

Having given the background of the study, it will now be necessary to review the relevant literature in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africans are even today (2004) still grappling to understand and accept that the stark and harsh reality that the South African society is, in fact, a pluralist one. Smit and Cronje (1997:423) define human plurality as a society with an extremely heterogeneous population, in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, language, sexual orientation, religion, conceptions of good or bad and so on. Mabey and Mayon-White (1993:212) assert that the pluralist vision of society is one where group bargaining and competing for a share in the balance of power and use their influence to realise Aristotle's ideal politics is supposed to result in a negotiated order that creates unity out of diversity. Ueda (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995:114) argues that cultural pluralism is more consistent with democratic ideals because it endorses the freedom of groups to determine their own cultural way of life.

The implication of this human diversity on the education system is that principals of schools have to accept and live with this reality. However, of necessity is the fact that they need skills on how to manage cultural diversity effectively in their schools. No doubt, this is an enormous challenge not only to principals but also to all involved in school management. Mashele (1998:20) postulates that schools today are complex organisations to manage, among other variables; we now recognise the difficulties of having to provide for a wide range of abilities and interests amongst learners. This challenge of providing relevant and usable skills for them to succeed in an increasingly complex society is indeed profound.

In the light of this argument it becomes quite clear that school management can barely effect school effectiveness in a pluralist society unless they are skilled in managing cultural diversity. Clearly, managing cultural diversity is no easy task due to the historical reasons of racial segregation and institutionalised separate development in South Africa. In this regard Smit and Morgan (1996:325) maintain that we are faced with an enormous task to overcome decades of conditioned

responses to “other groups” a task to be undertaken immediately if we are to manage cultural diversity effectively in our schools.

Smit and Morgan (idem) continue to argue that for schools to effectively handle the problems of diversity each school has to consider it imperative that its strategic planning includes the management of cultural diversity into its strategic management processes.

Dekker and Lemmer (1993:367) postulate that like private schools, government schools are losing their mono-cultural character. This change to a multicultural character in schools will obviously present greater challenges to education and to its educational management. As a matter of fact schools have learners from multicultural backgrounds and that necessitates that the management of schools need to equip themselves with multicultural education skills. Equipped with such skills should enable schools to provide an education that is more relevant. Over and above this multicultural education would be an honest attempt to “level the education field” and remove the present inequalities caused by the racially segregated past.

Arora and Duncan (1986:9) argue that multicultural education is concerned with changing the nature of teaching and learning across the board. Arora and Duncan (idem) continue to argue that proponents of multicultural education contend that the previous system of education was representing the knowledge, values, beliefs, and way of life, that is, culture of “White people” on the apparent premise that they are of “supreme” importance. Therefore, multicultural education initiatives at schools should be concerned with changing the White ethnocentric perspective within education.

In addition, Arora and Duncan (idem) continue to argue that this perspective serves to perpetuate the notion of racial superiority and supports racism in society. In order to effect a change to the situation it is necessary to challenge the established norms, values, and attitudes, which enforce prejudice and racism within the education service. If these fundamentals are left unchallenged managing cultural diversity will remain elusive and that would be to the detriment of the school in

terms of school effectiveness. One cannot merely substitute an Afro-centric perspective for a European-centred system as such a system is still based on racism. There should be a genuine attempt to produce a multicultural education system with a new perspective not based on majorities and minorities.

For school management to effectively manage such cultural diversity, educators need to be “on board” and espouse that they do indeed accept this change in their learner population. Arora and Duncan (idem) contend that the desire to change is really a matter of professional integrity of the educator. If the principles of equality, fairness and justice are really important the “buck cannot be passed” to higher education authorities. An educator does not need to seek permission to do what is educationally, professionally and ethically right.

The pluralist nature of the South African society makes it inevitable that schools will pursue a diverse learner population. Unfortunately such learner diversity is invariably accompanied with all types of conflict. Smit and Cronje (1997:423) argue that it is a complex task to safeguard such a pluralist society from potential destructive conflicts that often arise so easily in radically pluralist societies.

Such conflict situations at schools need principals who are skilled in managing cultural diversity. It is unfortunately the principals that bear the brunt each time there are racial clashes between learners. More often than not, the parents of such learners tend to be so irrational and quick to litigate against the principals (Mbatha, 2000:2). A case in this regard is that of Andrew Babeile, a learner at Vryburg High School (Paton, 2001:17).

According to Murphy (1994:1) the key to managing conflict is to have the courage to take risks and to regularly practice techniques that will give you more control over your environment. It is therefore essential for the principals to be equipped with potential multicultural conflict management skills, as these will enable them to reduce or eliminate potential for conflict. Murphy (idem) continues to argue that when you handle conflict effectively you not only put “out fires”, but also prevent more “fires from flaring up”. With such conflict under control school effectiveness is to a large extent assumed.

Dekker and Lemmer (1993:367) postulate that the political unrest and instability currently experienced at certain schools in South Africa calls for special management skills such as diversity management skills, conflict prevention and resolution skills, communication skills, negotiation skills and many more. These skills should assist principals to manage their schools efficiently and effectively.

Communication is like a panacea to marital problems and the same is true of intercultural communication skills in managing diversity effectively in schools. Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:13) contends that now that fundamental changes are taking place in almost every sphere of South African life, good intercultural communication is exactly what South Africa needs.

For effective management of cultural diversity at schools, stakeholders in both management and governance positions must begin to be sensitive to cultural differences and assist in the process of getting all involved including learners themselves to begin to appreciate and celebrate their cultural differences. Cultural differences have to be synergised as this has an added value in both learner's and educator's educational experiences. This contributes to school effectiveness.

An ideal situation for schools to strive for is a non-racial, just and equal society in which colour, religion and race shall form no point of reference (Price, 1992:8). Now that the principal subject for discussion has been introduced an exposition of extensive theoretical perspectives is in order.

## **2.2 WHAT IS DIVERSITY?**

Diversity in any given organisation does not only refer to different races but to any aspects that differ between individuals. These aspects include race, gender, age, class, ability, size, religion, education and so on (Smit & Morgan, 1996:325). According to Carrell, Elbert, Hatfield, Grobler, Marx and Van der Schyf (1998:48) managing cultural diversity is a recognition of the groups of people who share common traits. It is these traits or properties that constitute a whole person and these traits can either unite or divide us.

Carrell et al. (1998:50) postulate that in South African organisations, the term diversity has three working definitions namely:

- the politically correct term for equal employment or affirmative action;
- the recruitment and selection of ethnic groups and women;
- the management of individuals sharing a broad range of common traits.

Carrell et al. (idem) go on to argue that there are primary and secondary dimensions that relate to the definition of diversity. The primary definitions are those human differences that are inborn and exert a major impact on us, such as age, ethnicity, gender, race, physical abilities or qualities and sexual or affectionate orientation. These primary dimensions are at the core of individual identities. The secondary dimensions are more mutable and can be changed, discarded or modified throughout our lives. These secondary dimensions add depth and individuality to our lives. The following are examples of secondary dimensions: education, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, religion, work experience and parental status.

O' Hair, Friedrich and Shaver (1995:65), define diversity as differences among people. These differences can be due to gender, age, ethnicity, physical abilities, religious affiliation and sexual orientation. Bowin and Harvey (2001:453) maintain that diversity refers to more than skin colour and gender, as it refers to all kinds of differences. These differences include age, disability status, military experience, religion and education in addition, to gender, race, and nationality. Bowin and Harvey (idem) continue to argue that these groups share many common values, attitudes and perceptions, but also have cultural differences.

According to Cox and Beale (1997:1), the concept, "diversity" has a multitude of interpretations. However, in the broadest sense they contend that diversity is a mix of people in one social system that has distinctly different social relevant group affiliations. Cox and Beale (1997:23) postulate that diversity means any differences between people, differences being related to social or cultural groups. Such groups when broadly defined include gender, race, class, education, religion, sexual orien-

tation, physical and mental ability, nationality, ethnicity, work department, job level, and age among other differences.

Diversity can be broadly defined as differences with respect to ethnicity, race, gender, age, functional and educational backgrounds, lifestyle preferences, and tenure with the organisation, personality traits, and way of thinking (Osland, Kolb & Rubin, 2001:277). Cook (1998:252) contends that diversity means adopting a policy of employing people from many different backgrounds, which vary in gender, ethnic background, (dis)ability, etcetera. Gentile (1996:226) asserts that diversity encompasses the following group and situational differences: gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, age, family status, economic backgrounds, geographical background and status, as well as behavioural diversity, that is, different learning styles, communication styles, work styles, aspirations, and so forth.

Rallis, Rossman, Phleger and Abeille (1995:9) argue that diversity in terms of a classroom situation means an array of colours and languages and national heritages, as well as abilities and special needs. According to Thomas (1996:17) diversity should be seen as an opportunity that must be encouraged, nurtured and utilised. However, O'Sullivan (1999:162) cautions that diversity should not be confused with divisiveness. Highlighting or privileging differences in a manner that engenders divisiveness is not a virtue of diversity. In addition, O'Sullivan (1999:163) posits that individual subjectivities are constituted differently by the relations of race, gender, age, disability, sexuality, maturity, religion, language and culture.

O'Sullivan (1999:165) contends that nowhere is there a more intense debate about realities relating to class differences than in educational settings. O'Sullivan (1999:246) postulates that the best scientific evidence points to the fact that differences between peoples are not based on any biological superiority of one race group over another. O'Sullivan (1999:246) argues against a view of difference that assumes racial superiority. His belief is that people are born of the same natural creator.



In this study “diversity” means the differences between people in terms of race, cultural backgrounds and religious persuasions.

Having now given the basic meanings of the concept “diversity”, the attention will now be paid to the concept: managing diversity.

### **2.3 WHAT IS MANAGING DIVERSITY?**

Managing diversity can be defined as a planned, systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organisational environment in which all people, with their similarities and differences can contribute to the strategic and competitive advantage of the organisation and where no one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to productivity (Thomas, 1996:10).

Smit and Morgan (1996:321) postulate that the management of diversity aims at creating an organisational environment (culture, systems and practices) that will allow all human potential to be managed effectively, resulting in greater productivity. Smit and Morgan (1996:300) continue to argue that among other aims, managing diversity is to deal with the root causes of racial and gender prejudice. It is often noted that learners from different race groups, cultural groups, and religions have misconceptions about each other. This causes a huge problem because these learners are virtually victims of circumstances as their inability to deal with such misconceptions cannot be blamed on them. This, however, should not be used to create a “victim mentality” which can prevent learners in dealing with problems.

For schools to effectively deal with such problems of racial and gender prejudices they have to consider it imperative that their strategic planning includes the management of cultural diversity into their strategic management processes (Smit & Morgan, 1996:322). According to Thomas (1996:86), the challenge for management is to synthesise different cultural, racial, social, political, economic, educational and religious values and to this end conventional management theories and practices based upon a rationalist approach which is united in its usefulness could serve as a catalyst.

Smit and Morgan (1996:325) argue that managing diversity not only has to do with understanding each other in a multicultural society. It should create an organisational environment in which people understand, accept, respect, tolerate and explore their differences. In such an environment all stakeholders, that is, learners, educators, parents, general workers and administrators, despite their differences:

- feel a sense of belonging;
- are accepted;
- are able to reach their full potential.

In the light of this it becomes clear that the management of diversity addresses both the individual level (interpersonal) and the organisational level (Smit & Morgan, 1996:325). Smit and Morgan (idem) go further and argue that managing diversity essentially refers to cultivating respect and understanding between diverse groups. They contend that apartheid made many people ignorant about other racial and cultural groups. And ignorance per se leads to misunderstanding, fear, apprehension, hostility and even contempt. Smit and Cronje (1997:435) argue that managing diversity is a management orientation, which is not limited to one department or a specific management level of the organisation. It is the overall approach, which seeks the commitment of the whole organisation if any success is to be achieved. There is also no one specific policy, which necessarily guarantees the required results. Carrell *et al.* (1998:53) contend that managing diversity is not the same as being in compliance with equal opportunity regulations; managing diversity should mean recognition by an organisation of the fact that it has a diverse membership and it is crucial that it taps the potential of this diverse membership. Unlike affirmative action, managing diversity is not a short-term strategy to correct historical imbalances in organisations. Managing diversity is a long-term process, which demands top management identification and commitment to set in motion mechanisms to access and unfold the potential of all its members.

According to Thomas (1996:53), managing diversity is a planned systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organisational environment in which all stakeholders with their similarities and differences can contribute to the

strategic and competitive advantage of the organisation, and where no one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to the basic “purpose of being” (vision) of that particular organisation.

Thomas (idem) continues to argue that there are generic reasons why organisations embark upon managing the process of diversity. These reasons, among others, include:

- tapping into a range of skills which the organisation never had before;
- attracting and retaining the best talent;
- promoting greater productivity as a result of job satisfaction (learners and staff feeling content);
- developing and enhancing creativity and problem solving mechanisms;
- responding timeously to diverse clients' needs;
- utilising all members of the school community to the maximum;
- creating improved relations and communication between all stakeholders and school management.

Thomas (idem) cautions that if diversity is not managed effectively conflicts will “rule the roost” and destabilise productivity in an organisation (teaching and learning will not be effective). Misunderstandings arising from such a situation are likely to lead to costly litigation. Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2000:254) assert that managing diversity involves creating an environment that allows all stakeholders to contribute to organisational goals and experience personal growth as well as fair and positive treatment of all members to an extent that they are comfortable working with others from a wide variety of ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds (the same is true with educators and learners in a school environment).

Armstrong (1999:262) postulates that managing diversity, simply put refers to how an organisation manages the diverse people it employs. Armstrong (idem) continues to argue that managing diversity recognises the fact that there are differences among employees (staff and learners) and that these differences, if properly managed will enable work to be done more efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately one of the legacies of apartheid is that anything that “smacks of

differences between people” is labelled as racism. Thus, the advantages that differentiation has are often lost in the South African situation as there seems to be this pressure that we “must all be the same”.

Armstrong (1999:264) states that the concept of managing diversity is founded on the premise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everyone will feel valued, where their talents are fully utilised in an effort to meet organisational goals. Armstrong (1999:803/804) goes on and contends that managing diversity is about ensuring that all people (staff and learners) maximize their potential and their contribution to the organisation (school). "Managing diversity is about managing people who are not like you, and who do not necessarily aspire to be like you. It is about having the management skills to allow their different perspectives and views to improve the quality of your decisions" (Armstrong, 1999:804).

Vogt (1997:212) asserts that managing diversity builds upon legislative initiatives around equity and equal opportunity (anti-discrimination) with a strong focus on the best practices within private and public sector organisations. Vogt (1997:212) describes managing diversity as a philosophy that helps people to maximise their individual potential while at the same time valuing and utilising the differences of others to the benefit of the organisation.

Internationalisation of Higher Education in Australia has contributed towards tertiary classrooms becoming increasingly diverse in their learner populations. Institutions and their staff are faced with the problem of managing this diversity and for ensuring quality learning for all learners (Ramburath, 1999:1). In addition, Ramburath (idem) maintains that initiatives are being taken in regard to managing diversity such as discipline specific support courses, the integration of this support into subjects, induction programmes and extensive involvement of academic staff.

The changing learner profiles have resulted in increasing pressure for educational institutions to develop effective organisational frameworks to manage issues of

learner diversity, provide appropriate educational support and ensure quality learning and teaching (Ramburath, 1999:2).

According to Zenger, Mussel-White, Hurson and Perrin (1994:120), the highest push for diversity in any organisation comes from the realisation that its survival depends on making diversity work. If organisations today do not value the diversity of their clients and staff and take everyone's opinions into account, they are on the "road to a dead-end route".

Quite clearly diversity means valuing the individual and gaining the greatest potential from each person and thus is an essential ingredient in the lifeline of the organisation. Zenger *et al.* (idem) continue to argue that diversity is a business issue that no organisation can ignore if it were to maximise the potential of their staff to the benefit of their organisation.

Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:171) argues that managing diversity is intended to improve greater cultural synergy and the emphasis should not be on what make people different but rather focus on what they share in common. Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:173) goes on to argue that managing diversity in South Africa presently tends to be somewhat of an ad hoc intervention loosely allied to attempts to increase the number of black people in managerial positions. However, such interventions often fail to challenge the problematic paradigms such as black advancement currently held by many managers and often do little to undo the misconceptions about the role of diversity training, development and cultural awareness programmes in changing the organisational problems.

It is important to note that the move towards managing diversity in the American organisations tended to extol the virtues of all cultures and of understanding these cultures, in other words, of accepting diversity. Nevertheless, managing diversity is not about pretending that all cultures are equal; it is, in fact, according to Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:174/175), about addressing negative expectations and negative perceptions of black culture and black people without unduly reinforcing cultural differences.

Human (idem) contends that the reason why the presentation of cultures in terms of stereotypes is so problematic in South Africa is the fact that the apartheid ideology has created and reinforced an "us" and "them" syndrome, where black culture is looked down upon as inappropriate to the business world. Unfortunately this tendency to look down upon black culture includes the abilities and behaviours of black learners as they are often judged against Eurocentric values.

This tendency to judge people on the basis of stereotypes instead on the basis of individual capacity is rather unfortunate. However, any manager (principal) worth his/her position may do well to have a good understanding of and respect for the various South African cultures. Yet, this should not preclude judging each of the areas of strength and weakness on an individual basis (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:174/175).

It is interesting to note the contention advanced by Human (idem) that diversity in itself is not the issue, but people management and people development is. The people management school of thought advocates that organisations should regard all members (educators, assistants and learners) as individuals with their strengths and weaknesses, their own particular problems and training needs. It is argued that people management provides the opportunity not only to deal with people on an individual level but also to avoid the harmful effects of stereotyping and prejudice caused by a lack of knowledge of individual strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore crucial that managers of organisations pay attention first and foremost to people management and by so doing culture will have been placed where it rightfully belongs; as a particular issue positively or negatively impacting on individual performance at a particular point in time; an issue which can be dealt with by that particular individual and his/her manager in a coaching relationship rather than by a strategy which assumes that everyone of the same race has the same relationship with his/her culture as all other members of that particular group (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:175).

With regard to managing diversity, Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:179) quotes Sachs (1992) as follows: "The African dimension, whether expressed in terms of language, dress, humour, style or attitudes, will come through naturally and

strongly when people of African origin take their rightful place at all levels of economic life. What has been called the Anglo-Saxon behavioural style will continue for those who feel comfortable with it. The African personality will express itself as part of the South African personality, neither claiming honour nor accepting inferiority, just demanding its rightful position as a major ingredient of the whole.”

On the question of unity and diversity of the South African society, Sachs (idem) argues that we want neither forced unity nor artificial diversity. With our history of apartheid it is only on the basis of mutual acceptance of the principle of unity and equality that diversity can truly express itself and not be associated with domination. Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:180) asserts that diversity and synergy come together when there is acceptance of the principles of unity, and equality, integrity and trust and when a genuine effort is being made both to provide development opportunities in order that individuals can compete on merit and inculcate a belief in ability which is not linked to racial and gender stereotypes.

Diversity if effectively managed could produce a powerful synergy, Human (idem) gives an intriguing scenario - that of the Paul Simon concert tour: Paul Simon's band consisted of musicians from varied cultural backgrounds - from South America, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Botswana, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Dublin, New York, Los Angeles - to name but a few. Out of managing this diversity - where each individual makes his or her own contribution on merit - came a unique and unforgettable fusion of instruments and voices - a sound which is European and African and South American and North American, modern and traditional. The most important aspect of the synergy created by this diversity was that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. This was no tokenism and no lowering of standards. In unity and equality, each musician was able to articulate his own relationship with culture in a self-confident manner.

Organisations the world over could answer, as well as draw an invaluable lesson in the pragmatic manner in which Paul Simon demonstrated to all and sundry the benefits synergy flowing from diversity effectively managed (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:80). Human (idem) contends that professional and human resource develop-

ment systems which emphasise the need to address both employee (educator) and managerial expectations and responsibilities in relation to development as well as to inculcate a respect for human dignity and integrity of the individual play a far greater role in the creation of a conducive environment for cultural synergy than programmes explicitly designed to address the issue of cultural diversity.

Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:180/181) argues that diversity can be managed effectively and the first step should be in managing ourselves; in managing our own prejudices and stereotypes; in opening up ways in which we subtly damage the self-confidence, and self esteem of those with whom we work. Progress and standards depend on the extent to which we can harness latent skills and abilities, motivation and enthusiasm. We will not achieve all this until we recognise our role as either part of the problem or part of the solution.

According to O'Hair, Friedrich and Shaver (1995:65) diversity can be managed effectively if the following factors are taken into account:

- understanding your own perspectives that make you unique;
- understanding the perspectives of others;
- acting in such a way that conflict resulting from diversity can be positive.

O'Hair et al. (1995:69) assert that the principal goal of managing diversity should not be to make everyone alike but to ensure that people have knowledge and the skills to successfully manage conflict from diverse cultural perspectives.

Bowin and Harvey (2001:452) postulate that managing diversity effectively depends on managers' understanding and utilising employee (educators and learners) differences to develop a far more effective and profitable organisation (an effective school). Many organisations (schools) will have to take cognisance of the fact that in order to survive in today's South Africa they not only have to accommodate differences but also accept them and be prepared to live with them. This is a reality of the heterogeneous nature of the South African society. Bowin and Harvey (2001:453) continue to argue that managing diversity involves being more aware of the characteristics common to different groups of employees



(educators and learners) while also managing these people as individuals. Bowin and Harvey (*idem*) argue that managing diversity means not just tolerating differences, but supporting and using these differences as resources to the advantage of the organisations. Schools in South Africa, in particular, will not have a choice of whether to have or not to have a diverse school population; it is happening already and principals have to learn, as a matter of necessity, the skills appropriate to managing a diverse learner population.

Managing diversity necessitates that organisations make changes in their systems, structures, and management practices in order to eliminate any behaviour that may exist to keep people from reaching their full potential. The goal should be not to treat all people (educators and learners) as being the same, but rather to treat people as individuals, recognising each person has different needs, which require different efforts to succeed (Bowin & Harvey, 2001:457).

The challenge for managers (principals) created by a diverse school community (educators, learners and parents) includes group cohesiveness, communication problems, mistrust, tension and stereotyping. These challenges can be turned into advantages by diversity training and effective diversity management.

Bowin and Harvey (2001:463) maintain that managing diversity means making a heterogeneous workforce perform to its potential in an equitable work (school) environment where no one group has an advantage or a disadvantage over another. In support of this viewpoint, Cox and Beale (1997:xii) contend that in a diverse organisation all its members take part in creating a climate in which all people are fairly treated and can achieve and contribute to their full potential and where diversity, as an organisational resource can be fully leveraged to enhance organisational performance.

In addition, Cox and Beale (1997:2) argue that managing diversity creates a climate in which the potential advantages of diversity for organisational or group performance are maximised while the potential disadvantages are minimised. Cox and Beale (*idem*) accentuate the fact that managing diversity should be the responsibility of everyone in the organisation and should not be limited to those in

management or supervisory positions. In strengthening their contention, Cox and Beale (1997:13) contend that managing diversity consists of taking practical steps to create and sustain an organisational climate in which the potential for diversity-related dynamics to hinder performance are minimised and the potential for diversity to enhance performance is maximised. Thus managing diversity is about improving organisational performance by optimally utilising every member's abilities and leveraging diversity as an organisational resource.

Cox and Beale (1997:29) assert that managing diversity places great emphasis on various intercultural dynamics, involving the culture of the organisation, its various subunits and the members who work in them. The rationale for managing diversity includes moral and ethical reasons such as fairness and upholding the dignity of every person. Thus, managing diversity is necessary in order to leverage this often under utilised resource (diversity).

Managers of organisations have to focus on the special needs of diverse groups, yet, have to treat the entire membership consistently fairly in recognition of their human dignity. Unless an organisation manages diversity efficiently and effectively: it risks causing conflict, distrust and poor communication between diverse groups (Mahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1999:85). For the effective management of diversity Mahavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:88-90) suggest the following guidelines:

- Strong support from the top levels of management of the organisation. The values, beliefs and behaviours of the top leadership of the organisation set the tone for the others and create a domino effect. The leadership's strong commitment to diversity signals its importance in the organisation.
- Clear and consistent application of diversity principles in personnel decisions. Managers need to "walk the diversity walk" through their recruitment, hiring and promotion practices. The presence of a generally diverse workforce (general assistants, educators and learners) at all levels sends a clear signal about what the organisation values.
- Appropriate reward systems and accountable managers and other members of the organisation must be rewarded for their efforts in promoting diversity and

are held accountable in their performance regarding such efforts (bonuses to managers for their efforts in promoting and managing diversity).

According to Thomas (1996:10), managing diversity can be defined as a planned systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organisational environment in which all members of an organisation with their similarities and differences can contribute to the strategic and competitive advantage of the organisation, and where no-one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to productivity.

Thomas (1996:10) remarks that the process of managing diversity is:

- a means of creating an organisational environment which promotes sustainability of well constructed programmes;
- linked to individual and interpersonal interventions;
- linked to training and development;
- linked to sound business reasons, which ensure the achievement of organisational objectives.



Thomas (1996:11) continues to contend that managing diversity targets all members of an organisation and assumes that multicultural norms can prevail in an organisational culture whose consensus exists around performance criteria, and not around one's race and individual style, which have no bearing upon job output.

Understandingly in South Africa today in the realm of diversity, race and to a lesser degree gender, command a central place in the political arena. This is to be expected in the light of the history of our country (Thomas, 1996:89). In addition Thomas (idem) argues that organisations do wittingly or unwittingly stifle the diversity specific to the variety of individuals they employ in the quest to preserve the historical mould which has for so long been part of corporate life.

O'Sullivan (1999:247) postulates that in the global world towards which we are moving, there is an educational imperative for all members of the planet to enter communities of greater inclusion. The kind of inclusion that means openness to

variety and differences with a sense of including all in a manner, which attends to the uniqueness of each and every member. Thus educating for an inclusive community. Inclusive communities operate not on the basis of sameness but on the creativity of differences.

In this study “cultural diversity” is all about differences between people, in terms of race, religion and culture. Having “painted a picture of what managing cultural diversity is all about”, it is now crucial to indicate the ways in which such cultural diversity can be of value to organisations.

## **2.4 VALUING DIVERSITY AS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY EFFECTIVELY**

Cox and Beale (1997:13) maintain that valuing diversity should be considered an organisational resource that should be incorporated in the statements of mission, values, and vision. Cox and Beale (idem) argue that the valuing diversity philosophy is about how diversity affects organisational outcomes and indicate that the presence of diversity represents a distinct organisational resource that if properly leveraged can bring about a competitive advantage.

Smit and Morgan (1996:326) assert that the benefits of managing cultural diversity at the interpersonal level include:

- career satisfaction;
- identification with the organisation;
- involvement in the job;
- satisfactory compensation;
- greater career mobility

Benefits of managing cultural diversity at organisational level include:

- improved work attendance;
- longer retention;

- greater success in recruiting, because the organisation's reputation attracts candidates who are easier to assimilate into the organisation;
- higher productivity and improved work quality from satisfied workers;
- more creative solutions to problems;
- greater cohesiveness among members of the work group and better communication between groups;
- reduced work related stress (Smit & Morgan, 1996:326).

Kruger, Smit and Le Roux (1996:247) argue that organisations must realise that diversity can result in creative solutions to problems and therefore be profitable. On the environmental level the individual and organisation function within a broader society, which must also be sensitive to diversity.

Kruger et al. (1996:52) contend that companies that value diversity assimilation are not ideal, because assimilation is bias. Pressuring employees (educators and learners) to conform, diminishes them as individuals. In trying to gain acceptance by the dominant group, they lose touch with their own cultural backgrounds. Kruger et al. (idem) continue to argue that when diversity is not valued, the diverse employees' accomplishments may not be noted and mistakes may be magnified. Pushing assimilation does not benefit the dominant workforce either. It reinforces the bias that spawns this approach, and it perpetuates stereotyping and prejudice in the organisation. Organisations whose members cannot adapt to the new dispensation in South Africa would barely survive.

Kruger et al. (idem) postulate that the first step in getting an organization to value diversity is to acknowledge the fundamental difference between valuing diversity on the one hand and equal employment or affirmative action on the other hand. Equal employment opportunity is a legal approach to workplace discrimination (equal admission opportunities for learners at schools). After all, it is against the law in South Africa to deny a learner admission on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation or other primary characteristics (South African School's Act: Act no. 84 of 1996).

Valuing diversity by management is intended to reap the benefits that a diverse workforce (membership) offers. Valuing diversity is an organisation specific necessity-driven effort to change from a quantitative point of view to a qualitative point of view. This approach accentuates performance by individuals as individuals other than the “so and so's” of the organisation. In an organisation that values diversity; managing diversity becomes a substitute for assimilation (Kruger et al., 1996:53).

Armstrong (1999:804) argues that valuing diversity is in fact valuing differences between people and the difference they bring to their organisation. This can lead to the development of a more rewarding and productive environment.

Ueda (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995:114) states that the liberal movement in the United States of America created a movement toward the development of education for cultural pluralism. This was a clarion call for the appreciation of foreign cultures (alien cultures) derived from the doctrine of liberal Americanisers such as Jane Adams who contends that immigrants brought cultural contributions that would enrich the American society.

Ueda (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995:117/118) contends that schools are challenged not to merely tolerate cultural pluralism but to be oriented towards the cultural enrichment of all children and youth, through programmes rooted in the preservation and extension of cultural alternatives. In support of multicultural schooling, Ueda (idem) gives the following goals of multicultural education:

- the teaching of values which support cultural diversity and individual uniqueness;
- the encouragement of the qualitative expansion of existing ethnic cultures and their incorporation into the mainstream of socio-economic and political life of a people;
- the support of exploration in alternative and emerging life styles;
- the encouragement of multiculturalism and multilingualism.

According to Ueda (idem), the proponents of the above goals view multiculturalism as a means of cultural empowerment, not as an academic tool for improving scholastic and civic knowledge. Schools are therefore better placed for developing an appreciation of one's own culture and other cultures. By so doing one is attempting to eradicate racism, classism, sexism, ethnocentricism, prejudice and discrimination. However, over and above this, the cultivation of an ethnic identity in schools has beneficial effects on learning. The therapeutic character of multicultural schooling would enable learners to gain self-esteem, which in turn would produce confidence and interest in learning. In addition to this, Ueda (idem) argues that the endeavour to increase knowledge of other cultures easily slips into demands for confidence in other cultures and respect for them.

Vogt (1997:187) a fervent proponent of multicultural education argues that one thing that most multicultural education efforts have in common is that the main focus is social diversity and the celebration of that diversity. Vogt (idem) continues to argue that multicultural education usually aims at "broadmindedness rather than tolerance", that is, at positive acceptance of differences rather than merely "putting up" with them.

Vogt (1997:212) asserts that diversity of learner population enhances quality and is a facet of, not a hindrance to excellence. Proponents of diversity echo these values and argue that acceptance of diversity in schools indicate a commitment by the school management to opening up learning opportunities to all sections of the community.

Many schools are actively recruiting their learners from an increasingly diverse local and national society, in terms of ethnic mix and are striving to widen access for those who can benefit from higher education. The result of such a mixture of learners is one, which has a variety of needs, experiences and talents. However, while such diversity should be celebrated, it must be managed carefully so that no group of learners becomes marginalized within the school environment (Vogt, 1997:212).

Tromp (1998:76) argues that in recognising human diversity, managers of organisations should demonstrate an appreciation of what differentiates people from one another and the realisation that every individual is a valuable and unique member of the organisation. Bowin and Harvey (2001:454) contend that top management has to create a conducive environment within which every member of the organisation is able to reach his potential. This means developing an organisational culture in which individual differences will not just be tolerated but valued and even celebrated. Bowin and Harvey (idem) continue to argue that the valuing of differences as a management philosophy ensures that the broader the spectrum of differences in the organisation the richer the synergy among members, the more creative their ideas and the more excellent the organisation's performance.

The valuing of "difference philosophy" is intended to develop employees (educators and learners) understanding of the stereotypes and assumptions associated with cultural differences. It is also potent in reducing the prejudices each group may hold towards others. And when employees (educators and learners) realise that their differences are not merely tolerated but valued, they are likely to become more loyal, productive and committed to the organisational goals (Bowin & Harvey, 2001:454-457).

Bowin and Harvey (2001:458) assert that no human society could survive where the values of tolerance and cultural tolerance come to nothing. South Africa today is facing the challenge of shaping a truly common national culture, one that is responsive to the long silenced and suppressed cultures of the people of colour. This may be very idealistic, but ignoring it may be too huge a price to pay in the foreseeable future.

According to Mahavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:87) diversity gives business access to broader, more diverse ideas, and markets and increases overall effectiveness in a complex, multicultural world. Proper management of cultural diversity can provide an organisation with a distinct competitive edge.



Osland, Kolb and Rubin (2001:281) provide the following guidelines for managers who want to manage diversity effectively:

- know and understand your own culture (why do we value certain things and behave in certain ways?);
- know the other cultures;
- make an effort to understand why members of the other cultures hold the values they do and behave as they do;
- look for strengths in the other culture rather than focusing on weaknesses or differences;
- respect the other culture and bear in mind that it is the ability to create relationships and work through others that leads to effectiveness;
- recognise the degree to which you are ethnocentric and keep it in check;
- listen actively so that people from other cultures can guide you and so that the organisation will benefit from its diversity;
- use management techniques or intervention strategies that will be appropriate for the given culture or subculture.

Osland *et al.* (2001:281) assert that multicultural groups can be the source of learning and creativity but only when groups are open about their differences and use them to enhance mutual understanding. According to Myers (1996:69), accepting diversity enables organisations to become versatile, and pull different capabilities together. They do this by recruiting people from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds to blend together different cognitive orientations. By so doing they stand a better chance of addressing different contingencies effectively.

Gentile (1996:475) argues that diversity can be used as a lever and a tool in recognising and optimising the learning triggered by differences. Rallis (1995:28) postulates that the educator's role is to help children discover their own value as well as that of others. However, of note, is the contribution that each individual learner often makes to the classroom community.

Learners bring varied backgrounds, stories, and languages to the classroom. Educators should view this diversity as a resource and their constructivist minds

should offer opportunities for learners to develop richer and deeper understandings of phenomena around them (Rallis, 1995:8). Patterson (1993:8) claims that in tomorrow's organisation, the signs of strength and weakness will be the opposite of those in today's organisations. Tomorrow's organisations will be characterised by diversity and such diversity will be valued and celebrated as a potent resource. Members of such organisations will be operating in an environment that will be encouraging them to express their opinions even when they go against the prevailing orthodox view as the richness of different perspectives will be enjoyed.

In valuing diversity, Patterson (1993:8) states that management should:

- acknowledge that each learner is a unique individual and provide an appropriate educational program;
- seek to maximise the strengths of diverse learning styles and strategies;
- actively seek diverse viewpoints as a rich source of helping us see reality more fully and helping us dream more creatively;
- expect each school to develop its own sense of community; and accord to all peoples' dignity, respect, and worth.

Zimpher and Ashburn (Dilworth, 1992:50) argue that true valuing of diversity implies an understanding of the broad array of differences among people and how these differences interact with subject matter and with teaching. Plani (Thomas, 1996:86) contends that managing diversity should in the final instance be seen as an opportunity for the organisational leadership to dismantle the past dysfunctional organisational culture and to create, over time, a more appropriate organisational culture that is consistent with the diverse South African society.

In this study "valuing cultural diversity" is about recognising, appreciating and accepting all sorts of differences between people. Therefore if one appreciates and accepts such differences one is then in a better position to manage people effectively.

The preceding account on the values of organisational diversity, as a matter of course, necessitates the ways and means of inculcating such values. The following does so.

## **2.5 DIVERSITY TRAINING AS A SINE QUA NON IN MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Noe et al. (2000:252) contend that diversity training refers to training designed to change employee (staff) attitudes about diversity and/or developing skills needed to work with a diverse school community.

Smith and Cronje (1997:455) assert that diversity training is a learning process implemented to raise managers' awareness and develop competencies concerning the issues and needs involved in managing a diverse school population. Smit and Cronje (idem) argue that in order for managers (school principals) to respond to the challenges of working with a diverse school community, they must recognise learner and staff difficulties in coping with diversity. These difficulties include resistance to change, racism, and lack of knowledge about other groups as well as prejudices, biases and stereotypes.

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Diversity training should therefore focus on:

- programmes designed to raise participants' consciousness and awareness about differences in values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour and communication that may exist across cultures;
- programmes designed to develop new skills and competencies, including communication competency (Smit & Cronje, 1997: 455).

Exposure to other peoples' cultures could form a significant step in any cultural awareness training (Smit & Cronje, 1997:455). Smit and Cronje (idem) continue to argue that for the effective managing of diversity, there is a dire need for support to complement training in coping with diversity and this revolves around managerial support from the top, such as:

- managers who have skills for managing diversity and competence in doing this;
- education and training;
- diversity awareness raising;
- peer support in the workplace;
- organisational climate that supports diversity;
- open communication with one's managers (principals) about diversity issues;
- recognition for staff and learner development of diversity skills and competencies;
- recognition for staff contributions to enhancing diversity;
- organisational rewards for managers implementing organisational diversity goals and objectives.

Diversity training and managerial support from the top can do much to create cultural synergy and contribute to higher productivity (Smit & Cronje, 1997:455).

Kruger (Carrell *et al.*, 1998:52-55) maintains that the top management should be the first to undergo diversity training. Managerial and staff training should follow, focussing on stereotyping and the dimensions of diversity. Education in managing diversity should be an ongoing resource and should be customised in accordance with each organisation's unique needs.

Kruger (*idem*) continues to argue that diversity training seeks to motivate staff to recognise the worth and dignity of everyone in the organisation and to treat them with respect. It also seeks to diminish the negative impact of individual prejudices by getting each person to accept responsibility for the problems arising from diversity.

Kruger (*idem*) advocates the use of the following methods in diversity training namely, role-playing and/or listening to commonly held stereotypes and argues that diversity trainers could use role-players to get staff and learners to see themselves through the eyes of their fellow staff members and learners. However, it must be borne in mind that unlearning biases is a long-term process, and during this process individuals must be willing to re-evaluate and reprogram many deeply held beliefs.

According to Kruger (idem), diversity training takes many forms, such as involving encounter-type retreats or quiet consciousness-raising sessions. The following are some exercises that may be used in diversity training:

- Value clarification – a checklist of values, like punctuality, honesty, acceptance and financial success.
- Perceptual differences – participants are asked to give a percentage definition of items, such as always, frequently.
- Exploring cultural assumptions – one group about the other.
- Personalising the experience – awareness of individual uniqueness other people different from themselves in colour, gender, religion or in economic status.

In regard to managing diversity effectively, Kruger (idem) cautions managers about language sensitivity and suggests the following guidelines for appropriate language that would assist managers (principals, heads of departments and educators) in their endeavour to value diversity of a school community. Diversity training could sensitise managers about these guidelines:

- Do not tell jokes directly at a group of people stereotyped because of their primary or secondary characteristics.
- Use metaphors and analogies from diverse sources and diverse disciplines, like sports, arts and sciences.
- Avoid terms that devalue people – crippled, black girl, white girl or that spotlight differences.
- Be aware of and sensitive to the preferences of members of diverse groups regarding titles or terminology, for example, the previously disadvantaged people.

Noe et al. (2000:252) suggest the following steps in training for cross-cultural preparation:

- Be able to communicate verbally and non-verbally.
- Be flexible, tolerant of ambiguity and sensitive to cultural differences.

- Be motivated to succeed in a multicultural environment.

Noe et al. (2000:254) state the goals of diversity training as to:

- eliminate values, stereotypes, and managerial practices that inhibit employees personal development; and
- allow employees to contribute to organisational goals regardless of the race, sexual orientation, gender, family status, religious orientation, or cultural background.

In order for diversity training to be effective organisations need to ensure that:

- employees (staff) understand how their values and stereotypes influence their behaviour towards others of different gender, ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds;
- employees gain an appreciation of cultural differences among themselves;
- behaviours that isolate or intimidate minority group members are improved (Noe et al., 2000:254).

Diversity training programmes among other things aim at attitude awareness about differences in cultural and ethnic backgrounds, physical characteristics (for example, disabilities) and personal characteristics that influence behaviour towards others. The assumption underlying these programmes is that by increasing their awareness of stereotypes and beliefs employees (staff) will be able to avoid negative stereotypes when interacting with learners of different backgrounds? The programmes help employees consider the similarities and differences between cultural groups (Noe et al., 2000:255).

Noe et al. (2000:256) posit that school personnel trained in managing cultural diversity could be able to encourage learners of colour to be comfortable with what they are and be free to voice their concerns whenever there is a need to do so. Learners of colour armed with self-confidence and self-esteem could quite easily obviate (counter) the all too often made arguments that learners of colour were intellectually unable to perform optimally.

Armstrong (1999:264) contends that if the management of an organisation is trained in managing diversity they will be able to formulate an effective diversity policy that will:

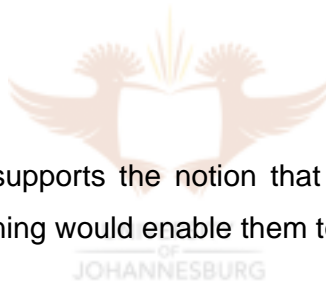
- acknowledge cultural and individual differences in the workplace (school);
- state that the organisation values the different qualities that members bring to the organisation;
- emphasise the need to eliminate bias in the area of performance assessment and learning opportunities;
- focus on individual differences rather than group differences.

Ravitch and Vinovskis (1995:114) argue that diversity training should encourage cultural pluralism and that should help decrease prejudice and discrimination and promote inter group toleration among the members of the organisation. Ueda (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995:121) postulates that a well-designed diversity training program would enable educators to help learners acquire “a growing capacity to accept diversity as inevitable and natural”. As a logical consequence diversity training would produce educators sensitive to multiculturalism. Ueda (idem) argues vehemently that multicultural educators would be better skilled to urge schools to make learners aware of ethnic differences and identities. White learners would be enabled to learn about the diversity of other group experiences and perspectives and by so doing lessen the formation of prejudice and intolerance and the same would be true with learners of colour. The ultimate result of this approach is that learners from the so-called “civilised cultures” would consider other cultures from a less arrogant perspective of their culture as being superior to others.

O’Sullivan (1999:162) argues that differences must be taught in a way that allows people to acquire the strength to work collectively for transformative change. O’Sullivan (idem) continues to argue that differences should be taught in a manner that recognises our individual and collective strengths and not in a manner that renders others exotic and romanticises the “other”. People must recognise their differences and yet, learn from each other.

Vogt (1997:212) postulates that organisations (schools) need to engage in “Managing diversity in education.” The objective of the “diversity change agent course” is to provide participants with skills, knowledge, tools, and techniques to effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities as change agents. Such a course should follow an interactive adult learning format. Throughout the change agent course, participants learn and build competency in the following areas:

- Organisational culture
- Cross-cultural communications
- Understanding and managing change
- Conflict resolution
- Organisational problem-solving
- Systems diagnosis
- Strategic planning
- Process mapping
- Facilitation



Vogt (1997:213) strongly supports the notion that managers of schools undergo diversity training. Such training would enable them to:

- identify and share existing good practices in managing diversity;
- develop support mechanisms for staff and learners;
- develop guidelines for the rest of the school community;
- offer a curriculum which reflects the diversity of South Africa today;
- guide and encourage learners to produce work free of prejudice;
- ensure that all fields and subjects are free from prejudice in terms of content, materials used and delivery;
- encourage staff and learners to contribute to the diverse wider community through their changed attitudes, behaviours, ideas, and so on.

As a positive consequence of diversity training, according to Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:178/179) South Africans could see themselves as “fellow countrymen” rather than Whites and Blacks, Coloureds and Asians. In this way South



Africans would break free from the obsession with differences and begin to focus on commonalities, which unite them first and foremost as human beings and secondly as South Africans.

Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:181) contends that transcultural competence requires adaptability, flexibility and empathy. Crucially, this involves a good and critical understanding of oneself and one's own culture. If you are not fully informed about your own culture and its strengths and limitations, then you are not going to be sensitive about others. Diamant (1993:27) remarks that it is critically important for counsellors (trainers) who provide career services to special populations to reduce the stereotypes, discrimination, environmental barriers and other forms of bias that typically impede the development of such groups. Diamant (idem) argues that in order to counsel a member from culturally different groups, counsellors (trainers) should be familiar with the culture of the "client".

To manage the increasingly diverse members of organisations, many organisations are now developing and implementing diversity training programmes designed to improve members' and managers' sensitivity to the diversity existing in their organisations (Diamant, 1993:54).



Given the changing complexion of the former Model C schools with more and more learners of colour being admitted; the school management is duty-bound to assume a clear policy position that confronts the question of diversity squarely, thus:

- develop an explicit policy prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of skin colour, language, culture, religion, and so forth. Such a policy proclaims school management intolerance of discriminatory personnel actions and sets the atmosphere for the organisational climate favourable to learners of all colours;
- educate every member of the school community about the diversity policy. It is not sufficient to just have a policy while members of the organisation hardly know a thing about it;

- training that would enable members of an organisation to intellectually understand the organisation's anti-discriminatory policy but may not emotionally appreciate it;
- sensitise members to others' perspectives and lifestyles (Diamant, 1993:54).

Bowin and Harvey (2001:463) assert that the challenges to managers created by a diverse workforce include group cohesiveness, communication problems, mistrust, tension and stereotyping. However, these challenges can be turned into advantages by training and by effective diversity management. Managers can be trained on how to become aware of the myths, stereotypes and true cultural differences. Employees (members of the organisation) can be trained to better understand the corporate culture, success requirements and career choices that affect opportunity for advancement.

Cox and Beale (1997:2) argue that diversity training enable managers to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of social-cultural diversity in an organisation. The diversity-training programme could entail the following phases of development: awareness, knowledge and understanding, behaviour and action steps. Cox and Beale (idem) contend that during this process individuals in an organisation are moved from diversity ignorance to a point where they understand how the dynamics of diversity affect organisations, the people and their outcomes. A competent person as a consequence of diversity training is able not only to avoid diversity-related problems, but also to tap into the potential of diversity to enhance organisational performance and progress.

Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:87) expostulate that organisations need to train their managers in skills required to manage and to deal with the inevitable conflicts and disagreements. For example, Colgate-Palmolive has a mandatory diversity training for all its staff members. The same could be true of all multicultural schools. The principle of "fairness to all" is accentuated during the diversity-training course. Special attention should focus on supporting employees (educators and learners) including members of majority groups. Training could also enable people to recognise individual differences that cross many cultural boundaries. Diversity

programmes should focus on benefiting the whole organisation, not just the top management.

Osland *et al.* (2001:281) posit that diversity training should emphasise an appreciation of differences, a focus on similarities and the ways in which diversity can be a competitive advantage. Myers (1996:69) asserts that in recent times organisations have set out to sensitise their members to cultural diversity through in-house training and educational programmes that strive to cultivate cultural awareness in all their members.

Garibaldi (Dilworth, 1992:23) contends that schools, colleges and departments of education should assume the responsibility of preparing all educators, regardless of race, to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. The framework of these training programmes should be comprehensive and holistic and include much more than a single course of multicultural education or human relations.

Garibaldi (Dilworth, 1992:25) continues to argue, stressing the fact that one of the areas to which pre-service educators need more exposure to, is the knowledge and dynamics of cultural differences that exist among learners. In addition, Garibaldi (*idem*) argues that diversity training for educators should be considered as an aspect in the educator preparation programme.

In this study “cultural diversity training” is a management strategy that is designed to educate people of all races, cultural backgrounds, and religious affiliations to be aware and accept differences in people as part and parcel of human existence worldwide.

Now that the need for diversity training has been exposed and advantages explicated, it is now necessary to consider culture as an important aspect in managing diversity.

## 2.6 CULTURE AS A CENTRAL FACTOR IN MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

People tend to live in communities within which they have a reasonable number of values and norms in common.

### 2.6.1 What is culture?

Smit and Cronje (1997:444) postulate that there are as many definitions of the concept “culture” as there are writers on the subject. However, all these definitions to some extent agree on the variables that make up culture, namely, philosophy, beliefs, norms, habits, customs, art, literature, etcetera. Influenced by each other these variables influence the behaviour of people and groups.

Culture is defined as the set of important assumptions (often unstated) that members of a community share (Noe et al., 2000:537). Noe et al. (idem) argue that culture affects human capital and if education is greatly valued culturally, then it makes sense to see members of the community increasing their human capital by acquiring all the skills and expertise that education could offer. It is against this background that culture invariably determines the effectiveness of school practices.

The crucial role that culture plays in a society cannot be underscored and in this regard Hofstede (Noe et al., 2000:539) asserts that cultures have an important impact on approaches to managing people. Culture can strongly affect the education – the human capital of a country, the political, legal and economic systems.

Hofstede (Grobler, 1998:1) views culture as a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one human group from another. Hofstede (idem) argues that culture is difficult to change: it exists in the minds of people and it is shared by a number of people – thus it becomes embedded in their institutions such as family, school and church as these people have built it together.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993:92) contend that culture is a set of understandings or meanings shared by a group of people. Typically these meanings are tacitly held and serve to define the group as being distinct from other groups. While Adler (Grobler, 1998:1) claims that culture is something:

- that is shared by all or almost all members of some social group;
- that the older members of the group try to pass onto the younger members;
- that (as in the case of morals, laws and customs) shapes behaviour or structures one's perceptions of the world (provides you with a cultural lens to look at things with).

Grobler (1998:1) maintains that culture is crucial to its communal bearers for the following reasons:

- it is cohesive by nature – it binds its communal bearers to the common fate, cohesion and striving towards unity;
- it is directive by nature – it evokes, ratifies and bans certain behaviours by using specific norms and assumptions held by the group. It thus plays a vital role in decision-making by prescribing the valuable, the proper and the ideal for a group or a community;
- it determines behaviour – it ratifies the proper and that which is ideal for that particular community.

Culture manifests in numerous ways namely dress, language, food, gestures, manners and in various other forms, yet, the bulk of cultural components such as beliefs, norms, values, standards, perceptions, attitudes and priorities are less visible, hence much harder to detect and to deal with. It is noted that culture has a significant influence on attitudes, priorities and behaviours of people and groups. In a nutshell culture is basically the way that different groups of people do things differently from other groups, and therefore they perceive the world differently (Smit & Cronje, 1997:444/445).

Clements and Spinks (1996:44) contend that humans cannot escape the fact that populations do differ in form, physical appearance and culture. However, the

physical form and characteristics may be due to heredity. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to note that culture is not inherited but learned. Bentley (1998:87) asserts that different people understand culture in different ways, and identify themselves in relation to cultural norms and beliefs with varying degrees of self-awareness. Bentley (1998:88) continues to argue that part of the basic function of education is to pass a body of inherited cultural values, beliefs and practices to the younger generation, even if the appropriate values and beliefs are disputed. Equally, the importance of culture to the success of education is incumbent upon the extent to which it is actively supported by parents and others in the community, the esteem in which education and educators are held by the wider society.

Bentley (1998:88) continues to argue that culture as the system of norms, beliefs, and practices upheld within social groups, institutions and communities will always be at the heart of the educational process. Even if such norms and beliefs are not outwardly articulated by learners, such systems will always influence the way in which education is received and treated by young people.

In addition, Bentley (1998:89) maintains that using cultural resources can also be an effective means of motivating under achieving and disaffected young people. It is of particular importance to note that the cultural influence of sport and popular music holds a great potential, which often lies untapped. The importance of culture in education cannot be overemphasised as it produces icons and role models, both positive and negative and both hold unprecedented sway over the interests and imaginations of even the most hard-bitten or damaged young people.

McLaren and Leonard (1993:30) pose an anthropological notion of culture. According to this notion, culture is the actions and results of humans in society, the way people interact in their communities, and the additions people make to the world they find themselves in. According to Rickards (1999:103), culture consists of patterns explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, consisting of the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts: the essential core of culture consists of traditional (historical and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. Cultural

systems may on one hand, be considered as products of action, while on the other hand as conditioning elements of future action.

It is worth noting the following psychological oriented view of culture (Rickards, 1999:104):

- a pattern of shared assumptions;
- invented, discovered, or developed by a given group ;
- as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration;
- that has worked well enough to be considered valid;
- is to be taught to the members of the group as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems.

Rickards (1999:108) asserts that many theorists on culture share a belief that culture is significant, and that its significance lies in the symbolism of action and events rather than in the tangible characteristics of artefacts. Culture exists not so much as a phenomenon that can be objectively measured but as a story that can be experienced and retold, in ways that sustain its mystic meaning.

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Terpstra and David (1991:6) maintain that culture is a learned, shared, compelling, interrelated set of symbols, whose meaning provides a set of orientations for members of a society. These orientations taken together provide solutions to problems that all societies must solve if they are to remain viable. In addition, Terpstra and David (1991:5) argue that each culture shapes perception and behaviour by paying selective attention to some details of reality and ignoring others.

According to Terpstra and David (1991:7), culture binds people and because of this bond, people view culture as having a vital function in their lives. It serves for:

- acquisition of food, clothing, and shelter;
- provision of protection from enemies and natural disaster;
- regulation of sexuality;

- child raising in a socially approved and useful behaviour;
- division of labour among humans;
- sharing and exchanging the products of human work;
- providing social controls against behaviour;
- providing incentives to motivate persons to want to do what they have to do;
- distributing power and legitimising the wielding of power to allow setting of priorities, making decisions, and co-ordination of actions that obtain social goals;
- providing a sense of priorities (values) and an overall sense of worth (religion) to social life.

Wilkens (1999:83) contends that culture is not about what one says but it is about what one does within a community in terms of interaction with reality. Du Toit, Grobler and Schenk (1998:200) describe culture as being person-centred, existing in the minds of people, their feelings, meanings, values and behaviour. They contend that culture is individual, it distinguishes people from others and shifts the focus from the problem to the person and also determines our understanding of others' behaviour.

In addition, Du Toit et al. (1998:200) argue that culture is always in flux; it is forever changing and adapting to new information. However, more important is the fact that no two people share exactly the same cultural world. Although people may come from the same ethnic group, they may still have different perspectives. According to Du Toit et al. (1998:200), every person can be seen as coming from a different background: "Any two-way conversation – even one between two identical twins – is in a real sense a cross-cultural event, because each person is a different individual with differences in terms of personal assumptions, beliefs, norms and patterns of behaviour".

Du Toit et al. (1998:200) remark that apart from individual culture every group and community has its own culture or frame of reference that is part of their decisions and behaviour.



Thomas (1999:1) asserts that the cultures in which the young are raised can differ markedly, and that these differences affect children's physical growth, aspirations, abilities, values, life chances and personal social adjustment. Thomas (1999:12) describes culture as being human-made; it includes ideas, values, and codes known to all members of the group; it is a learned system of behaviour based upon symbols; it is transmitted from generation to generation. Thomas (*idem*) argues that culture is the society's blueprint for behaviour: what must be done, what ought to be done, what may be done, and what may not be done.

Cooper and Rousseau (1995:129) postulate that culture reflects one's perceptions of the world. However, the dominant view of culture is that it is about the values, norms, beliefs, and customs that an individual holds in common with members of a social unit or group. Cooper and Rousseau (*idem*) continue to argue that an important characteristic of culture is that it is so subtle a process that one is not always conscious of its effects on values, attitudes, and behaviours. One usually has to be confronted with a different culture in order to fully appreciate its effects.

Leistyna (1999:25) argues that culture in a critical sense embodies the lived experiences and behaviour that are the result of the unequal distribution of power along such lines as race, class, gender, sexuality and ability. Laxton (1998:17) contends that the dominant culture is often able to manipulate alternative and oppositional ideologies in a manner that it readily secures its hegemony. Coutts (1992:34) maintains that culture essentially means the whole body of ideas, beliefs, values and traditions that are shared and reinforced by a social group.

Harris et al. (1997:34) state that culture is formed by influences from inside and outside the organisation. Harris et al. (*idem*) contend that culture is composed of a collection of values, and manifestations, some of which are contradictory and exposed values may be inconsistent with actual practices. Laxton (1998:17) states that culture is a term used in many ways. It signifies the total communication of beliefs, norms, activities, institutions, and communication patterns. In addition, Laxton (1998:17) argues that culture can therefore be seen as the everyday practice of a group of people. What people of the same culture share is a symbolic system that includes verbal as well as non-verbal communications.

Cox and Beale (1997:147) postulate that the concept culture refers to differences in values, behavioural norms, goal priorities, and ways of thinking that distinguishes one group of people from another group. According to Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:74) culture is a set of values, commonly held among a group of people. It is a set of norms, customs, values, and assumptions that guides the behaviour of a particular group of people. Culture gives each group its uniqueness and differentiates it from other groups. Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (idem) argue that people are strongly influenced by their culture. Culture determines what they consider right and wrong: it influences what and whom they value what they pay attention to and how they behave. Culture not only affects values and beliefs but also influences management and interpersonal styles; it also affects simple things such as clothing styles and food preferences. People learn about culture formally through various teachings and informally through observation. The family, educational, social and religious institutions are the major teachers of culture.

Osland et al. (2001:269) assert that culture causes humans to see the world differently through their cultural lenses and is also a major determinant of behaviour. People are usually introduced to their own culture in the act of confronting another. One learns what it means to be a Zulu by interacting with Zulus in their culture and traditional setting. Jeevanantham (2001:25) states that culture is a set social practice with boundaries of demarcation that are blurred rather than clearly demarcated. Jeevanantham (idem) argues in favour of an education system that teaches in a more beneficial route about dominant and marginalised cultures, so that the education enterprise equips its recipients with strategies to resist the attempts at homogenisation designed by the dominant cultural formations.

The notion of culture is central in this research study because this study is primarily about the management of cultural diversity in schools. Therefore it is imperative that cultural dynamics be understood as far as possible. In this study the concept of culture should be understood as meaning a way of life characteristic of a particular community. In view of this, learners exhibit such attributes.

Now that a theoretical exposition of culture has been made it is now logical to give a theoretical account on the role of organisational culture in managing diversity.

### **2.6.2 What is organisational culture?**

Cornelius (2001:216) states that organisational culture refers to the traditions, beliefs, and norms of behaviour and management style that characterise a particular organisation. While Armstrong (1999:159) defines organisational culture or corporate culture as the pattern of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions that may not have been articulated but shape the ways in which people behave and things get done. Armstrong (idem) contends that organisational culture is concerned with abstractions such as values and norms, which pervade the whole or part of an organisation.

Armstrong (1999:161/162) argues that culture in an organisation represents the “social glue”, it generates a “we-feeling”, thus counteracting processes of differentiation which are an unavoidable part of organisational life. Armstrong (idem) continues to argue that organisational culture offers a shared system of meanings, which is the basis for communication and mutual respect and understanding. If these functions are not fulfilled in a satisfactory way, culture may significantly reduce the efficiency of an organisation. Culture in an organisation is needed in order for the organisation to maintain effective working relationships among the members of the organisation, and this establishes values and expectations.

It could be argued that a good organisational culture exerts a positive influence on organisational behaviour. It could help to create a high performance culture, and will produce a high level of organisational performance (Armstrong, 1999:169). Organisational culture supports and reinforces programmes aimed to preserve and underpin what is good and functional in the given organisation (Armstrong, 1999:170).

Booyesen (2002:8) contends that if South African organisations are to survive, the dominant Western management paradigm must begin to value both the Western and the Afro-centric management systems as equally important. Booyesen (idem)

goes further arguing that South African leaders need to understand the different cultural expectations of all South Africans and corporations need to “South Africanise” in order to mobilise their people for effective organisational performance.

The two different leadership approaches in South Africa: the Eurocentric and the Afro-centric represent one of the dilemmas South African managers face. The Eurocentric/Western approach has a proven value in improving organisational and work performance worldwide. However, this does not imply that the Afro-centric management approach has no value at all. It must be noted that the Afro-centric approach includes not only teamwork down to grassroots level, but also encouragement of team members or followers to sacrifice their personal gain and goals for those of the group. This style includes also creative co-operation, open communication, teamwork, and reciprocal moral obligations. It is therefore absolutely crucial that South African managers do not and should not attempt to choose between the Eurocentric and Afro-centric management approaches but need to marry these two sets of values (Booyesen, 2002:8).

Kruger, Smit and Le Roux (1996:249) argue that organisational culture is expressed in the behaviour of its members. This behaviour is based on the value system of each member. Therefore a manager who wants to change the behaviour of employees must not only know what the nature of the organisational culture is, but also how to influence and change this culture. Noe, *et al.* (2000:24) assert that organisational culture creates an environment that makes it comfortable for employees (members of an organisation) of all backgrounds to be creative and innovative. Organisational culture enables both management and employees to commit themselves to ensuring that diversity in their organisation is recognised and effectively used for competitive advantage.

Smit and Cronje (1997:438) contend that any organisation that accepts true diversity has to assume the responsibility of:

- building a corporate culture that values diversity;
- changing structures, policies and systems to support diversity;

- provide diversity awareness and cultural competency training.

Smit and Cronje (*idem*) go further to argue that for each of the above efforts to succeed, top management support is critical, as well as holding all managerial ranks accountable to increasing diversity. In addition, Smit and Cronje (1997:445) assert that because different groups of people do things differently, the different cultures of the members of the organisation will influence management differently and will result in different organisational behaviour. At a visible level, culture represents the common behaviour of a specific group of people. In an organisation these aspects of behaviour are taught to new members rewarding those that fit in and sanctioning those that do not. If actual organisational behaviour patterns do not serve the organisation's interests, organisational performance is impaired. If these patterns of behaviour are basically inconsistent with the needs, values, and skills of the organisation's members, dysfunctional consequences develop leading to poor performance (Smit & Cronje, 1997:947). Nasr (1994:56/57) postulates that school culture could enable learners to play an active role in the events and proceedings unfolding in the school and not just to be passive observers of events and proceedings in the school. Nasr (*idem*) argues that when learners are active participants in the events around them, they take a much greater interest and consequently the school functions much more efficiently and effectively. In this way learners' sense of responsibility manifest in mutual respect and in sharing at least on the social and intellectual levels. In such a school with diverse learner population each learner sees herself as a significant thread in the democratic fabric not just of the school but of society.

It is important to note that people and nations need one another for their survival. Therefore, an understanding of other people and their cultures is the key to successful organisational life and peaceful co-existence.

Hargreaves (Harris, Bennet & Preedy, 1997:239/240) asserts that the fundamental problems faced by schools, to which their culture constitute a solution can be understood in terms of group dynamics: to solve a complex problem a group has to maintain pressure to keep members on task and devise social controls to prevent distraction, yet, simultaneously, it must seek to maintain in the group some

social harmony. Hargreaves (*idem*) suggests that a school culture that is characterised by a relaxed, carefree and cosy atmosphere and places emphasis on informal, friendly educator-learner relations, facilitates the management of diversity. In such a culture the focus is on individual learner development within a nurturing environment. It is in this kind of a school culture that learners from diverse backgrounds could blossom according to their inherent talents and this could undoubtedly glorify the name of the school and the community within which it is situated.

Hargreaves (Harris *et al.*, 1997:242) advocates a collegial school culture. The term “collegial” refers to a type of institution, where particular forms of both structure and culture exist. Hargreaves (*idem*) argues that this helps to avoid the danger of considering school cultures as if they existed independently of structural bases. Hargreaves (*idem*) continues to argue that in a pure collegial school culture, members elect their head, power is shared, subject to the statutes and ordinances and there is a collective responsibility. In a school with a collegial culture, the principal acts in practice as “*Primus inter pares*,” that is, allowing or purporting to allow all educators equal rights to be participative, always in discussion and sometimes in decision making. In addition, Hargreaves (*idem*) maintains that in collegial school cultures there is a close integration of the social control and social cohesion and this is evident in their mission. Policies tend to be whole-school policies, which are not accepted without consensual support and commitment. The implementation of such policies is achieved by the truthful delegation of responsibilities and the regular but not permanent rotation of duties among members in the place of the “allocation by position” which is the norm in schools with traditional school cultures.

Aronowitz and Giroux (1987:80) contend that schools are seen as part of a larger universe of symbolic institutions that do not overtly impose docility and oppression, but reproduce existing power relations more subtly through the production and distribution of a dominant culture that tacitly confirms what it means to be educated. The notions of culture and cultural reproduction function within schools. Harris *et al.* (1997:31) postulate that organisational cultures are resistant to

change, yet, incrementally adaptive, and continually in flux. Underlying this argument is the premise that cultures are socially constructed realities.

Bennet (1997:49) argues that the type of knowledge which underpins how people view the world is important in shaping the nature of organisational culture. Different perceptions of the world can create different expectations. Turner and Meyerson (1998:1) maintain that the culture of organisations within which people work determines to a significant extent how effective, successful and fulfilled the people are in their work environment. It is against this background that it is argued that a culture of diversity be established at schools so those learners from diverse cultural backgrounds should find schools comfortable with enabling environments for individual excellence.

Sutherland and Canwell (1997:217) argue that essentially, organisational or corporate culture is the organisation's personality. It is the way in which the organisation thinks and how it does things. Sutherland and Canwell (*idem*) contend that culture is something that most members of the organisation share. By being a member of that organisation its culture is gradually learnt. The organisation, which favours this form of culture, will develop their ability to pass it on from one member (learner/educator) of the generation to the next. Organisations with such cultures are inclined to be traditional and all members of the organisation will have characteristics of a particular style and manner of conduct (Sutherland & Canwell, 1997:218).

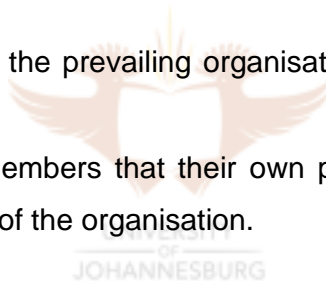
The culture of an organisation develops over time and is strongly influenced by the organisation's founders who left an indelible mark on it. Through stories, rituals, dress codes and other means, founders help shape the culture of the organisation. To perpetuate organisational culture new members of the organisation absorb its culture formally through various teachings and informally through observation and interaction with old members (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1999:95).

Cultural norms – the concepts “norms” are rules for behaviour which, indicate to an individual what is appropriate and inappropriate in certain circumstances. In relation to organisational culture, these norms help an individual to understand how

they should react and deal with particular aspects of organisational culture. Use of logos, for example, can help reinforce the corporate culture and identity. The identification of corporate (schools) heroes who are seen or meant to be seen by members of the organisation as examples of success (Sutherland & Canwell, 1997:222).

Why is it important for an organisation (school) to identify particular individuals as being heroes. There are a number of good reasons for this namely (Sutherland & Canwell, 1997:222):

- ordinary individuals who have obtained this status can be copied by others;
- they can provide excellent role models and set standards for performance required;
- they can be used to identify a particular aspect of the organisation (school) to external organisations;
- they can help reinforce the prevailing organisational culture and show what is unique about it;
- they can illustrate to members that their own personal success is very much linked with the success of the organisation.



Sutherland and Canwell (1997:230) argue that from time to time, organisations will face traumas or crises. The same is true that at various times individuals in the organisation will have problems. It is because of this that organisations are sometimes compelled to undergo restructuring. During the restructuring process the management will invariably develop ways and means to overcome personnel related problems.

As the external environment changes, the organisation may discover that previously successful ways of doing things are no longer valid. Steps must be taken to modify the culture of the organisation in order to take account of the changing external environment. This is a must for schools in the suburbs as demographics have dramatically changed there (Sutherland & Canwell, 1997:230). Most organisational culture is shared, where the majority of people in the organisation have learnt that particular codes of behaviour and practices are



acceptable and successful and this helps a great deal to positively influence newly admitted learners in a school. In this way a more integrated culture (diversity culture) can emerge (Sutherland & Canwell, 1997:230).

Top management is responsible for ensuring that an organisational culture of success prevalent in the organisation is continued. This is usually facilitated by the way in which the organisation chooses new entrants into the organisation, an integral part of the recruitment and selection procedures (Sutherland & Canwell, 1997:231).

Once an individual has joined the organisation, she will find herself part of a socialisation process. Schools often engage in the orientation process of their new learners. Sutherland and Canwell (idem) continue to argue that socialisation within an organisational environment can be formal and informal. This is often referred to as enculturation, which refers to the process by which individuals are gradually exposed to the various types of behaviour; the values and beliefs of the organisation. In addition to the more formal socialisation process which includes of course, such systems as induction. This particular system is probably the more primary means of transmitting the organisational culture from one individual to another and conveys to them the importance of particular codes of behaviour and the adoption of specific beliefs and values. Effective schools, particularly the independent ones do this (Sutherland & Canwell, 1997:231).

Pettinger (2000:42) argues that effective socialisation results in compliance and conformity with the organisation. Newstrom and David (1997:102) assert that organisational socialisation is the continuous process of transmitting key elements of an organisational culture to its members, particularly, the new ones. It consists of both formal methods such as corporate orientation training and informal means like role modelling provided by mentors. All these approaches help shape the attitudes, thoughts and behaviour of employees (educators and learners). Viewed from the organisation's perspective, organisational socialisation is like placing fingerprints or stamping its own process of genetic code on them. From the employee's perspective, it is the essential process of "learning the ropes" to survive and prosper within the organisation.

Organisational culture of effectiveness is vital in any organisation. In this regard, Sutherland and Canwell (1997:232) contend that one of the principal reasons for the development of the organisational culture is that it helps to reduce the amount of potential conflict within the organisation. In other words, there is a degree of social cohesion within the organisation, that is, they (members) will adapt to changes by developing a series of integrated internal processes, for example, a diversity management forum. This form of consensus allows the organisation to develop its personnel in such a way that they will act together, understanding how, when and why certain things need to be done in a particular way. Quite clearly, in this way, organisational culture reduces the degree of ambiguity in certain situations and this enhances its effectiveness.

Sutherland and Canwell (1997:233) continue to argue that organisational culture helps the management to co-ordinate and control the organisation itself. Individuals within the organisation will readily accept the fact that they need to respond in a particular way. This will facilitate the co-ordination of various activities taking place in the organisation. The adoption of various rules and procedures will also reinforce the control that management has and there will be a generally accepted recognition of power and authority within the organisation. In addition, Sutherland and Canwell (*idem*) maintain that organisational culture can motivate the individuals within the organisation and by so doing making them more efficient and effective. If the members of the organisation can readily identify with the organisation and its culture, they will be more loyal to it. This means that they have fully embraced the beliefs, norms, and values of the organisation.

Pettinger (2000:186) asserts that organisational culture is an amalgam and summary of the ways in which activities are conducted and standards and values adopted. It encompasses a climate or atmosphere surrounding the organisation, prevailing attitudes within it, standards, morale, strength of feelings towards it and the general levels of goodwill present. Pettinger (2000:192) continues to argue that organisational culture can either be positive, which then tends to attract people or negative, tending to repel people (which people tend to reflect).

Another dimension of organisational culture – what Pettinger (2000:192) calls designed cultures – are shaped by those responsible for organisational direction and results and are created in the pursuit of organisational effectiveness. These involve setting the standards, attitudes, values, behaviour and beliefs that everyone in the organisation is required to subscribe to as a condition of joining the organisation. Policies are produced so that everyone knows where they stand, and these are underpinned by extensive induction and orientation programmes and training schemes. Procedures and sanctions are there to ensure that these standards continue to be met. High levels of internalisation of shared values are required. Feelings of confidence, trust, and respect are created.

Cox and Beale (1997:209) argue that organisational culture can either be strong or weak. This is dependent on the extent to which norms and values are clearly defined and vigorously enforced. An organisation with a weak culture has ill-defined norms and values and favours low enforcement, therefore the pressure to conform to organisationally prescribed behaviour is relatively low. While on the other hand a strong organisational culture is one in which organisational values and norms are clearly defined and much attention is given to member conformity so that adherence to organisational culture is widespread.

Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:91) argue that just as countries and groups have their distinct cultures and individuals have unique personalities and styles, so do organisations. In addition, Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (idem) continue to argue that the culture of an organisation provides a sense of stability and order. It helps organisation's members to maintain a sense of purpose in times of crisis. It provides a sense of direction and helps organise activities and set priorities. It tells people what is important and what is not. One of the hallmarks of a successful organisation is a corporate culture that supports its mission and encourages members and managers to engage in behaviours that will achieve that mission. By helping the organisation define itself, organisational culture helps the organisation adopt its environment and maintain smooth internal functioning.

Newstrom and Davis (1997:102) postulate that organisational culture is the set of assumptions, beliefs, values, and norms that are shared by the organisation's

members. Bowin and Harvey (2001:412/413) assert that a corporate culture is a system of shared values and beliefs, which interact with an organisation's people, structure and systems to produce behavioural norms (the way things are done around here).

Corporate culture sets the tone for the whole organisation and influences the communication, decision making, and leadership patterns of the entire system. Bowin and Harvey (2001:213) continue to argue that there is no one basic culture that works best for all organisations. The management style and the set of norms and beliefs of the organisation's members combine to form the corporate culture. A corporate culture gives the organisation's employees a sense of how to behave, what to do, and where to place priorities in getting the job done.

Ivancevich, Lorenzi, Skinner and Crosby (1994:71) contend that culture is an elusive, intangible, implicit, and often taken for granted concept, but every organisation develops a core set of assumptions and implicit rules that govern the day-to-day behaviour in the workplace. Ivancevich et al. (idem) argue that until newcomers learn the rules, they are not accepted as fully fledged members of the organisation. A strong positive organisational culture leads to organisational commitment, loyalty, and co-operation. However, culture can be a liability when behaviours and work patterns are not congruent with the values and actions that enhance performance.

Gatthorn (1990:55) argues that school culture is usually regarded as of recent vintage, while Waller (Gatthorn, 1990:55) contends that schools have a culture that is uniquely their own. There are in the schools complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways and irrational sanctions, a moral code based upon them. There are games, which are sublimated wars, teams and an elaborate set of ceremonies. There are traditions and traditionalists waging their world-old battles against innovators.

The culture of schools is an integrated learned pattern of human behaviour in schools embodying its own content; the content is manifested in certain types of objects, specific communication networks. There are four major ways in which the

content is made manifest: the special language used by members, the myths and folklore shared among members and the icons or symbols venerated by true believers (Gatthorn, 1990:58). In addition, Gatthorn (1990:58) argues that there may be a danger in speaking of school's culture as if it were some monolithic phenomenon. Attention should be paid to the various subcultures operating within each school: the administrators, the educators and the learners.

Garibaldi (Dilworth, 1992:182) asserts that the notion of school culture or climate is an intangible construct that refers to the assumptions, understandings and implicit rules of behaviour that characterise the school as organisation. In order for school culture to accommodate a diverse learner population, it is critical for educators to understand the issue of diversity, as well as the norms and structures that contribute to the culture of the school. Garibaldi (idem) continues to argue that the culture of a school is affected by the consistent or inconsistent enforcement of the school procedures, rules and beliefs that guide the daily functioning of the staff and learners.

Thomas (1996:90) argues that while norms are to be expected in an organisation and indeed are desirable lest the organisation has a totally fluid and nebulous root system. The aim of an organisation should be to develop a corporate culture. This should be around flexibility so as to be able to adapt and benefit and profit from the different styles, cultures and other dimensions of diversity which various members of the organisation can introduce.

Lunenberg and Ornstein (Grobler, 1998:10) postulate that the culture of an organisation constitutes the beliefs, feelings, behaviours and symbols that are demonstrative of an organisation. It is like societal culture and is the unseen force behind organisational activities that provides meaning and direction. According to Lunenberg and Ornstein (Grobler, 1998:10/11) the core organisational culture consists of the following:

- observed regular behavioural patterns, a common language and terminology, rituals and ceremonies that are introduced to influence respect and attitudes;

- norms or standards of behaviour which have with time developed in the school. For example, what educators may and may not do? Which behaviours are rewarded and which are not;
- values and beacons that have priority in the school. What do educators and management, for example talk about?
- philosophy as for example contained in the school mission. The school policy also, normally provides guidelines about how parents, educators, administrators and learners should be handled;
- rules are present in any school so that order can be created and that people will know what to do and how to behave;
- school climate is the “feeling” which prevails in the school and which is influenced by the reigning leadership style. The layout of the school and the way clients are treated also plays a role.

The above characteristics taken together reflect and give meaning to the concept of organisational culture. Grobler (1998:11) argues that every school is located in a particular social milieu and if the focus is on multicultural schools (diversity), it is assumed that the external environment of the school is multicultural. In reality, however, there will always be a dominant societal culture, which impinges on the school. In the process of transformation, this dominant culture will have to undergo a change process in order to cater for the multicultural population of the school.

Grobler (1998:11) asks how can a school, with a predominantly White culture with cultural dimensions of small power distances, individualism, femininity and large uncertainty avoidance, change so that effective management still takes place. This also implies that all the educators that are recruited by the school will conform to the culture of the school.

Cunningham and Gresso (1993:53) argue that all organisations have their own culture. Culture enables people share a common digestion and have a common way of doing things. Gamble and Gamble (1996:40) maintain that while culture is a tie that binds, the creation of the global village makes it essential that you leave the comfort of your cultural niche, become more knowledgeable of other cultures, and strive to be culturally aware. It is important to familiarise oneself with the

communication rules and preferences of members of different cultures so that one can increase the effectiveness of ones communication encounters.

In this study, organisational culture is about the way things are done in a particular organisation. This includes the ambience that prevails in the organisation. This is of particular importance in that it serves to guide and orientate new members of the organisation.

Now that perspectives have been given on organisational culture other dimensions of organisational culture are in order.

### **2.6.2.1 Culture shock**

Cooper and Rousseau (1995:129/130) assert that the phenomenon of culture in regard to people moving across cultures is “nerve wrecking” as it causes untold anxiety and unease in a rather unwelcoming new environment. The new environment requires many adjustments within a relatively short time, challenging ones frame of reference to such an extent that one’s sense of self may come into question. The person in effect, experiences a shock reaction to new cultural experiences that can cause psychological disorientation because he/she misunderstands or does not recognise the environmental cues. Culture shock may lead to negative feelings about the new environment or old members, and a longing to return to familiar territory.

Cooper and Rousseau (idem) continue to argue that cultural shock has ripple effects, in that a type of culture may also be experienced between the nostalgic memory of the home culture and the experience upon repatriation. The phenomenon of culture shock thus presents a major challenge for the effective management of learners of colour and their adjustment to new environments. Cox and Beale (1997:160) cite an example of a learner who found that courses were conducted by case study method and relied heavily on discussions and debates. This was an academic culture shock to him and was very difficult to adapt to and overcome this frustrating hurdle academically.

Newstrom and Davis (1997: 475) remark that just like employees who move to new job locations, learners of colour who move to former Model C schools often experience various degrees of cultural shock, which may be a feeling of confusion, insecurity, and anxiety caused by a strange new environment. They are concerned about not knowing how to act and about losing the self-confidence when the wrong responses are made. In addition, Newstrom and Davis (1997: 476) argue that a cultural change does not have to be dramatic to cause some degree of shock. For example, when an employee moves from a small town to a big city, both the employee and his family are likely to suffer culture shock (from big to small, the same could result). The new environment can appear to be chaotic and somewhat overwhelming. Although, it is different, it can be understood if employees have receptive attitudes, dedicate themselves to learn about the new culture and adapt to it.

Newstrom and Davis (1997: 476) continue to contend that cultural shock is even greater when an employee moves from one ethnic group to another. When employees enter another ethnic group, they may experience several reactions in a series of four phases, as follows:

- in the first phase, they are often excited and stimulated by the challenge of a new job (school) and culture. Each day is filled with new discoveries;
- this positive attitude is soon followed by a second phase of disillusionment as they may discover various problems they had not anticipated, for example, language skills;
- in the third and most critical stage, they tend to suffer from cultural shock, which is the insecurity and disorientation caused by encountering all parts of a different culture. They may not know how to act, may fear losing face and self-confidence or may become emotionally upset;
- if they can emotionally survive the first four weeks, they will reach the fourth phase, that of adaptation. At this point they accept the new culture, regain a sense of self-esteem and respond constructively to their new environments.

The fact that in the previous political dispensation in South Africa people of different race groups lived in separate racial designated residential areas made



them somewhat strangers to one another. Given this set-up children had to attend racially and ethnically defined schools. No wonder that when the current political dispensation came into being and allowed children of all race and ethnic groups to attend schools of their choice that cultural shock was experienced. This paradigm shift of racial mix at schools had dramatic effects: a culture shock, in that, for example a Black learner in a previously “Whites only” school, naturally had to be tense, shaking and fearing as to whether he would fit into this new way of school life.

### **2.6.2.2 Cultural capital**

Most people view the Western culture as being superior to other cultures. This is due the fact that this culture has made dramatic advancements in the fields of Science and Technology. It is against this background that people of other cultures more often than not envy the Western culture. It is in this sense that the culture becomes a desirable capital. Aronowitz and Giroux (1987:80) postulate that a child from a non-dominant culture is inevitably inclined to envy a child from the dominant culture: their life style, social values and their status in society. Schools play an important role in legitimising and reproducing dominant and reproducing dominant cultural capital. They (schools) tend to legitimise certain forms of relating to the world that capitalise on the type of familiarity and skills that only certain learners have received from their family backgrounds and class relations. Learners whose families have only a tenuous connection to the dominant cultural capital are at a decided disadvantage.

Aronowitz and Giroux (1987: 81) posit that the culture of the elite is so near that of the school that children from the lower middle class can acquire only with great effort something which is given to the children of the cultivated classes-style, taste, wit – in short, those attitudes which seem natural in members of the cultivated classes and are naturally expected of them because (in the ethnological sense) they are the culture of that class. However, Leistyna (1999:85) is critical of those who aspire for cultural values that are viewed as superior to their own. Leistyna (idem) goes on to contend that every culture has inherent values and therefore there is no need for an individual to alienate himself/herself from the spirit of their

own culture. They want to be like the exponents of the dominant culture as they aspire to walk like them, dress like them, behave like them, and so on and so forth. The desire for the acquisition of the cultural capital is in effect an honest aspiration for one to see himself/herself fitting in the dominant culture from which the school drew its values.

Cox and Beale (1997:205) contend that if learners of colour are to render themselves accepted in former Model C schools they will have to conform to the culture of the school in terms of language, and dress and behavioural patterns traditionally dominant in such schools. Over and above this they have to learn to play cricket or tennis and talk about what a genius Shakespeare was and information technologies or whatever are deemed necessary and befitting to encourage the group to feel comfortable around them. Quite often learners of colour are indeed eager to model themselves upon “White learners” whom they consider as bearers of a civilised culture.

In this study, “cultural capital” signifies that the culture of the former Model C schools is viewed as glorious hence desirable. It is therefore natural for children from the previously disadvantaged communities to envy those from the previously privileged communities. It is against this backdrop that one finds it understandable as to why Black children (in a political sense) desire to emulate their White counterparts.

The presence of learners of colour in former Model C schools brings about cultural diversity. Therefore it is necessary to discuss cultural diversity.

### **2.6.3 What is cultural diversity?**

Prior to the onset of political change in South Africa most Model C schools were predominantly homogeneous and there was little social integration. However, since the inception of democratic government these Model C schools have been phasing out their largely monolithic culture (Smit & Morgan, 1996:322). According to Smit and Morgan (1996:323), many of the schools have developed into “plural organisations”. Such an organisation (school) has a more heterogeneous

membership (learner population). These learners come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Smit and Cronje (1997:423) argue that in many parts of the world people do morally repugnant things to others because they have a different and strange language, practise uncommon habits or have different values and beliefs which are perceived to be weird.

According to Smit and Cronje (1997:426), there are numerous dimensions of cultural diversity: primary ones, which have an ongoing impact throughout one's life-age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, race and sex orientation. These dimensions are the core elements through which people shape their view of the world and are closely related to culture. Secondary dimensions of cultural diversity can be acquired or changed throughout one's life education, religious beliefs, income, work, backgrounds, parental status, marital status, geographic location, etcetera. In addition, Smit and Cronje (1997:430) contend that the awareness of cultural diversity improves the quality of workforce (school community) hence the need to have skills for the management of cultural diversity.

Cornelius (2001:216) asserts that the issue of cultural diversity arises where organisations from disparate cultural backgrounds, whose cultural make-up represents a blend of national and organisational cultural influences, engage in business relationships. Cornelius (2001:218) contends that mixed-groups out-perform homogeneous groups on complex problem-solving tasks. However, at first these groups have diversity constrained processes and performance, yet in the final analysis the heterogeneous groups out-perform the homogeneous groups.

The event such as the "Carnival" in South Africa gives an opportunity for South Africans to celebrate their cultural diversity. It is worth noting that the South African "Carnival" is in fact modelled upon international events such as the Rio, Nottingham and Tenerife carnivals (Marbeline, 2001:9). Oppelt (2002:20) gives her experience of cultural diversity, when in 1987 at the University of Cape Town she attended classes (lectures) together with White, African, Coloured and Indians students (South Africans). To her utter amazement the university was ill equipped to welcome such a diverse body of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. There were "bridging courses" designed to bring on par students of colour that

were disadvantaged by the Bantu Education system. Oppelt (idem) goes on to cite an example of her paternal grandfather whose memories of Fort Hare University were indelible as it was there where he came into contact with a diverse group of students from all over Africa and that experience hugely enriched his life. Oppelt (idem) argues that universities should be forced to transcend their history of their parochial approach to diversity and begin to be places where cultural diversity is welcomed.

Steyn and Motshabi (1996:9) postulate that there is a need to recognise cultural diversity through modern racism and internalised oppression, so that people can recognise, understand, respect, and appreciate the similarities and differences which enable people to create an inclusive democratic society. Tromp (1998:83) contends that cultural differences complicate human interaction but could enrich the level of critical examination of ideas and opinions. Differences in language, upbringing, political orientation and ethnicity complicate communication, but if handled with sensitivity can bring about different perceptions to the discussion.

In addition, Tromp (1998:85) argues that a sufficiently diverse group enhances the chances for high quality outcomes which will not only cater for the needs of all stakeholders but will also incorporate the perspectives of different organisational interest groups. Tromp (1998:91) continues to argue that the optimal benefit of collaboration can only be achieved if there is a sufficient level of diversity in the group. It has been shown that diverse groups produce more creative solutions and can achieve a higher degree of objectivity.

Thomas (1999:17) asserts that in cultural diversity, society can vary from the highly monolithic to the highly heterogeneous. A heterogeneous society – sometimes referred to as a plural society - is one in which a diversity of cultural choices are found. These cultural choices are either encouraged or at least tolerated. Societies such as those of Great Britain, Canada and United States of America are heterogeneous. It is because of this pluralistic nature of their societies that their political, social and educational practices are typically labelled multicultural. This is in recognition of their populations being composed of diverse ethnic, religious and social-class groups that demand to have their cultural traditions recognised and

respected. Mda (2000:53) argues that the differences in language and culture between groups, and between the incoming learners and the school contribute significantly to the situation of diversity in South African schools.

Mda and Mothata (2000:53) remark that while culturally, language is central as an agent of socialisation, learning English as the language of instruction and communication poses a huge problem for the African learners for whom it is a second or third language. Leistyna (1999:2) argues that multicultural education is the kind of schooling that helps learners and relates to cultural, ethnic, and other diversity. Leistyna (1999:12) contends that the culturally different learners work from a deficit model orientation that equates different cognitive and learning styles, literacies, languages, and low academic achievement of learners from certain groups with individual or group pathology, cultural deprivation, or genetic limitations.

In addition, Leistyna (1999:21) maintains that multicultural education recognizes the important of cultural diversity, alternative lifestyles, maintaining native culture, universal human rights, social justice, equal distribution of power among groups. Advocates of multicultural education call for teaching of diverse traditions and perspectives, questioning stereotypes, learning the cultural codes to function within a variety of settings, recognising the contribution that all groups made to society (especially those that have been traditionally excluded).

Leistyna (1999:22) asserts that a critical analysis of multiculturalism means more than simply acknowledging differences and analysing stereotypes; more fundamentally, it means understanding, engaging, and transforming the diverse histories, cultural narratives, representations and institutions that produce racism and other forms of discrimination. Nord (1995:226) argues in favour of cultural diversity at schools as in such a setting, learners learn that every ethnic group has worth and dignity. Twitchin (1981:6) contends that multicultural education is at the very least an attitude that welcomes and indeed celebrates cultural linguistic, and ethnic diversity.

Shoemaker (1995:2) posits that cultural diversity should not be a new phenomenon in the classroom; it is a societal phenomenon which is a challenge to all. For cultural diversity in the classroom to make a positive contribution the attitudes of educators should be encouraging learners to appreciate their cultural differences. Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:21) remark that cultural diversity refers to differences due to individual and group factors such as ethnicity, religion, gender, age, physical attributes, sexual orientation, regional differences, functional specialisation and so forth.

Osland et al. (2001:267) postulate that all people are unique individuals with unique cultural and sub-cultural backgrounds and identities. As a consequence of that, all people have experiences of being different, or being stereotyped and discriminated against. Newstrom and Davis (1997:91/92) contend that the workplace (school community) of the future (whether in the United States, Europe or elsewhere) will contain a rich blend of people representing diverse cultural social conditions. People of all ages and colours will need to explore their differences, learn from others around them and use that information to build a stronger organisation.

Ivancevich et al. (1994:111) argue that cultural diversity refers to the differences that exist among cultures. Meanings attached to body language, time, greetings, spatial patterns and other symbols differ significantly across cultures. In addition, Ivancevich et al. (1994:351) argue that human groups are increasingly characterised by cultural diversity. Whether at work, at school or during leisure time, cultural diversity exists in groups whose members differ from each other in important characteristics such as gender, age, ethnic background, disability status, religious affiliation, and lifestyle. The growing globalisation of organisations also contributes to increased cultural diversity. Cultural diversity has several implications for groups – the varying rules and customs about relationships between genders, social class, or some other different group often complicates interactions between group members.

Hughes (1994:13) contends that the school itself is a melting pot for the cultures and value variety brought in by the learners. Arora and Duncan (1986:16) postu-

late that in a supportive learning environment in which diversity is taken as normal, the children represent a useful resource in themselves, and learners from various backgrounds would intuitively feel that their common sense of knowledge is valued and respected.

Berube (1994:124) remarks that most public schools and universities have revised their curricula to offer more multicultural diversity. Berube (idem) argues that advocates of cultural diversity at schools acknowledge the fact that there is a cultural debt to people of colour. This is evidenced by the absence of their cultural consideration in the school and university curricula. According to Berube (1994:123) the multiculturalists point to the changing demographics as the impetus of their campaign to include more diversity in the public school curriculum. They project an increase of learners of colour in all public schools. Consequently, they contend that multicultural education, rather than being divisive, will help a divided nation and society to become more unified.

Lindle (1994:27) supports advocates of multicultural education as he sees it being of benefit to the community. It is of value in that it enhances learning of all children. Lindle (idem) posits that by being aware of the other cultures in their environment learners are being enriched. In this way schools play a critical role in the socialisation of children into the community, which is diverse in terms of demographics. Reissman (1994:3) postulates that multiculturalism is a process of preparing learners for meaningful participation in a diverse world and for asserting them in affirming their own cultural backgrounds while respecting others.

In addition, Reissman (1994:7) argues that multicultural education is an education for freedom. Multicultural education helps learners develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enable them to participate in a democratic and free society. Multicultural education provides the freedom, abilities and skills to cross ethnic and cultural boundaries to participation in other cultures and groups. Multicultural education helps learners realise both academic and cultural excellence. Reissman (1994:10) contends that cultural excellence should be understood in terms of learners' knowledge of their own cultural backgrounds and initiation in the studies of differing cultural backgrounds of their peers. Reissman (idem) continues to

contend that the broader mission of multicultural education is to bring about educational equity for all learners; to create a school environment that is equitable and just. However, in the final analysis multiculturalism is a way of thinking: it is recognising other perspectives, but it is more than just a recognition; it is caring, and taking action to make our societies more just and humane.

Reissman (1994:10) argues in support of theories of multicultural education as an inclusive, a questioning process for cultural equity. Reissman (idem) argues that language is particularly important in multicultural education for it describes and defines people of numerous and various cultural groups. In addition, Reissman (1994:11) asserts that language, like multicultural education itself, is a process that is in constant flux. However, multicultural education should offer a diversified curriculum that presents the views and perspectives of many peoples.

Garibaldi (Dilworth, 1992:181) argues that there is a need for restructuring of schools in order to accommodate diverse learner populations and school personnel. Demographic shifts in the school age population indicate increases in the numbers of learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. Restructuring of schools to provide for a multicultural teaching force and learner population do require changes in school culture so that a diversity of learners and staff can be accommodated.

Winds of change in terms of diversity are blowing across the world and thus every classroom will be a global village in the 90's and beyond. This is not only in terms of technological advancement but also in terms of a intercultural mix of both educators and learners. Intercultural educators can be on the cutting edge of a school-wide curriculum that thrives on cultural diversity. Diverse, culturally conditioned learning styles can be recognised and learning enhanced by curricula innovations. Learners of every ethnic background can develop a whole range of skills and understandings that are possible in a multicultural curriculum. However, the teaching and testing of ethnically distinct (disparate) children requires special sensitivity to cross-cultural differences in learning styles (Seelye, 1993:267).



Vakalise (Mda & Mothata, 2000:192) contends that South Africa is a country of diverse cultures and languages. These conditions demand more than adequately qualified educators and well-resourced schools. It is against this background that educators in public schools should have been exposed to courses in multicultural education in their preparation to become educators. In that way they would have been reasonably proficient in the language used as a medium of instruction and in one or two other African languages.

All pluralist societies the world over are characterised by cultural diversity. In this study, cultural differences have to be recognised and be accepted as a hallmark of the South African “rainbow” nation. In a multicultural school learners bring along cultural differences and these have to be managed responsibly. However, unless one has the requisite skills on how to manage cultural diversity, one is likely to view these cultural differences not as an enriching resource, but as a cause for conflict.

Having so far given the positive aspects of cultural diversity, it is now in order to discuss the negative aspects of cultural diversity such as ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudice.

### **2.6.3.1 Ethnocentrism as a dimension of cultural diversity**

According to Rensburg (1996:147) ethnocentrism can be defined as a tendency to identify with one’s own group and to evaluate other groups in terms of the values and attitudes of our own group. Smit and Cronje (1997:428) posit that ethnocentrism is the belief that one’s own group culture or subculture is inherently superior to other cultures or groups. In addition, Smit and Cronje (idem) argue that viewing one’s own culture as the best culture is a natural tendency among most people. It is unfortunately this tendency that makes workplace (school) diversity so difficult to manage. This difficulty emanates from the fact that managers (principals of schools), employees (educators and learners and administrators and general support staff) do not share similar values, beliefs, motivations and attitudes about work and life in general.

Smit and Cronje (idem) continue to argue that ethnocentrism is a product of a monolithic culture which is opposed to cultural diversity. In a monoculture there is an assumption that people who are different are somehow deficient and thus unable to enhance the success of the organisation.

Monare (2001:4) remarks upon the “flight syndrome” meaning that White parents remove their children from former Model C schools once they realise that they are full of Black children. This is due to the fact that some White parents do not as yet accept cultural diversity in the classrooms. This is a typical example of ethnocentrism in practice. On the other hand we could argue that Black schools are also ethnocentric.

Twitchin (1981:165) posits that ethnocentrism is the strong tendency of any group to feel that their way of doing things is the right way, though this is simply because they are conditioned by upbringing to think so. Osland et al. (2001:270) postulate that ethnocentrism is the exaggerated tendency to think that the characteristics of one’s own group or race are superior to those of other groups or races. In addition, Osland et al. (idem) contend that humans are preoccupied with the “differences” between their “own” kind and “outsiders”. By “outsiders” they imply those outside their ethnic group as though they are not humans and therefore not worthy of the same consideration.

Osland et al. (idem) continue to argue that everyone possesses some degree of ethnocentrism and therefore we should not be lulled into overlooking its existence. For anyone who deals with people who are different, the first step is to acknowledge one’s own ethnocentrism and try to curb the natural thought that one’s own group, culture, gender, is by definition, better than others. Newstrom and Davis (1997:474) maintain that ethnocentrism is a potential barrier to easy adaptation to another culture as people are predisposed to believe that their own culture conditions are the best. This disposition is known as the self-reference criterion or ethnocentrism. Though this way of perceiving conditions is natural, it could interfere with understanding of human behaviour in other cultures.

Cox and Beale (1997:33) assert that ethnocentrism is the tendency to view members of one's group as the centre of the universe. To interpret social groups (out-groups) from the perspectives of one's own group, and to evaluate the beliefs, behaviours and values of one's own group somewhat more positively than those of out-groups. Makhanya (2002:6) argues that ethnicity is an issue the world over. He goes further to argue that in a society as diverse as the one we live in, there is absolutely no way it would not be. We have to admit that we have histories that are diverse. The geographic concentration of different peoples accentuates ethnic feelings.

### **2.6.3.2 Stereotyping as a dimension of cultural diversity**

Clements and Spinks (1996:7) describe stereotyping as when one believes that just because people are members of a particular ethnic group they must (because of that fact) also share particular traits which one thinks are characteristics of that group. The reasons one may believe that they share those traits may be because that is what one was told or maybe it is what one has experienced. For example, if you meet a disabled person for the first time who is a wheel chair user and who is heavily dependent upon the assistance of others, one may form the view that such dependence is a common characteristic shared by other members of the disabled community, even though one has no direct experience or knowledge that this is the case.

Coutts (1992:35) postulates that racial stereotypes are common in South Africa, therefore any schooling system designed to accommodate different races and ethnic groups must reflect a non-racial or anti-racist philosophy. In addition, Coutts (1992:84) maintains that in schools the use of stereotypes based on race can lead to learners experiencing depression, lack of feelings of personal worth and a "self-fulfilling prophecy" in which their achievements are reduced in accordance with the inferiority felt. Cox and Beale (1997:296) remark that it is important to note that some people will not only need to learn but also to unlearn things they might have been taught by their families and friends or other elements of the society as they may have been taught incorrect information and this more often than not manifests in stereotypes, as well as in biases and prejudices.

Osland et al. (2001:272) posit that people entering organisations bring with them their own assumptions and perceptions and they use these ideas to form new impressions about other groups in the organisation. When people act toward individual members of a group based on their assumptions about the group to which they belong and such a behaviour is a stereotypic one. Osland et al. (2001:273) contend that racial stereotypes sometimes prevent people (learners) who are different from feeling accepted and living up to their full potential. Stereotypes deny individual uniqueness. When people are treated only as members of a group rather than as individuals with their own unique characteristics, difficulties in interpersonal communication and co-operation often result.

Osland et al. (idem) continue to argue that stereotyping blocks learning in organisations. If individuals and organisations are to be viewed as learning systems, their individual differences need to be fostered, rather than suppressed if learning is to occur. A multicultural organisation provides an excellent opportunity for individual and organisational learning because it accommodates people with unique differences and perspectives. Arora and Duncan (1986:25) assert that stereotyping, whether expressed in terms of human characteristics, lifestyles, social roles or occupational status, is unacceptable and likely to be damaging.

Kruger et al. (1996:51) describe stereotyping as a fixed, distorted generalisation about the members of a group. Stereotyping that stems from dimensions of diversity – such as race, gender, age, physical abilities/qualities, or sexual orientation – attributes, exaggerated or distorted qualities of members of that group are hurting or can cause an inferiority complex. In addition, Kruger et al. (idem) argue that a stereotype requires that the exaggerated beliefs about a group be sustained by selective perception and/or selecting or forgetting of facts and experiences inconsistent with the stereotype. Stereotyping negates peoples' individuality and limits their potential.

Human (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:176/177) asserts that not seeing what is really there constitutes one of the major problems with the stereotypical attitudes which many people hold towards other cultural groups. The power of stereotypes lies in their self-fulfilling nature. For example, we expect a woman to display certain

characteristics and we interpret or explain her behaviour in terms of what we assume to be typical behaviour for that group. Ultimately, the person may begin behaving in the way we expect the person to behave. Another self-fulfilling prophecy can be the negative expectations many White managers hold the view that Black workers are lazy. Once these workers realise this, they will be demotivated and under-perform, thus fulfilling the prophecy.

In addition, Human (idem) argues that stereotypical perceptions of cultural differences are hard to get rid of, however, people must be aware of the stereotypes they hold, question them and use them constructively and intelligently.

Clinging to negative stereotypes about those different from ourselves can result in prejudice. Stereotyping and prejudice among diverse groups have been institutionalised in South Africa. Therefore one function of every organisation is to recognise and eradicate both stereotyping and prejudice. If this can be done then human relations could improve and so can performance (Kruger et al., idem).

In this study, stereotyping has to do with the negative assumptions that people have about other people who are different from them. This could be in terms of cultural or race groups. These assumptions have to be understood and be managed responsibly, lest they harm human relations in the school. It must be noted that learners in a multicultural school bring with them hurtful stereotypes learnt from their communities.

### **2.6.3.3 Prejudice as a dimension of cultural diversity**

Cox and Beale (1997:96) maintains that prejudice is closely related to the term “stereotype”, yet the conventional use of the term “prejudice” in organisational parlance refers to predetermined negative attitudes towards people based on some group identity. When prejudicial attitudes get translated into behaviours, there is discrimination.

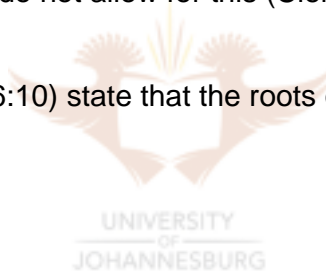
Clements and Spinks (1996:1) assert that in our society there are people like you and me who everyday have to face prejudice and discrimination merely because

they happen to be different in some way from the majority. It may be the colour of their skin, their religious beliefs, because they are women, because they have a disability, or because they are gay or lesbian. Clements and Spinks (1996:6) continue to define prejudice as the idea of pre-judgement, of making your mind up about something before you have a personal expression of or facts about it. Therefore prejudice against a certain group, for example, Black people, suggests prejudging members of that community before you know anything about them or have had any shared experiences with them.

The negative side of prejudice serves to “pigeonhole” members of a particular community by sticking various negative labels on them. One real danger arising out of both prejudice and stereotyping is that it is all too easy to label people negatively, which could cause unhealthy interpersonal relationships. Normally one would expect others to treat one as an individual within his/her right. However, prejudice and stereotyping do not allow for this (Clements & Spinks, 1996:7).

Clements and Spinks (1996:10) state that the roots of prejudice are:

- Ignorance
- Power
- Vulnerability
- Education
- Conformity



Clements and Spinks (1996:10-13) argue that **ignorance** – not knowing about something – can lead to feeling threatened. The flipside to this argument is equally true. Our sketchy knowledge about other people can lead us to assume that other people are like this when they are in fact of neither. Therefore, one effective way to overcome prejudice is by overpowering ignorance about other people’s cultures.

**Power** is related to an aspect of prejudice and discrimination that is termed “institutional” in that it is a form of prejudice contained within the social system and within institutions such as education, health and government (Clements & Spinks, *ibid.*).

Clements and Spinks (idem) continue to argue that **education** – if one takes a reflection-thinking stance – one would realise that the values, attitudes, beliefs, norms and standards we hold are largely those of our parents and friends. Yet, we all like to think of ourselves as “free thinking” individuals with minds of our own. If we were to examine our values, beliefs and attitudes from the viewpoint of the other person, put ourselves in their boots, we may know how it hurts to be a victim of prejudice.

In addition, Clements and Spinks (idem) remark that **conformity** is easy in that no one likes being out “on a limbo” alienated because they disagreed with the views of the majority or from fellow clan members. Most of the time, most of us simply conform, going along with others of our kind, even though we know what they are doing is absolutely wrong. We seldom challenge this wrong doing openly.

Twitchin (1981:163) describes prejudice as unfavourable feelings, opinions, or attitudes especially of a hostile nature, directed against a racial, religious or national group, identifiably different from our own (antagonistic feelings based on prior assumptions). Thomas (1999: 1090) argues that prejudice is a certain kind of attitude, a kind that consists of making factually incorrect, negative predisposing arguments of other people. Therefore, prejudice is attributing characteristics, which usually are undesirable traits to a class of people; identifying a particular person as belonging in that class or in combination of classes and attributing to that person the supposed undesirable characteristics of the class without learning whether such traits are true of that individual,

Kruger et al. (1996:180) contend that attitudes and prejudices are closely related. They argue that prejudice is a specific type of attitude and differs from an attitude in that a attitude is more general, while prejudice is aimed more specifically at a person or a group. Kruger et al. (1996:180) assert that a prejudice is an attitude that is based on insufficient information and is a broad generalisation characteristic of the individual who will most easily change the information that may prove the prejudice to be incorrect. In a nutshell prejudice refers mainly to a negative attitude towards certain groups, for example, an ethnic group and often leads to discrimination.

Kruger et al. (1996:51) remark that prejudice consists of processing our stereotypes in such a way as to reinforce our own sense of superiority to members of that group.

Gamble and Gamble (1996:40) argue that stereotypes and prejudices are learnt and their argument is supported by the musical called “South Pacific”, thus:

“You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear ...  
 You’ve got to be taught to be afraid of  
 people whose eyes are oddly made  
 and people whose skin is a different shade ...  
 ... You’ve got to be taught before it’s too late,  
 before you are six or seven or eight.  
 So hate all the people your relatives hate  
 You’ve got to be carefully taught.”

In this study, prejudice is a preconception that other people are something negative. This is, of course, a prejudgment of what other people are without having facts to that effect. These negative preconceptions are detrimental to human relations particularly in a multicultural school. Therefore, in order to prevent the potential damage likely to be caused by prejudice, it is rather imperative that both the school management and the educators understand what prejudice is all about. By so doing they would be in a better position to “nip it in the bud” as a potential conflict that prejudice could cause in a school with learners from diverse cultural groups.

#### **2.6.3.4 Racialism, racism and discrimination**

Clements and Spinks (1996:8/9) argue that discrimination is used alongside prejudice. In fact, discrimination is prejudice in action. Whereas prejudice is about the ideas we hold of other people who are different from us and about negative assumptions and prejudgments we might make about them, discrimination is about the way we act.



Dupont (1997:51) describes discrimination as the treating of people differently, unequally and usually negatively because they are members of a particular group. Coutts (1992:36) contends that discrimination cannot be defended on moral grounds. On educational grounds, learners would benefit from getting to know children from other ethnic groups, as part of their educational experience. Education can be enriched by the experience of a range of culturally-based ideas, beliefs and viewpoints.

People of colour in a society that allows discrimination tend to be particularly sensitive to discriminatory behaviours within the organisations that employ them. They perceive discriminatory intent in behaviours that may seem appropriate and non-discriminatory to members of the dominant culture. As a result members of the dominant culture may feel insulted if accused of discrimination. They do not recognise that they are beneficiaries of institutional discrimination and do not understand why people of colour are so sensitive about discrimination (Osland et al., 2001:273).

In the preceding discussion of the concept “discrimination” it has emerged that discrimination does occur even among people of the same race groups. This could be attributed to economic status or educational status of the people concerned. However, racism is an outrageous form of discrimination, barely on racial grounds. The focus of discussion will now be on the concept “racism”.

Arora and Duncan (1986:67/68) describe racism as a set of attitudes and behaviours towards people of another race, which is based on the belief that races are distinct and can be graded as “superior or inferior”. In addition, Arora and Duncan (*idem*) posit that a racist is therefore “someone who believes that people of a particular race, colour, national origin are inherently inferior, therefore their identity, culture, self-esteem, views and feelings are of less value than their own and can be disregarded or treated less important”. This could be either overtly expressed or unintentionally displayed. In whatever way, the result is equally damaging to the recipient.

Racism affects educators' expectations of certain learners. If they feel that Black learners are innately intellectually inferior, they are likely to plan and structure their work with sufficient care. The effects of racial disadvantages are compounded when work is not carefully planned and structured and underachievement can result. Social class and sexist ideologies have similar effects by providing lazy and professionally incompetent educators with excuses for their failure to educate all children (Arora & Duncan, 1986:15).

According to Twitchin (1981:164), racism is a belief that human races have distinctive characteristics that determine their respective cultures, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to dominate others. Twitchin (idem) argues that individual racism is attitudes of bigotry, that quite consciously refuse to accept some individuals or groups as entitled to the full respect due to fellow human beings. This kind of racism often manifest in the staff room through remarks like: "I don't like teaching them", and through unintentional paternalism, expressed in remarks like "don't speak that kind of language here, you must speak your well practiced English".

Clements and Spinks (1996:44) describe racialism as the holding of a belief that races have distinctive characteristics determined by hereditary factors, which endow some races with in built superiority over others. Any form of discrimination, be it racism or racialism, has no place in any school in South Africa today.

It is now quite obvious that most of the former Model C schools are now admitting learners from all walks of life. These schools are currently not only multicultural but multiracial as well. It is against this backdrop that issues related to racism had to be discussed. The object of this discussion was to alert school management and educators to understand the disastrous consequences that racism may have on human relations if left unchecked.

Having now given the negative dimensions of cultural diversity that are counter-productive in any education system, it is now necessary to discuss how to manage cultural diversity.

#### 2.6.4 Managing cultural diversity

Smit and Morgan (1996:323) argue that it is important to ensure cultural diversity is not only valued but also managed for the benefit of both the organisation (school) and the individual (learners). If cultural diversity is well managed, the organisation will become multicultural over time. At this stage the organisation is plural in terms of groups represented. However, this plurality may lead to it being multicultural if the diversity is well managed and valued. In addition, Smit and Morgan (*idem*) argue that unless cultural diversity is managed properly at the organisational level, the diverse groups in a given work place (school) will continue to feel a little sense of loyalty towards that particular organisation.

Noe et al. (2000;23) contend that managing cultural diversity effectively would require doing many different activities, including creating an organisational culture that values cultural diversity. Managing cultural diversity also entails promoting knowledge and acceptance of cultural differences. Therefore, to manage cultural diversity successfully in an organisation, managers need to develop a new set of skills including the following:

- communicating effectively with members from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds;
- coaching and developing workers of different ages, educational backgrounds, ethnicity, physical ability and race;
- create a work environment that makes it comfortable for workers of all backgrounds to be creative and innovative;
- make a commitment to ensuring that cultural diversity in their organisation is recognised and used effectively for competitive advantage.

Smit and Cronje (1997:432) assert that there is a worldwide interest in the diversity and multicultural management of the South African situation. This is due to the

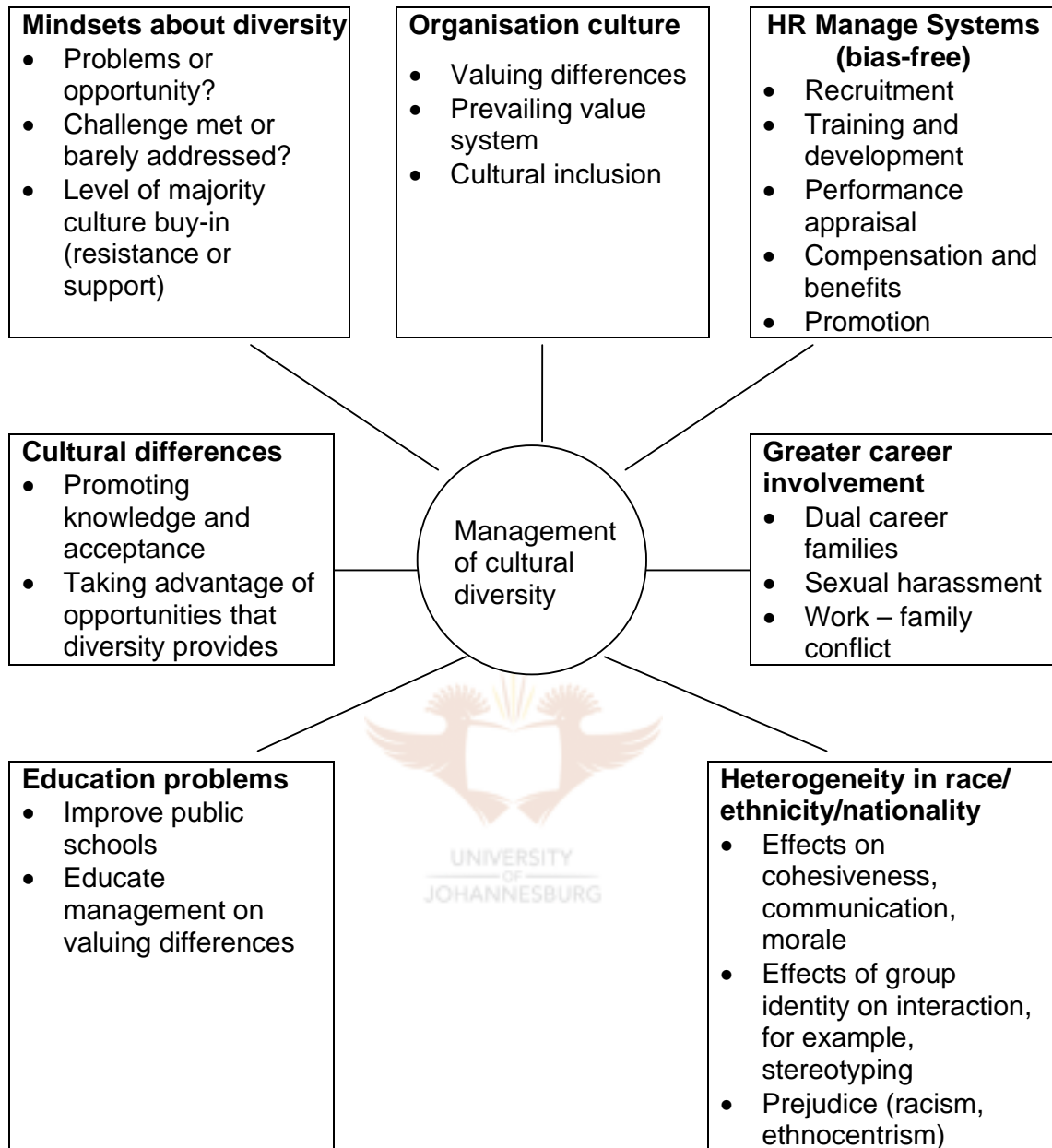
fact that South African society is radically pluralist while race and ethnicity are the most visible dimensions of diversity. Many cultural differences exist between ethnic groups such as Euro-Africans, Coloureds, Asian-Africans and Blacks. And within each group there are differences. Despite that, each of these groups shares a common history, while at the same time maintaining certain uniqueness.

Smit and Cronje (1997:436) continue to argue that successful diversity management depends on the commitment of the whole organisation. Many spheres of management activities are involved in preparing an organisation to accommodate diversity. Figure 2.1 (p.92) indicates which spheres of management can accommodate this diversity.

Cornelius (2001:218) maintains that managing cultural diversity is a complex and often bewildering task. The organisation's ability to attract, retain and motivate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds provides distinct competitive advantage in cost structures, creativity, problem-solving and the ability to respond and adapt to changing circumstances. Cornelius (2001:218) further remarks that a mixture of cultural groups provide greater opportunities for synergy to members of the organisation, contributing to a wide range of educational, professional and cultural experiences than they would to a single-culture group. Cornelius (2001:219) identifies the following aspects that help to provide synergy within culturally diverse groups. Members should:

- value the exchange of alternative points of view;
- tolerate uncertainty in group processes;
- cooperate to build group decisions;
- respect each other's cultural values as a positive opportunity for cross-cultural learning;
- overcome the misunderstandings and inefficiencies that result from members of different cultures working together.

Cornelius (2001:219) further posits that management can increase the likelihood of synergy in a diverse group by adjusting the cultural mix. This alone may not be sufficient, however, the following factors can be taken into account:



**Figure 2.1: Processes in the management of cultural diversity (Smit & Cronje, 1997:437)**

- support from top management;
- providing the group with time to overcome process difficulties;
- setting tasks that demand a creative and non-routine response;
- investing in diversity training;

- providing administrative support (facilities, opportunity to meet office hours, etcetera);
- rewarding commitment and working to overcome problems.

Armstrong (1999:263) postulates that a policy on managing cultural diversity is a must. A policy on managing cultural diversity that will recognise that there are differences among members of the organisation and these differences would have to be managed effectively. This would enhance productivity and diminish chances of potential conflict. Armstrong (1999:264) states that the concept of managing cultural diversity is founded on the premise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everyone will feel valued, where their talents are fully utilised, and in which organisational goals are met.

Tromp (1998:83) asserts that a group with a homogenous cultural background could easily ignore issues, which they deem to be less important, but which can be very important to other cultural groups. Members of a cultural group who were not involved in the deliberations might therefore find the outcomes insensitive to their views and needs. To overcome this, managers should seek to form culturally diverse groups, thereby attaining a higher level of deliberation and a wider acceptance of the outcomes. This is particularly relevant when the outcome of the group's work have an impact on the people from other cultures. We too often see one group making decisions for other groups. In line with the principles of collaboration, people should be involved when plans or decisions could affect them.

Getting people with different cultural perspectives involved will increase understanding and will result in outcomes that will be acceptable to a wider range of people within the organisation. Managers should involve males and females as equals in their groups. This does not only help to break down stereotypes but also enhances the outcome of the discussions, due to the often different perspectives offered by men and women (Tromp, 1998:84).

Tromp (1998:85) argues that diversity in workgroups can be of great benefit but it must first be recognised and valued before it can be utilised. Making the most of

this cultural diversity also requires a different management attitude and a more facilitative role of the manager. Having a diverse group enables the manager to counter some of the pitfalls associated with working in groups. In addition, Tromp (1998:91) maintains that managers should also seek to involve a good mixture of cultures and gender so that discussions benefit from different perspectives of these subgroups.

Leistyna (1999:3) contends that proponents of cultural diversity are concerned with helping learners from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those with disabilities adapt to the mainstream demands of public schooling and society. The ultimate goal of this approach is to remediate deficiencies or build bridges between the learner and the school. Educators who embrace this multicultural model believe in meritocracy where the so-called talented are advanced by virtue of their achievements. They feel that the only reason culturally different people are not succeeding academically and consequently in the workplace, is that they do not possess the necessary standard human capital to navigate the everyday demands of society, for example, language and bodies of knowledge. Advocates of cultural diversity in education attempt to prepare “in-need” learners with the necessary skills, values and knowledge to compete in the classroom and eventually in the job market, arguing that their success will eradicate the larger national problems of poverty and discrimination.

Leistyna (1999:5) argues that multicultural education encompasses educational policies and practices that attempt to affirm cultural pluralism across differences in gender, ability, class, race, sexuality, and so forth. Educators who embrace such an approach stress the importance of cultural diversity, alternative lifestyles, native cultures, the universal human rights, social justice, equal opportunity (in terms of outcomes from social institutions) and equal distribution of power among groups. Teaching diverse traditions and perspectives, questioning stereotypes, learning appropriate cultural codes in order to function within a variety of settings, recognising the contributions of all other groups to society (especially those that have been traditionally excluded) encouraging educators to learn more about their learners’ experiences and realities, and eliminating negative biases from materials that are deemed important in everyday practices. This model also embraces co-

operative learning, having high expectations for all participants involved in the learning process, nurturing a positive self-concept among learners and developing forms of evaluation that are free of stereotypical language and that reflect a multicultural curriculum (Leistyna, 1999:21).

Leistyna (1999:22) asserts that a critical multiculturalism means more than simply acknowledging differences and analysing stereotypes; more fundamentally it means understanding, engaging and transforming the diverse histories, cultural narratives, representations and institutions that produce racism and other forms of discrimination. Understanding cultural diversity in the light of the above would enable managers of schools and educators to better manage their charges in a multicultural environment.

Carrell et al. (1998:46) argue that if South African business is to succeed it must recognise the emergence of the diversified workforce and find means to harness its energies, talents and differences for tomorrow's challenges. The challenge is not only for business managers but for school principals as well. Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:20) argue that managers now have to supervise employees (educators, learners, administration staff and general support staff) who are not like them. They have to learn to adapt and change their managerial practice to fit other cultures.

Osland et al. (2001:275) suggest the following principles in relation to managing cultural diversity:

- Tolerance of differences
- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Patience
- Positive attitudes towards people and experiences
- Interpersonal sensitivity
- Empathy
- Good communication skills, including active listening
- Open-mindedness
- Sense of humility



- Capacity to learn
- Ability to handle conflict
- Ability to handle stress
- Behavioural flexibility
- Personal self-awareness

The practice of these principles will indeed stimulate cross-cultural experience and the feelings that accompany it. It also provides a chance to “decode” another culture.

In a democratic, pluralist society, organisations quite often have their members drawn from different cultural backgrounds. Similarly schools too have educators and learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is therefore incumbent upon people in management positions to recognise these cultural differences. Having recognised them, they then have to equip themselves with the requisite skills in managing cultural diversity. Armed with such skills they would, to a large extent, be able to manage cultural differences in their organisations effectively.

In an organisation where cultural differences are harnessed to affect a synergy, such a synergy enhances productivity and harmony in terms of human relations among the members of the organisation. In the case of schools, learners would accept their differences as a fact of life and thus not a cause for conflict in their co-existence in the school.

Now that an exposition of theoretical perspectives has been made on managing cultural diversity, it is now logical to consider what roles do other key stakeholders in schools have to play in managing cultural diversity.

#### **2.6.4.1 The role of parents in relation to managing cultural diversity in schools**

It can be argued that some parents do attach some importance to certain differences between schools. Although a minority places the highest importance on a school's denominational character, it may still be considered a crucial policy to

aim to provide for the aspirations of such minorities (Glatter, Woods & Bagley, 1997:25). In addition, Glatter et al. (idem) argue that the prevalence of cultural diversity may also assist in school development and improvement by providing for developing innovative forms of school practice, which parents, learners and professionals may then assess and respond to constructively in the interest of the whole school community.

Glatter et al. (1997:71) assert that the management of the educational market has to be aware that schools are seen primarily as “producers” while parents are cast in the role of “consumers” (or clients). The operation of this market assumes, amongst other things, that schools will be aware of the preferences of their parents, and that they will take active steps to change their practice in accordance with these preferences. In other words, it is assumed that the external pressures of the market will lead to internal changes in the schools in terms of accepting cultural diversity. This would be an enriching phenomenon in the lives of learners.

Leistyna (1999:6) argues that proponents of multicultural education believe that when it comes to the education of children, parents and community members must be more than mere spectators, simply attending graduation ceremonies or sporting events. They argue that just as citizen participation is fundamental to South Africa’s democracy, so it is fundamental to a school’s success.

Coutts (1992:7) contends that many White parents have made threats of withdrawing their children from school when the number of Black learners becomes too large. In view of such threats, it is quite evident that the success of managing cultural diversity at school is dependent upon the will and constructive education of parents. Furthermore, Coutts (1992:90) asserts that some children enter the classroom burdened with the racial prejudice of their parents. It is unfortunately that prejudice is constantly reinforced by the home.

Shoemaker (1995:47) maintains that ethnic parents, like all parents, appreciate and help work towards community and centre efforts that value their contributions that yield positive academic results and encourage positive interpersonal and intercultural relationships. Positive inputs by parents are indispensable if cultural

diversity is to be managed effectively. Fullan (1996:228) postulates that parent bodies are crucial as they influence the initiation or rejection of the new policies and reforms. The role of parents in school practices makes substantial differences in the performance of learners, especially in helping the at-risk children.

It is not only the management of schools that have to understand cultural diversity and need to have the know-how as to how to manage cultural diversity effectively. Parents too, as partners in the education of the child, have to play a constructive role. Among other things they have to educate their children about human rights, the acceptance of other people different from them as fellow human beings. Over and above this, parents have to inculcate the ethic that all human beings are entitled to human dignity. Children with such home education are likely to rub it off to fellow schoolmates. This would to a large extent bring about harmonious human relations among learners in the school.

#### **2.6.4.2 The role of educators in relation to managing cultural diversity in schools**

Rallis, Rossman, Phlegar and Abeille (1995:9) state that in today's classroom we are more likely to see an array of colours and languages and national heritages, as well as abilities and special needs. Rallis et al. (1995:10) go further and argue that the task of uncovering hidden talents, strengths or knowledge falls to the educator. This multicultural cornucopia (abundance of supply) can provide a rich resource if educators can recognise and tap into it. Doing so, however, is a challenge. It is therefore incumbent upon today's educators to expand their skills and their roles as to be able to deal effectively with these issues of cultural diversity in their classrooms.

Rallis et al. (1995:28) contend that the role of educators to help children discover their own value and that of others as learners and so provide positive contributions to the classroom community. The educators' role is also to facilitate this process – creating a learning environment in which learners can test knowledge, discover and dig deeply into a broad expanse of content areas, test their own understandings and share with others to build greater understandings. The educators' responsi-

bility is to ensure that each child is reaping the maximum benefits from this process and environment.

Dynamic educators see individual children, not categories, although they believe all children learn, they know that each child uses a different approach and brings a somewhat different perspective. All children do not look alike, nor do they think alike. Dynamic educators create a classroom where all children belong: the athletic girl, the gifted boy, the class clown, the recent immigrant, the child whose parents do not speak English, the quiet one, the middle-of-the road learner, and so forth (Rallis *et al.*, 1995:18). In addition, Rallis *et al.* (1995:34) assert that educators have indeed an unavoidable role to play in managing cultural diversity. In this regard each educator could evaluate his role against the following checklist:

- how can I help this child belong?
- how can this child become a contributor to the learning in the classroom?
- how can I build on the strengths of this child, taking into account multiple intelligence, language and cultural differences? and
- how can I involve his parents?

Leistyna (1999:11) posits that learners and educators need to struggle to make new meaning and develop cultural practices that are engaging in transformative and liberatory education. Coutts (1992:89/90) argues that to ensure racial harmony, the educator's role is central. The educator can fundamentally influence the well being and adjustment of each child who enters the mixed race classroom. Nord (1995:226) on the other hand contends that it is the responsibility of educators to ensure that learners learn that every ethnic group has worth and dignity.

Leistyna (1999:11) maintains that educators today should be equipped with diversity skills in order to transform the education system. He warns educators not to fall into what Paulo Freire (1970) refers to as the "banking model of education". This occurs when educators perceive learners as empty containers that need to be filled with pre-established bodies of knowledge (learners are treated as objects that are acted upon, rather than as knowledgeable participants in the construction of deep, meaningful and transformative learning experiences). In addition, Leistyna

(1999:13) argues that educators better adopt a human relations approach to diversity; the idea that education of this kind is for all learners not just for those on the margins. The stress is on infusing such principles as system wide and the use of heterogeneous grouping, cooperative learning and role-playing in the classroom.

Leistyna (idem) continues to argue in favour of educators teaching social skills and providing an open invitation to community members to come into the schools and share their experiences about their cultural backgrounds with others. However, there is a problem, as educators seem to be grounded in a relativistic stance on culture and diversity – a major problem with the human relations approach in the classroom. It is a fact that educators like all human beings belong in cultural communities. Obviously they too have cultural differences and preferences. However, they have to realise that they are in a position of responsibility, hence they have to be a catalyst in the kaleidoscope of cultural diversity. They are the ones that are “on the coal face” in terms of managing cultural diversity in schools.

Twitchin (1981:7) maintains that the first vital thing is for educators themselves to appreciate that racism is not just a matter of overt colour prejudice and discriminatory attitudes they do not personally share. Educators need to deepen their understanding of facts of racial disadvantage in our society; to acknowledge and identify the unwitting racist attitudes still embedded in our language and culture; and to find ways in which the school itself may embody forms of institutionalised racism. To some extent educators could manage cultural diversity by building a rapport with the parents of their learners. Through this kind of interaction he could pick up valuable cultural cues and thus better understand learners from that particular cultural group.

Shoemaker (1995:44-46) argues that cultural diversity in the classroom is particularly challenging to educators as some of these learners come from cultural backgrounds unfamiliar to the educator. Educators are not only faced with differences of cultural nature but of all sorts, for example, many of these learners have limited English proficiency. Issues of socio-cultural differences are also problematic when the educator has to intervene by establishing a home education programme for the academically disadvantaged learner.

Reissman (1994:8) asserts that educators can play a constructive role by highlighting cultural heroes, holidays and discreet cultural elements (cultural heritages). Educators could let learners read or tell stories or myths of cultural significance to them, and reflect on heroes' contributions to community or nation building in their cultural groups. As part of the social studies curriculum learners could study biographies of specific cultural heroes, for example, Shaka Zulu. Learners could investigate the traditions and historical contexts of various cultural heritages like holidays.

Davis (Arora & Duncan, 1986:9) states that it is possible for the individual classroom educator to exercise their degree of autonomy within their realm and level of decision-making and thereby effect certain changes. In addition, Davis (Arora & Duncan, 1986:10) argues that the desire for change in education is really a matter of professional integrity of the educator. If the principles of equality, fairness and justice are really important, the "buck cannot be passed" to education authorities. An educator does not need to seek permission to do what is educationally, professionally and ethically right. Davis (idem) goes further to argue that the goal for the educator committed to bring about change in education is to teach from a perspective, which is not based on an ideology of cultural (or any other) superiority. A learning environment may thus be created in which learners would be motivated towards successful learning skills, information, values, beliefs and attitudes that will enable them to participate effectively within a multicultural democracy. They would be motivated to question the inequalities in society and strive for structural changes to promote a fair, just and equal society.

Davis (idem) continues to contend that the immediate concern of the educator committed to the development of education for a multicultural democracy should be the elimination of the ideology of racism from the structures and procedures of education itself. In this regard, the individual educator has a responsibility both inside and outside the classroom. The goal is not only achievable, but the only educationally justifiable approach to schooling within a society created out of a history of colonialism and imperialism.

An educator with integrity cannot compromise with any incident of overt racism whether inside or outside the classroom; cannot be silent in the face of overtly racist acts; cannot collude with racism. However, covert racism is harder to deal with. The educator should aim to confront covert racism when the confrontation is likely to lead to meaningful change. Confrontation for its own sake about everything could lead to the educator being regarded as a troublesome staff room crank who could be dismissed without consideration by colleagues (Arora & Duncan, 1986:12).

Rallis et al. (1995:119) argue that educators are the change makers and thus they are increasingly challenged to assume the responsibility of a significant new role that combines the skills of an architect, a catalyst, a diplomat and an ambassador. To be successful, educators must have the fine-tuned skills of a politician advocating for the needs of all children regardless of their individual backgrounds and contexts. Dimmock (1993:25) argues that change can be brought about successfully if educators feel the ownership of those changes being implemented. The element of ownership is crucial in that it increases the chances of successful implementation of the envisaged changes as the educators are on board and therefore motivated and commit themselves to making success in managing cultural diversity in their classrooms.

Booyesen (2002:8) maintains that there are distinct differences in preferred leader behaviours between South African White managers and South African Black managers. These differences in the two cultural groups' values, priorities and preferred behaviours could be valuable strengths in a diverse workforce and could lead to higher levels of competitive advantage. Booyesen (*idem*) argues further that if Whites and African Blacks are going to work together effectively, they need to become socially aware of different sub-cultural orientations.

In South Africa today an educator is more likely to be confronted by a classroom full of learners from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Notwithstanding this challenge, they have to forge ahead with the job at hand. In such circumstances educators have to recognise the cultural differences of their charges. However,

they need to acquire the kind of skills deemed appropriate in managing cultural diversity effectively.

In a multicultural milieu such as this educators are charged with the responsibility of creating an environment conducive to learning despite their cultural differences. Educators have to enable learners to find one another by:

- recognising that there are differences between people;
- accepting that these differences are a fact of life;
- harnessing these differences to effect synergy;
- making every learner feel as an important member of the school community.

Having discussed the strategies in managing cultural diversity, it is now logical to discuss the need for change and transformation in South Africa in order to manage cultural diversity effectively.

### **2.6.5 Change and transformation in order to manage cultural diversity**

Dekker and Lemmer (1993:401) postulate that in order for one to learn ones thought processes have to become destabilised. Nothing new can be learned without ones thinking processes experiencing some measure of destabilisation while learning it. Such a period is uncomfortable because of the preferred state of stability. This in part explains the strength of the status quo. However, uncertainty alone does not keep an educator from mastering new techniques. Values also play an important role in this because they act as stabilising forces in a person's behaviour.

Hughes (1994:66) argues that transformation is not change per se. The difference between "transformation" and "change", is one of kind rather than degree. Change leads to new organisational activities and procedures, whereas transformation leads to the development of insight and self-understanding. Ueda (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995:118) asserts South Africa is unalterably pluralistic. There is a need for social reconstruction and transformation through multicultural approaches; the multicultural philosophy must permeate the entire South African education



enterprise. To this end, the South African people must reclassify the entire societal and institutional objectives, re-think our educational philosophy.

Winfield and Manning (Dilworth, 1992:181) maintain that in order for schools to accommodate a diverse learner population, there has to be transformation of the education system. The object of such a transformation process would be to bring about some changes in the culture of schools. Ueda (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995:120) claims that the consequences of institutionalised transformation would go far beyond improvement in scholastic knowledge to the heightening of ethnic consciousness and the empowering of group differences. Keeton (Mashele, 1998:9) asserts that in a transformation process all significant stakeholders of an institution should be taken on board as a collective. They then should strive to bring about the necessary institutional changes in the best interests of the organisation.

It is a fact that there have been transformation and changes in the South African education system since the beginning of the democratic dispensation in 1994. There had to be these dramatic changes because the previous system of education was seen by the Blacks as being based on norms, values, beliefs and ways of life, that is, the culture of White people on the apparent premise that they are of superior nature and therefore of supreme importance (Arora & Duncan, 1986:9). The evidence of these changes is seen in the introduction of the outcomes-based education system. This was indeed a paradigm shift in the education system of South Africa as the Eurocentric perspective in education was challenged.

Smit and Cronje (1997:260) state that organisational change is a process in which an organisation takes on new ideas to become different. The necessity for change may be brought about by factors in the external environment of the organisation. Changes that have to occur in schools are due to this. Short and Greer (1997:24) argue that change is seen by many as painful and stress producing for those involved. Persons are more willing to be involved in a change effort therefore they see the need for the change and are involved in planning the effort.

External forces for change derive from the organisation's macro environment and market-environment: political – new laws and regulations. The market environment, however, has an even greater influence on organisations. Competitors and customers may force an organisation to change. The recent political dispensation in South Africa has had such an impact on schools, particularly the former Model C schools (Smit & Cronje, 1997:262). The impact of external forces in South Africa is not only felt in education but in other organisations as well. In this regard, Ivancevich *et al.* (1994:526) argue that those external forces, that is, forces outside the organisation can signal us that change is needed. Government regulations such as Employment Equity Act (EEA), Equal Opportunity Act (EOA) and Affirmative Action (AA) are all measures to compel organisations to make changes and undergo transformation in order to be in line with government requirements. Mabey and Mayon-White (1993:93) maintain that resistance and confusion frequently develop during an organisational change, because people are unclear about what the future state will be like. Thus the goals and purposes of the change become blurred and individual expectancies get formed on the basis of information that is frequently erroneous. This could be avoided by constant communication to all affected about the upcoming changes.

Smit and Cronje (1997:267) suggest the following to overcome resistance to change: education and communication. People should be educated about upcoming changes before they occur. The nature, as well as the logic behind the change should be communicated to the people that will be affected. Among other methods, this could be done by means of one-to-one discussions, presentations to groups or reports and memos. Communication improves interpersonal relationships.

Manganyi (Sayed & Jansen, 2001:25) asserts that the transformation of education since the advent of democratic rule meant changes of the complex disestablishment of nineteen apartheid education departments. This would bring about wholesale changes, that is, introducing a unitary, non-racial system of provincial education management and administration. This educational dispensation had no regard to race, class, religion or creed. South African children and university students were brought under one roof. These changes in the school and

higher education sector were brought about in compliance with the provisions of the South African School's Act (SA, 1996), the Further Education and Training Act (SA, 1998) and the Higher Education Act (SA, 1997). In addition, Manganyi (ibid.) contends that what was achieved through this new policy and legislative environment was the national recognition of education as a fundamental human right. It remains a relatively easy exercise to mandate certain changes. The problem arises when you have to implement them as "you cannot mandate that which matters" (Fullan, 1991:64). You cannot force people to change or to accept change especially where the "steamrolling" of an Act through Parliament is relatively easy and little room for debate is possible. The educators at the chalk-level are not really ever involved in any debate as it often suits politicians to say there was "wide consultation" when in fact there was virtually none.

Principals are generally the key factor in bringing about change and improvement in schools. Their expertise and enthusiasm play a vital role in educational change. They can explain the need to change to all stakeholders and ensure that all change initiatives are supported. The democratic dispensation that commenced in April 1994 meant that the South African society had to undergo transformation and in numerous spheres of life changes had to be made. All this was done in order to evidence the new political order. In the educational arena, schools had to be desegregated for both educators and learners. Schools that were hitherto monocultural became multicultural. This scenario effectively meant that principals and educators had to manage learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.

## **2.6.6 Communication – a crucial factor in managing cultural diversity**

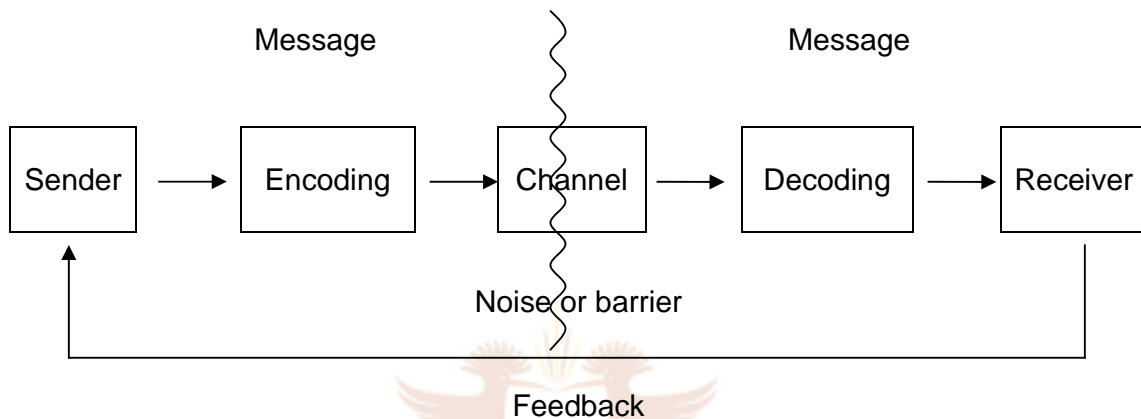
Effective communication is the life-blood of every organisation worth its salt. It is hardly possible for an organisation to function efficiently and effectively unless it has an effective communication system.

### **2.6.6.1 The concept: communication**

According to Smit and Cronje (1997:333), communication can be described as the process of transmitting information and meaning. This process is used when there

is something the sender wants the receiver to know, understand or act upon. Implied in this definition is the ability to listen as no meaningful messages can be conveyed without a willing listener. The communication process must be understood if it is to be effective and meaningful.

The steps in a communication episode are interactive; they do not occur in a sequential order. Smit and Cronje (1997:334) provide the following diagrammatic representation:



**Figure 2.2: The logical flow of effective communication (Smit & Cronje, 1997:334)**

Encoding takes place when the manager translates the information on the organisation's goals into a series of symbols for communication. In this case the symbols used by the manager could be words or pictures. Since communication is the object of encoding, the sender attempts to establish mutuality of meaning with the receiver by choosing symbols usually in the form of words and gestures that the sender believes to have meaning for the receiver.

The sender has to select a channel for transmitting the message. The manager explaining the goals of the organisation to his subordinates can choose one of the following channels: oral, non-verbal and written. He can choose a one-to-one or a face-to-face situation. However, the message may be impeded along the way. This glitch is called noise.

**Noise** may be described as any factor that disturbs, confuses or otherwise interferes with the transmission of the communication message. Noise may arise along the communication channel and may be internal or external. Noise may occur at any stage of the communication process, but is particularly troublesome in the encoding or decoding stage. Since noise can interfere with understanding, the manager should attempt to restrict it to a level that permits effective communication.

The **receiver** is the person whose senses perceive the sender's message. **Decoding** is the process in which the receiver interprets the message and transmits it into meaningful information. It is a two-step process. The receiver must first perceive the message and then interpret it. Decoding is affected by the receiver's past experience. The receiver has to decide if feedback is needed. In the feedback process the receiver becomes the sender and the sender becomes the receiver.

Laxton (1998:19) states that effective communication is essential for three reasons, namely:

- for the organisation to achieve its goals;
- for individuals to attain their goals;
- for individuals to experience satisfaction in their interpersonal work relationships.

Laxton (1998:19) asserts that the quality of communication will depend on certain factors:

- the quality of information passed;
- the relationship between the sender and receiver;
- the beliefs, values, perceptions and attitudes of both sender and receiver.

Flaherty and Stark (1999:76) argue that all critical management skills require effective communication. Whether you are leading, coaching, delegating, building a team and making decisions, counselling, hiring or just involved with any

management activity, effective communication is critical. Effective communication involves speaking clearly, listening for understanding and fostering an open communication climate. Flaherty and Stark (ibid.) continue to argue that one of the primary responsibilities of a manager is to get the right message to the right person to get the results he/she expects. Smit and Cronje (1997:332) contend that in South Africa the skill of communicating is made more complex by the fact that there are eleven official languages.

Wolkins (1996:18) argues that effective communication is very difficult to sustain in today's world. With so many ways of communicating, an organisation that is not careful may overwhelm its target audiences with so much information that its message gets lost. Wolkins (ibid.) continues to argue that communication virtually links the employees, customers and stakeholders of the company. These links bring the sense of purpose that is so critical to sustaining a positive culture within the organisation. Leadership requires communication and the process of communication must include the goals and objectives in the business plan, as well as how the organisation intends achieving them.

Members also want to get their ideas to their leadership. This requires a system to be put in place that regularly allows the members to communicate their feelings, thoughts and concerns to senior management. This needs to be done in formal, as well as informal ways (feedback at communication meetings). Senior executives must take the responsibility for ensuring that the organisation's vision, goals and objectives are continually communicated to all the organisation's stakeholders and especially to the employees. The communication process must also ensure feedback of results to all members so that they can feel part of the organisation's success and challenges (Wolkins, 1996:19).

South Africa has recently achieved democracy and therefore needs to have aggressive communication strategies to convey to the populace what democracy is all about. Mabey and Mayon-White (1993:93) maintain that one of the first and most critical steps for managing the transition state of the transformation stage of South Africa is to develop and communicate a clear image of the future.

Wilson (2001:60) argues that communication is central to the existence of organisations, even in animal communities, although it is often not realised until there has been some breakdown in communication. It is only then that its centrality becomes apparent.

Communication is the life-blood of any organisation. In this regard Wilson (2001:65) contends that communication helps organisations reduce uncertainty, solve problems, confirm beliefs, control the situation or to provide feedback. It must be noted that choice of words and the accompanying non-verbal gestures are important. Nehavandi and Malekzadeh (1999:418) maintain that non-verbal communication plays a powerful role in the communication process. Even when we are talking to others we communicate with them through our facial expressions, body posture, tone of voice, use of touch and the use of space and distance.

Murphy (1994:26) asserts that open and ongoing communication leads to increased mutual respect resulting into stronger work relationships. Managers are said to be effective if they communicate well and respect the basic human rights of co-workers. Communication is the golden thread of good management. Manning (1987:79) argues that communication is the key in bringing about change in any organisation. This is true at any time or in any place, but it is especially true in South Africa today. Many of our problems arise directly out of poor communication; only better communication can resolve them or they can be eased through improved communication. Fullan (1991:199) states that the effective district administrator is one who constantly works as communicator, not because he or she thinks that people are resistant or dense, but because he/she realises that the difficulties of communication are natural and inevitable.

Communication is a key factor in all management functions. Therefore, in order for one to manage cultural diversity effectively, one needs to put in place first an effective communication system in an organisation. One may acquire the necessary skills in managing cultural diversity, yet, if he/she is not equally skilled in communication, the goal of managing cultural diversity may not be achieved. One must bear in mind that cultural diversity could cause conflict if not managed

properly. One of the effective ways of managing cultural differences is to be skilled in intercultural communication.

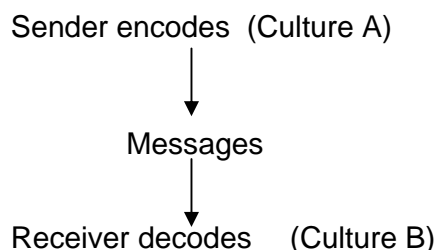
### 2.6.6.2 Intercultural communication

O'Hair, Friedrich and Shaver (1995:69) state that communication between diverse groups can be described in the following terms: international (that is between representatives of different nations), interethnic (between people who identify themselves as members of different ethnic groups), interracial (between people of different races with physical differences), and cross-cultural (between two or more cultures). Their connotative meanings (the emotional ideas associated with them) can be negative. So one might wish to use the more positive terms namely, intercultural or multicultural.

Gamble and Gamble (1996:33) assert that wherever cultural variability influences the nature and the effects of communication, **intercultural communication** is at work. Thus when we speak about intercultural communication we are concerning ourselves with the process of interpreting and sharing meaning with individuals from different cultures.

Laxton (1998:19) expostulates that intercultural communication is made much more difficult due to the complex relationships between the sender (from culture A) and the receiver (from culture B). This process is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.3 below.

#### The Communication Process



**Figure 2.3: Two people in communication (Laxton, 1998:20)**



In terms of the above communication process, it becomes quite apparent how culture could negatively impact on the communication process. The sender encodes the message using a certain verbal as well as non-verbal methods based on culture A. The receiver from culture B decodes the message using culture B's culture-specific tools. What the sender and what the receiver receives may be two completely different messages. In addition, Laxton (1998:20) asserts that in intercultural communication individuals are presented with the challenge of understanding each other's cultural backgrounds before effective communication can take place. This will obviously influence the way in which one behaves towards one another, as well as the way in which one will communicate with others. Laxton (1998:20) continues to argue that it is only through gaining culture specific knowledge that we will be able to interpret and understand the way in which others express themselves. The cultural variables that influence communication with others can be aspects such as differences in world-view, language, non-verbal communication, perception, values and many more.

Smit and Cronje (1997:339) contend that in South Africa managers need to be sensitive to the fact that the same word in different languages may mean different things to different ethnic groups. Not only do we have eleven official languages in South Africa but these languages have also dialects. To make this situation even more complex, perceptual differences can also arise because of social and gender issues. Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:13) argues that now that fundamental changes are taking place in almost every sphere of South African life, good intercultural communication is exactly what South Africa needs.

In terms of cultural knowledge, Groenewald (ibid.) argues that in contrast to what some believe, a sound knowledge of the other person's culture it is not necessarily a condition for effective intercultural communication. Groenewald (ibid.) contends that some South Africans, mainly Whites, believe that if they have some knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of Blacks, they will succeed with communication. They tend to think that they need information instead of a change of heart.

Steyn and Motshabi (1996:19) maintain that the **contact hypothesis** (inter-group communication can lead to positive inter-group relations) works better under

favourable conditions, such as when groups have similar status. In cases where negative stereotypes or prejudices exist communication will probably intensify the negative attitudes and beliefs. Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:20) contends that in South Africa the improvement of intercultural relations goes hand in hand with the nature of the political system which evolves. This country needs a new culture of committed intercultural communication to complement the new political dispensation. Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:21) continues to argue that intercultural communication needs new concepts that are or that can become familiar to all South Africans and which will add new dimensions of meaning to contact and communication on an equal basis.

Steyn and Motshabi (1996:22) argue that a major challenge in the immediate future will be to create a setting for constructive communication in South Africa. Constructive communication demands that the relevant parties have reasonably sound perceptions of each other's intentions, goals, options and needs. Inter-group communication to a large extent usually centres on ascertaining these aspects. Steyn and Motshabi (1996:23) maintain that in a South African multicultural society people have common needs, fears and aspirations. Cultural diversity should not keep people apart. They stress that there is a need for people to focus on similarities while retaining cultural differences, because only through communication can cultural bridges be built. They also emphasize openness and non-defensiveness about culture in order to achieve cultural synergy and to work and live together for a better tomorrow. In addition, Steyn and Motshabi (ibid.) argue that South Africans do not have any choice but to try to work out a unique dispensation, which reconciles its entire population with their cultural differences.

Terpstra and David (1991:1) assert that cultural miscommunication is costly. Communication in intercultural business relationships is a business task to be managed with absolute care and sensitivity. Wilkens (1999:78) remarks that when a manager addresses his/her subordinates, they have to demonstrate a clarity of purpose of what they are talking about. The audience must feel that he/she has shared something important with them; to communicate effectively both in what he/she says and what he/she does.

The value of uniqueness (individualisation) is relevant in respect of each client with whom the facilitator communicates, but it is of particular importance with people from different cultures (Du Toit et al. 1998:199). In addition, Du Toit et al. (idem) contend that instead of viewing cross-cultural communication as an obstacle, we should rather try to learn about and develop an appreciation of the other person's culture and make it an enriching experience for all involved. Working cross-culturally from a person-centred perspective implies that:

- any person is considered as being from another “culture” with his/her own frame of reference;
- there is no recipe or method available to use – it is a person-centred process;
- the facilitator respects, values and appreciates the client and his/her own culture, resourcefulness and skills allows the client to show the way to respectfully crossing the border into his/her frame of reference and world;
- it is a learning process for both the facilitator and the persons involved in the process of finding common ground and understanding;
- to assume is to stereotype. Admitting not knowing is to discover, construct, learn and appreciate.

O'Hair et al. (1995:65) argue that because people are different, they communicate differently. Their verbal and non-verbal languages are different, and their expectations are not the same. During interaction with diverse people, differences in communication and in expectations about communication can sometimes result in cultural conflict. O'Hair et al. (1995:70) continue to argue that words that cultural groups use to describe themselves and that outsiders use to describe them are important. They can imply prejudicial meanings and perpetuate negative stereotypes hence sensitivity to group names promotes positive communication and provides insights into other's perspectives. O'Hair et al. (idem) argue that you increase the likelihood of positive cultural communication when you display your awareness of names and show sensitivity when you use them. To improve your cultural communication you have to understand your own perspectives, to appreciate the perspectives of others and act in ways to ensure that conflict stemming from cultural diversity is positive.

Newstrom and Davis (1997:485) remark that the desirability of learning to speak and understand the language of the host country, expatriates also need to gain an appreciation for important differences in non-verbal communication. If they do not, they risk making serious errors that might damage their relationships with their employees, partners and customers. In addition, Newstrom and Davis (1997:485) argue that there are areas in which orientations to cross-cultural communication may differ, include contracts in the relative value placed on time efficiency, thought patterns, values placed on seeing the future, the need for personal space, eye contact, physical appearance, posture, gestures, the meaning of silence, and the legitimacy of touch. These factors make it immensely challenging to communicate effectively with one another in an intercultural setting.

In regard to verbal and non-verbal communication, Arora and Duncan (1986:21) argue that these factors are important in all classes: they are, however, crucial in ethnically and linguistically mixed classes. For example, in classes where learners do not come from an English home background, the educator needs to develop a genuine regard and acceptance of the children's language repertoire. The good educator will wish to value the children language(s) while at the same time helping them to acquire English, especially the written form, which is the language of access in education. Arora and Duncan (1986:22) go further arguing that the educators' real attitudes to learners are expressed in non-verbal (and sometimes verbal) communication. An educator who does not have a genuine feeling of equality for certain groups of learners is unlikely to hide it from the perceptive learners. Some people have invented the convenient 'chip on the shoulder' excuse to explain the learners' reaction to racist non-verbal communication.

Gamble and Gamble (1996:30) maintain that virtually everyday we find ourselves in situations that require us to communicate with persons who are culturally different from ourselves. If we are interculturally ignorant, however, instead of being interculturally aware, we are much more likely to experience undesirable communication outcomes instead of successful ones. The challenge facing us today is to learn to accept cultural differences and therefore communication differences. Those of us who insist on clinging to the notion of a "homogeneous melting pot" who refuse to take cultural diversity into account, will simply not be able to meet the

communication needs of our society and our world (Gamble & Gamble, 1996:32). In addition, Gamble and Gamble (1996:33) argue that we need to learn how to communicate effectively with persons who are culturally different from ourselves: persons with whom we should still be able to freely share ideas, information, and feelings.

Gamble and Gamble (1996:33) argue that to become more adept at communicating with persons who are culturally different from ourselves, we need to learn not only about their culture but also about our own. Gamble and Gamble (idem) continue to argue that merely knowing others' language, jargon or sharing some but not all of a group's values, does not necessarily ensure understanding. It is necessary for you to become aware of the norms and rules of the culture or subculture or co-culture that might influence the nature of interactions you have with its members, whether those interactions occur in public or in private.

If a message is generated by a member of one culture or subculture, for this message to be understood by a person of a different culture, the target person has to process it interculturally. Thus, when you and the individuals with whom you are interacting belong to different cultures, culture plays a role in shaping your communication (Gamble & Gamble, 1996:33/34).

We must come to accept our cultural diversity if we are to be able to process other cultural influences and communicate with each other in a meaningful way (Gamble & Gamble, 1996:35) and they further argue that intercultural communication is fast becoming the norm. In fact, living in South Africa gives one an incredible opportunity to interact interculturally and by so doing add value to a single nationhood.

Seelye (1993:20) maintains that the basic aim of an intercultural communication is to have the learners communicating with people who do not share their own line of cultural conditioning. If the people from the target culture do not speak your language you have to learn another language. This is not as difficult, as many believe it to be. Seelye (1993:21) argues that in order to learn and communicate interculturally we need to undergo restructuring of our attitudes and world-views.

Managing diversity, among other things is about managing cultural diversity. For one to effectively manage people from different cultural backgrounds one has to recognise and accept cultural differences. Yet, this is not adequate; one would have to be able to communicate effectively. In the case of managing multicultural groups, one cannot communicate with them effectively unless one understands their body language and other nuances embodied in their culture, which are loaded with cultural meanings vital in their communication system. To demonstrate respect while speaking to them facilitates effective communication. The same is true when principals and educators have to manage learners from different cultural backgrounds.

### **2.6.6.3 The concept “ubuntu” in relation to intercultural communication**

According to Laxton (1998:23) the concept “**ubuntu**” can be seen as the key to all African values and involves collective personhood and collective morality. Laxton (ibid.) argues that the values around harmony are deeply embedded in African communities.

On the concept “ubuntu”, Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:21) contends that the acceptance of “ubuntu” and the broad philosophy associated with it creates an interesting possibility in South Africa for collective morality. Groenewald (ibid.) argues that in a wider sense, “ubuntu” expresses the humanistic experience in which people are treated with respect as human beings. In this sense the concept “ubuntu” is the foundation of sound relations in African societies, for example, “umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye” (a person is a person because of other people around him). The English equivalent is “No man is an island”. Khanyile (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:21/22) states the universal values of the philosophy of “ubuntu” despite the ethnic claims to the concept in the following format:

“Ubuntu means being human and being human implies values that are not subjective but universal, namely, truth, honesty, justice, respect for a person and property, compassion, tolerance of different religions, views and races, sensitivity to the aged and enthusiasm for life.”

Khanyile (ibid.) continues to argue that the concept “ubuntu” is also of pragmatic value in intercultural communication and training because so many people in South African society can identify with this philosophy. Furthermore it seems that “ubuntu” fits in rather well with the basic conditions for meaningful intercultural communication skills such as empathy, tolerance, and the ability to handle ambiguity. This philosophy accentuates regard for the other person, hence its importance for intercultural communication.

The philosophy of “ubuntu” (humanity) cuts across cultures. People of all cultures want to be treated with dignity. One cannot treat another person with “ubuntu”, if he himself is devoid of the trait of “ubuntu”. The philosophy of “ubuntu” is appreciated across cultures all over the world. Therefore a manager with a demonstrable trait of “ubuntu” is easily acceptable to his subordinates of all cultural backgrounds. The concept of “ubuntu” cannot be overemphasised if cultural diversity in organisations is to be managed effectively.

#### 2.6.6.4 Barriers to effective intercultural communication

Wilson (2001:72) asserts that communication barriers occur where individuals, groups and organisational level variables are linked to breakdowns in communication. Two types of barriers can be identified: interpersonal and structural barriers. **Interpersonal barriers** relate to perceptual problems, which limit the extent to which the message has the same meaning for the sender and the receiver. So the barriers relate to trust between those engaged in communication, perceptions of influence and power and so on. **Structural barriers** relate to hierarchy, which restricts the free flow of communication, specialisation, which reduces communication between sub-units, and centralisation, which means that decision-makers are too far removed from reality to function effectively.

According to Rensburg (1996:144), the main problem with intercultural communication is that it happens in a context where the participants do not share common beliefs, norms, values, attitudes and world-views. Flaherty and Stark (1999:73)

assert that national and international crises occur all because of problems in terms of differences in intercultural communication. Flaherty and Stark (1999:76) state that the barriers or “roadblocks” that get in the way of effective communication are: lack of understanding (on your part or theirs), interruptions, noise, emotional state (yours or theirs) bias, prejudice, boredom, resentment, language problems, culture, physical environment, lack of trust, poor listening habits, mixed messages and unclear priorities.

Smit and Cronje (1997:343) remark that speech is usually accompanied by a variety of meaningful non-verbal cues such as physical postures, head orientation and gestures and facial expressions. These silent messages can either assist or disturb the accurate transfer of meaning: Cultural differences with cultural cues obstruct effective intercultural communication. Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:13) maintains that different cultures have different verbal and non-verbal patterns of behaviour and often parties do not know how to interpret and understand the actions of relative strangers because they do not know the implicit and explicit rules of communication. Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:14) contends that the obstruction to effective intercultural communication is in the main due to the lack of personal qualities like tolerance of ambiguity, the lack of ability to handle fundamental differences in values and beliefs, the lack of knowledge of handling new experiences.

Groenewald (idem) argues that culture acts as a screen between a person and social reality, colouring it in such a way that his/her interpretation and understanding of reality may be totally different from that of a person of another culture. In addition, Groenewald (idem) argues that people tend to block or avoid receiving messages that they do not like. This is particularly true of communication barriers in the intercultural situations.

Terpstra and David (1991:11) state that the lack of intercultural communications skills is a problem of many organisations with diverse cultural groups. According to Terpstra and David (1991:25), language diversity is a stumbling block in intercultural communication. Problems of cultural miscommunication occur largely

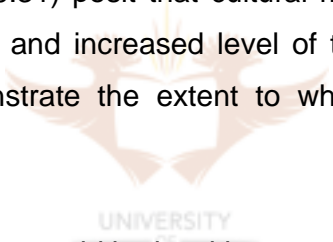


because communication interactants have been socialised differently. Cultural misunderstandings are a malaise to intercultural relations.

Wilson (2001:65) argues that there are differences in communication and style between men and women. He underscores the fact that: “not only do men and women communicate differently, but they think, feel, perceive, react, respond, love, need and appreciate things differently.” With regard to the use of expletives: women use milder forms, for example, Oh dear! While men use stronger forms, for example, Oh damn!

O’Hair et al. (1995:84) contends that non-verbal elements results in countless differences in communication styles and meanings. When non-verbal messages are confusing to the receiver, misunderstandings are likely to occur.

Gamble and Gamble (1996:31) posit that cultural misunderstanding often lead to lost business opportunities and increased level of tension between people. The following examples demonstrate the extent to which cultural differences affect communication:

- 
- wrong tonal pronunciation could be insulting;
  - crossing your legs in the United State is an acceptable practice and a sign of a relaxed attitude. In Korea, however, it is a social blunder or can be viewed as an indiscretion;
  - eye contact preferences also differ across cultures. Americans place high value on eye-to-eye communication, and tend to distrust those who fail to look at them directly;
  - the Japanese, in contrast believe eye contact over a sustained period of time shows disrespect;
  - among Asian cultures too much eye contact is seen to be intrusive (intruding, interfering into);
  - traditionally the African-Americans are taught that looking away when someone is speaking to you reveals your respect for him or her. Yet, this can anger a typical White American.

In addition, Gamble and Gamble (1996:35) contend that ethnocentrism is a key characteristic of failed intercultural communication efforts. Persons who are ethnocentric, experience great anxiety when interacting with persons from different cultures.

According to Murphy (1994:31), the following are barriers to effective intercultural communication:

- **Time** – since there is much emphasis on the word urgency, people often rush their communication.
- **Perception** – due to the nature of work, there are many ways to view issues – are other's views taken into consideration and others' not? With regard to perception, Smit and Cronje (1997:338) assert that differing perceptions are some of the most common barriers. These differences could be the result of different cultural backgrounds, values, experience and so on.
- **Expectations** – some people tell you what they expect you to hear rather than telling you how they really think and feel.
- **Prejudices** – based on inflexible, preconceived thinking, some managers and associates listen selectively. A 30-year old employee may listen to his/her superior but not to a "part-time kid" who is still at school.
- **Distractions** – no matter what work environment is like, a lack of focus can literally be the difference between life and death. Professionals in law enforcement or trauma units will attest to that.
- **Semantics** – many words convey varied messages. The true meanings of words come from people, not necessarily from a dictionary.
- **Not listening** – possibly the biggest barrier that prevent effective intercultural communication is poor listening.

If the world-view of two people engaged in a dialogue differs largely, communication is often difficult or can be hampered. The different pre-suppositions, beliefs, understandings and concepts in the minds of the participants distort the presentation and reception of the communication (Du Toit et al., 1998:205).

Speaking to somebody in a manner that despises his culture could cause damage in terms of intercultural relations. A manager may unwittingly cause such hurt because he did not understand some cultural codes in communication. For example, a traditional Zulu-man may feel offended to be spoken to by a woman looking at him straight in the eyes.

In a nutshell for one to be able to manage cultural diversity effectively, it is important that he/she be sensitive to cultural sensibilities. Yet, if one is not certain, it would always be the best if his/her approach is characterised by modesty and humility whenever he/she is communicating with subordinates from different cultural backgrounds. Principals and educators, particularly of multicultural schools have to be sensitive to cultural sensibilities when addressing learners from different cultural backgrounds. The golden rule should be a demonstration of respect for human dignity regardless of one's race or cultural group.

Having discussed the barriers to effective intercultural communication; it is quite logical to now provide ways and means to overcome these barriers.

#### **2.6.6.5 Overcoming barriers to effective intercultural communication**

Laxton (1998:20) asserts that the only way to overcome the boundaries of culture within the context of communication would be by making use of intercultural communication training. Only through this type of communication will the two main aims of communication be achieved, namely: information passing and relationship building. Laxton (1998:20) remarks that intercultural communication training refers to a formalised way designed to prepare people for more effective interpersonal relations when they interact with individuals from cultures other than their own.

According to Laxton (idem), any programme designed for intercultural communication should take the following issues into account:

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Emotional challenges

- Behaviour

The aspects stated above will now be discussed.

- **Awareness**

There are certain features that become important when trying to understand culture such as values, norms, and expected mode of behaviour shared by people. Laxton (ibid.) argues that we should all move away from being culturally unaware of how our lives are shaped by culture. It is important to respect others and be sensitive towards other cultures. Be aware of your own biases; stereotypes affect the way in which we interact with culturally different people. It is therefore important to take cognisance of these prejudicial views. Become comfortable with differences; it is important to recognise that there are differences between cultures and to try and incorporate all values. Be sensitive to circumstances; it is impossible for individuals within an intercultural environment to get it right the first time or to always get it right.

- **Knowledge**

After becoming aware of the fact that culture influences one's behaviour and interaction, it is important to try to identify culture specific knowledge. This is knowledge that will help us in intercultural interactions. Such knowledge would include: kinship and colour terminology, notions of taboo, world views (individual versus group importance), rituals, superstitions and so forth.

- **Emotional challenges**

In the process of discovering what our own culture consider to be appropriate, it can be quite challenging to find that people from different cultures have different views regarding what is appropriate. For example, if an adult Zulu man does wrong and his supervisor, a younger man, shouts at him, he would take umbrage because he feels that his manhood is being belittled.

- **Behaviour**

The last step in intercultural communication training is to learn the behaviour appropriate to increasing the chance of intercultural success in terms of communications (Laxton, 1998:20).

Flaherty and Stark (1999:76/77) posit that to work your way around the barriers to effective intercultural communication, the following ideas could prove to be valuable:

- Think through what you want to say before you say it. Begin focusing on your intention or goal. Be clear about what you expect as a result of your communication
- Your message must be tailored to the needs of the receivers or listeners. Consider the receiver's point of view.
- Once you have made your point, ask each listener for feedback. Make sure each listener has understood your intention and specifically what is it you want. You can get this feedback by observing and listening. Observe the listener's behaviour. Is it in agreement? Does he or she appear to have questions or disagree? Also pay attention to the non-verbal cues you are receiving.
- Speak clearly and concisely. Some people believe that verboseness is a sign of knowledge or power, but it actually gets in the way of effective communication. To be overly verbose is a distraction. Many people will simply "tune out" of a speaker who is too garrulous.

Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:13) argues that positive attitudes, openness to all the risks and problems of communication and the ability to listen on an empathic level are keys to effective intercultural communication. In addition, Groenewald (ibid.) contends that knowledge of a person's language, traditions, customs, values, and beliefs to name a few, may help a great deal but if an individual is not sensitive and perceptive to the needs, motivations and intent of his or her communication partner, the total communication effect may be in vain.

Groenewald (Steyn & Motshabi, 1996:15) remarks that to ensure meaningful intercultural communication, value clarification is important. Each party must know

or discover the critical value structures of the other to limit possible confusion, mistrust and conflict. Unless one tries to understand the value differences of the other, intercultural communication may be painful for both parties. For example, in the Eastern and African cultures, gratitude is of primary value but of far lesser value in Western cultures.

Terpstra and David (1991:11) argue that intercultural training consists among other things of suggestions for getting along in daily life. Only a few organisations have established systems to collect and use information to facilitate intercultural communications and update future intercultural training programs. Many organisations have yet, to face a challenge of harnessing experience in a cultural learning curve.

Du Toit et al. (1998:204) assert that when working cross-culturally, the person, the group or the community has to (dialogically) cross certain borders. By crossing borders we do not mean either invading the physical territory or the personal space of others, but rather going beyond our own mental and social borders and reaching out to others' worlds in a gentle and non-threatening way. In that way borders are not seen as obstacles but is a learning experience.

Du Toit et al. (1998:207) argue that the attitude of the facilitator is the most important factor in cross-cultural work. A facilitator should move into a community/group/family and let them guide him/her through their customs and ways of communication and learn from them appreciatively and respectfully.

O'Hair et al. (1995:75) contend that when you experience cultural conflict because others do not share your perspectives, certain personality traits can help you to be an effective intercultural communicator. We all have traits such as flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity in varying degrees, and if we cultivate them, we can improve our intercultural communication competence. O'Hair et al. (1995:76) go further and argue that the ability to tolerate change and willingness to compromise are necessary when you are working with one who is "culturally different". Even if differences outnumber likeness, your goal should be to find specific areas you can give without endangering your primary goal.

O'Hair et al. (1995:76) postulate that when you are interacting with persons of a different culture, you may know how unfamiliar the accent of your companions will be or how different their non-verbal communication will be. Ambiguity in such instances makes some people uncomfortable hence the need for ability to tolerate ambiguity. O'Hair et al. (idem) continue to argue that one of the difficulties in communication is the tendency to pass judgement on the behaviour of others. A non-judgemental attitude is crucial in intercultural communication. Equally important is respect for others. Respect is embodied in the belief that others have:

- the right to opinions that differ from yours;
- the right to behave in ways that you may find confusing or wrong;
- the right not to be ridiculed;
- should be able to feel confident that they will be treated fairly.

According to Gamble and Gamble (1996:33), it is necessary for one to become aware of the norms and rules of the culture or co-culture that might influence the nature of interactions one might have with its members, whether those interactions occur in public or in private. In addition, Gamble and Gamble (1996:39) argue that just having the desire to relate more effectively with persons of different cultures is critical to improving your ability to communicate interculturally. Also important is limiting your reliance on stereotypes that can diminish your success when you interact with others. You need to be able to reduce the uncertainty levels regarding the persons of different cultures with whom you communicate.

Gamble and Gamble (1996:40) suggest the following guidelines to assist with tolerance for ambiguity and increase one's ability to handle or manage new structures and prepare oneself to meet the communication challenges of today and tomorrow:

- Refrain from formulating expectations based solely on your own culture.
- When those you interact with have diverse communication styles, it is critical that you acknowledge the differences and accept their validity. By not isolating yourself within your own group or culture; you allow yourself to be more fully a part of a multicultural society.

- Recognise how faulty education can impede understanding interculturally. It is important to identify and work to eliminate any personal biases and prejudices that you have developed over the years. Determine, for example, the extent to which your family and friends have influenced your feelings about persons from other cultural groups. Do those you have grown up with appear comfortable or uncomfortable relating to persons of different cultural communication competence.
- Make a commitment to develop communication skills and abilities appropriate to life in a multicultural world.

Managing cultural diversity cannot be effective unless conflict, which may arise, is well managed. Hence intercultural conflict will be discussed. To understand what intercultural conflict is about is necessary to briefly discuss conflict.

## 2.7 WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Murphy (1999:14) asserts that conflict is a set of divergent behaviours, aims or methods. In addition, Murphy (1999:15) argues that there is negative and positive conflict. In addition there is healthy conflict. According to Murphy (ibid.) negative conflict is about individuals who view others as adversaries, hence they are concerned about protecting themselves and are less or not at all concerned about the basic human rights of others. They try to win at all cost and often see people as “expenses rather than investments”. While on the other hand positive conflict is about individuals with differing points of view and personalities show mutual respect for each other’s thoughts and supportive of each other. They are secure enough to communicate openly. Conflict per se is unhealthy as it is always detrimental to human relations in an organisation. The consequence thereof is poor productivity.

Botha and Lamprecht (1997:28) postulate that the concept: “conflict” calls to mind concepts such as “clashing”, “strife” and “argument”. They argue that all these are forms of conflict and conflict per se does not necessarily need to have negative results. The following are some positive results of conflict:



- In a conflict situation, people are forced to think quickly and creatively. In this way, members are stimulated to produce new ideas.
- Should members clash, grievances are aired timeously. This may prevent a minor problem from developing into a crisis later.
- The “air” will be clearer after a clash. Members of the group will probably feel closer to one another since problems have been resolved.

Manning (1987:31) argues that while conflict can be healthy, it is more often wasteful and draining. It always requires energy out of all proportion to the result. The fact that conflict could be a waste of time and energy for both the management and those actually involved in it. This makes it even more necessary that it should be prevented at all cost.

Organisational conflict occurs when the goal-directed behaviour of one group blocks or thwarts the goals of another. Conflict is often motivated by selfish interest (Jones, 1995:500). Research reveals that some conflict is good for an organisation, as it can improve organisational effectiveness. However, extreme conflict normally hurts organisational performance.

According to Mitchell (1987:419) consequences of conflict can be categorised into two types: functional consequence and dysfunctional consequence. Mitchell (ibid.) contends that one potential functional consequence of conflict is that it can generate a great deal of interests among organisational participants. It can energise them and mobilise them to take action. This can be a starting point of a motivation process and this may heighten performance.

Dysfunctional consequences of conflict occur when conflicting groups adopt a win-lose orientation. The group members begin to think in terms of “us versus them” and “victory versus defeat”. The worst scenario in such conflict situations is when it evolves into open hostility: groups taking overt action to disrupt the operations of the other groups (Mitchell, 1987:419).

Maddox (1988:57) asserts that conflict is healthy when it causes the conflicting parties to explore new ideas, test their positions and beliefs and stretch their

imagination. Conflict is constructive if it emerges from a collaborative process in which values, interests and co-operation are predominant. This happens when there is a collegial desire to discover mutual interests rather than compete to win positions (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993:125). Having made a exposition of what conflict is all about it is now expedient to discuss intercultural conflict.

### 2.7.1 What is intercultural conflict?

Steyn and Motshabi (1996:19) argue that people who in segregated communities have few channels of communication. They easily exaggerate the degree of difference between groups and readily misunderstand the grounds for it. Perhaps most important of all, the separateness may lead to genuine conflict of interest, as well as many imaginary conflicts.

Intercultural conflict can go the extremes, for instance, an American organisation can view this as generosity (Terpstra & David, 1991:13). Many petty things can cause intercultural conflicts, for example, making or avoiding eye contact, who should sit, stand or walk first, how a man should act towards a woman and a woman towards a man, and adults and children towards each other especially a particular culture (Du Toit et al., 1998:205).

Du Toit et al. (1998:118) argue that in some cultures direct eye contact indicates attention and awareness of the other. However, this is not always the case. As in other cultures, direct eye-contact may be seen as a challenge, or even as confrontation. Sometimes, a younger person is not permitted to look directly at an older person's eyes (compare to African cultures). O'Hair et al. (1995:68) give some real-life examples of cultural diversity conflict that arise from stereotyping:

- Ethnicity – the low numbers of Blacks in rugby and cricket players are a result of ethnic bias (favouritism).
- Religion – a new employee complained that the only company paid dinner was held during the Christmas holidays – a holiday that is forbidden by the employee's religion.

Leistyna (1999:9) argues that examining schooling, not as a neutral process but rather as a form of cultural politics, critical pedagogues argue that as microcosms of larger society, educational institutions reflect and produce social turmoil by maintaining dominant beliefs, values, and interests. Harris *et al.* (1997:87) argue that schools in common with virtually all other organisations are arenas of struggle, to be split asunder with actual or potential conflict between members, to be poorly coordinated; to be ideologically diverse and in such a scenario conflict is inevitable particularly between disparate groups.

Vakalisa (Mda & Mothata, 2000:192) asserts that in South Africa understanding of cultures other than ones own was not encouraged to say the least. A clash of cultures between educator and learners or among learners, may cause classroom management problems, and may jeopardize the educator's chance of modelling what it is to be a life long learner.

Thomas (1999:8-9) contends that cross-cultural problems of peer abuse occur within a particular cultural setting: individuals of one cultural group act on the basis of negative images they hold of people from a different cultural group. There are three types of social intercourse in which such conflicts are displayed: ones involving child/child conflict, child/adult confrontations and adult/adult encounters.

In addition, Thomas (1999:20) remarks that intercultural conflict is due to the clash of incompatible cultural beliefs or practices. These intercultural discords occur when the convictions of one group collide with the convictions of another. Consequently battles are fought over territorial rights, religious doctrines, and concepts of justice, language, and ethnic customs.

Problems can arise from confrontations between cultures that hold divergent notions of intelligence, of which varieties of intelligence are not admired and of how those forms should be nurtured. However, difficulties can occur when:

- children enter an education system whose practices are founded on a different theory of intelligence than that held in children's out-of-school environments;

- educational practices of one culture are transferred to another culture that holds different assumptions about the nature of abilities and their development;
- people steeped in their own culture's conceptions of intelligence interact with people steeped in a conflicting view (Thomas, 1999:20).

O'Hair et al. (1995:75) posit that issues between culturally different people can become "sites of conflicts" or "contest zones". Sites of conflicts are cultural dilemmas that occur again and again. Smit and Cronje (1997:453) maintain that in every social grouping, disagreement and conflict is bound to occur from time to time. Different cultures develop different ways of managing conflicts. In individualistic cultures conflict is seen as healthy and people are encouraged to bring contentious issues into the open. This trait makes for competition and innovation. In other cultures social harmony takes precedence over an individual's right to express his views, thereby limiting his initiative.

Bentley (1998:88/89) contends that if there is a clash of beliefs, this will be expressed in conflict somewhere in break-time discussion in the playground. These conflicts and competing influences will also be expressed in young people's behaviour and attitudes to education.

Booyesen (2002:8) argues that the differences between the different cultural groups have to be managed effectively. If these differences are not managed properly they would become the primary source of misunderstanding between managers and their employees, as well as between employees themselves.

There is always a potential for intercultural conflict in any organisation that draws its members from different cultural groups. People from different cultural groups, very often have mistrust about one another. They accommodate one another instead of accepting one another notwithstanding their differences. All in all cultural differences are inherent, hence they have to be recognised and be accepted as such. However, there is a need that people tasked with the responsibility of managing people from different cultural backgrounds be equipped with the necessary skills that would enable them to manage diversity effectively.

Intercultural conflict, like all kinds of conflicts, need to be managed effectively in the interest of organisational performance. Managing intercultural conflict will now be discussed.

### **2.7.2 Managing intercultural conflict**

Murphy (1994:1) argues that the key to managing intercultural conflict is having the courage to take risks and to regularly practice techniques that will give you more control over the environment. Conflict management techniques enable you to reduce or eliminate those barriers that prevent you from achieving the results desired. When you manage intercultural conflict, you not only put out fires, but also prevent more from flaring up.

In addition, Murphy (idem) states that the first step is to identify what the actual problem is. What should be considered the first step is sensing that a problem exists. The following ways are suggested as keys to sensing conflict on a daily basis:

- Be thorough – visualise how your actions or those of others will cause, or are causing conflict: ask yourself – who, what, when, where, how, and why questions to determine potential, as well as present sources of intercultural conflict.
- Give feedback – the amount, accuracy, and timeliness of information that you can provide to an individual will help you understand that person's point of view. Sharing your thoughts and feelings first, in a non-threatening way, often encourages others to tell you what is on their minds. When you as a manager are the first to share sensitive information you could be pleasantly surprised how most people will follow your lead and start to confide in you. Knowing what is on another person's mind can be a big help in sensing potential intercultural conflict.
- Give feedback – take the time to find out what your supervisor and/or associates are thinking and feeling. Do not wait until the last moment to discover that trouble is upon you. Poke for information by asking questions such as: how so; in what way; why; and can you tell me more?

- Define expectations – meet on a weekly basis with your supervisor and/or associates to determine priorities for the upcoming week. Any major discrepancies between your expectations will alert you to potential intercultural conflict. You also can review the status of any long-range goals or projects. It can be helpful, for a manager and the workgroup to generate lists identifying what each expects from each other. Any differences between the two parties lists are grounds for possible intercultural conflict.

Steyn (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993:367) asserts that there are particular challenges to South Africa. The political unrest and instability currently experienced at certain schools in South Africa call for special management skills such as intercultural conflict prevention and resolution, intercultural communication skills, negotiation techniques and many more.

Cox and Beale (1997:295) argue that managing a diverse workplace including schools create challenges for managers. The issues in this case pertain to the intercultural conflict resulting from an apparent incompatibility between the religious practices of an employee or a learner and the practices of the organisation.

O'Hair et al. (1995:84/85) argue that managing a diverse workplace or organisation is to realise that intercultural conflict resulting from diversity can be positive. Just as it is not possible to understand everything about another culture, it is not possible to eliminate all intercultural conflict – even with people who are similar to you. In addition, O'Hair et al. (idem) contend that un-addressed sites of intercultural conflict create tension that can stop work and hinder relational activity.

O'Hair et al. (1995:85) argue that as intercultural conflict rises or new incidents occur we might mistakenly decide that all interaction with people who are different will be unproductive. We might also conclude that we must solve all cultural differences in order to work well or get along well with others. O'Hair et al. (ibid.) continue to argue that specific cultural conflicts can be managed even if many differences remain unresolved. The first step – understanding your prerequisites and appreciating the perspectives of others are the prerequisites for managing the third step, which is acting in ways that render cultural conflict positive. If you are

informed about your own perspectives and sensitive to the perspectives of others, you may find these assumptions helpful:

- Managing cultural conflict is necessary for organisations to continue to function.
- Sites of cultural conflict must be identified. These are important because they reveal people's pressure points or high priority agenda items.
- For cultural conflict to be productive, participants must analyse themselves, events, and their language in order to identify the sites of cultural conflict and what others believe about the issues concerned.

O'Hair et al. (1995:86) suggest the following steps that would help analyse cultural conflict and turn it into productive discourse:

- Examine the issues/topics. They are of great importance in understanding the perspectives of the other person or group. The topic may be the primary point of the cultural conflict or it may suggest another or a more deep seated problem.
- Analyse your own contributions. Did you initiate the confrontation, enable or encourage others in their cultural conflict or react to someone else's agenda. Knowing who initiates certain types of encounters can help determine both the "whys" and the sites of cultural conflict.
- Make notes about the encounter so that over time you may identify patterns of behaviour, timing, and relational activity. Use dates, names, and specific references. You may be able to compare this information with other activities, issues or recurring topics.
- Discuss the cultural conflict with a trusted person, an advocate of cultural diversity in education who attempts to manage cultural conflict in a non-biased way. Confidentiality about interactions is important to ethical behaviour.

All public educational institutions in South Africa are open to learners of all races and cultural backgrounds. In this way schools are a melting pot of all cultures. The question of intercultural conflict is inevitable. In the light of this the management of schools has to be aware of this reality and be prepared to manage intercultural

conflict effectively. If no serious efforts are made to managing intercultural conflict properly one cannot expect multicultural schools to function effectively.

Managing intercultural conflict is of vital importance in any situation of cultural diversity. However, over and above this there is a need to seek out strategies towards resolving intercultural conflict. These strategies are now going to be discussed.

### **2.7.3 Strategies for resolving intercultural conflict**

According to Mitchell (1987:421) there are several strategies that can be used to resolve conflict. These include, compromise, the formation of coalitions and co-operation. These strategies are now discussed.

- **Compromise**

Compromise is one of the family related conflict-resolution strategies. This strategy reflects a moderate desire by a group both to attain its own preferred outcomes and to satisfy the concerns of the other groups involved in the conflict. Compromise implies willingness of all involved to share outcomes in order to resolve the conflict. The other members of this family include domination, collaboration, avoidance, and accommodation.

- **Domination**

When a group has a strong desire to attain its own preferred outcomes and it has no desire to satisfy the concerns of the other groups involved, it will be oriented towards domination. It will seek to satisfy its own concerns at the expense of others. Conversely, when a group has little desire to attain its own preferred outcomes but has a very strong desire to satisfy the concerns of the other groups involved, it will be oriented towards **accommodation**, which is, working towards the satisfaction of the concerns of the other groups, even if this means sacrificing all of its own preferred outcomes.



- **Collaboration**

The collaboration strategy implies an attempt at joint problem solving in which conflicting groups work together to develop a solution that meets all the preferences of all the parties to the conflict.

- **Avoidance**

When a group has little interest either in attaining its own preferred outcomes or in satisfying the concerns of the other groups involved in the conflict.

- **Coalition-formation**

When there are too many diverse interests to take into account, and no one group is likely to have sufficient power to be able to force its preferences on the others. In such a situation, compromise can be facilitated through the use of coalition. Coalitions are loose alliances among groups; coalition once formed acts as a single body.

- **Co-optation**

This is a strategy that groups can use to dissolve opposition to their preferred decision alternatives. Co-optation involves an attempt to secure the co-optation of an opposing group by giving that group a small measure of power within the co-opting group. The goal of the co-opting group is to relinquish a small amount of control over its own actions in order to gain a large degree of co-operation.

Sybouts (1990:205) remarks that when resolving a conflict the parties involved must be allowed to reveal emotions about the issues, the primacy of trust must be established as a condition for resolving conflict. This would enable the parties involved in the conflict to emerge with dignity in the event that conflict is resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

According to Murphy (1994:9) the following are the basic skills in resolving conflict:

- **Intellectual skills** – planning, analysis, judgement, perception and objectivity.
- **Interpersonal skills** – sensitivity, persuasiveness, communication.

- **Emotional skills** – persistence, self-discipline, assertiveness, result-orientation, enthusiasm.
- **Managerial skills** – ability to motivate, ability to delegate, ability to provide guidance.

Murphy (1994:26) remarks that just like a positive view of conflict, open and ongoing communication leads to an increased mutual respect, resulting in stronger work relationships. In addition, Murphy (1994:64/65) argues that most professionals who effectively manage conflict daily, such as judges or arbitrators agree that negotiating and innovating are often the best methods to use in conflict resolution:

- **Negotiating**

This is a give and take approach to resolving conflict. Negotiating requires people to focus on working as a team to beat the problem. Individuals use focused listening to determine what interests can be contributed to settle the conflict. Although negotiation can produce positive results, it can lead to people feeling manipulated by someone who has given less than expected. There must be a common understanding of what needs to be accomplished present.

- **Innovating**

When an attempt is made to become innovative in resolving conflict –divergent aims, methods, or behaviours and new perceptions normally surface. By using focused listening rather than debating more input is elicited. Even if the well of fresh ideas runs dry, people are more committed to the final outcome, that is, conflict resolution because they are encouraged to participate actively and to be a part of forming the future of healthy work relationships.

The fact that conflict is inevitable in a multicultural organisation presupposes that it has to be managed effectively. However, effective management of conflict is not enough hence the need that managers and supervisors of such organisations are equipped with conflict resolution skills. Obviously conflict will rear its head and they would be able to resolve it without wasting time and thus keep the organisation functioning effectively.

Of course strategies for resolving conflict are important in managing cultural diversity. However, there is a need for a leadership approach that would minimise possibilities for a conflict. To a large extent collegial leadership approach would effect this. This approach will now be discussed.

## **2.8 COLLEGIAL LEADERSHIP AS A STRATEGIC APPROACH IN MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY EFFECTIVELY**

Educational institutions like all organisations not only need to have efficient and effective management but equally need effective leadership. Leadership per se is not enough but what style of leadership is considered effective in a particular situation?

### **2.8.1 Collegiality – a central factor in managing cultural diversity**

Cunningham and Gresso (1993:99) assert that collegiality is a closeness that grows out of an understanding and caring for one another, resulting in group members getting to know one another better, wanting to listen to one another, being interested in one another's values and perhaps most important, wanting to be together. In addition, Cunningham and Gresso (1993:44) posit that building a collegial group composed of diverse talents and perspectives requires a special sensitivity to make each person feel a valued and appreciated contributor in the organisation.

Collegiality is to bosses, subordinates and colleagues what a sense of family is to parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents, and cousins. An appropriate synonym for collegiality is community. When people have sense of community, they belong and have pride in the group (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993:99).

According to Cunningham and Gresso (1993:100), collegiality is the means by which cultures, religions, and ethnic and gender differences are free to be expressed and understood. Cunningham and Gresso (idem) contend that collegiality results in comfort and trust, allowing each member of a group to feel safe. Members are comfortable sharing success and failures, happiness and sadness,

problems and opportunities, good and bad things, as well as hopes and fears. Collegiality promotes respect more effectively than power, authority, knowledge or experience. Honesty, trust, loyalty, commitment, caring, camaraderie, enthusiasm, support, patience, co-operation and synergy will characterise a collegial group. In a collegial environment members of an organisation are at ease and able to express themselves frankly.

Research on school effectiveness reveals that effective work culture depends on a shared ethos (the distinctive character, spirit and attitudes of a people). Collegiality can therefore produce that coherence that good schools require and vitality far beyond the reach of formalistic rules. A shared ethos provides the cohesion needed to sustain individual efforts. In a collegial group, flexible patterns of communication are used so that all members feel free to participate equally and at will. Minority opinions are encouraged and understood and appreciated (Cunningham and Gresso, 1993:100).

Bush (1995:68) postulates that collegiality accentuates that power and decision-making should be among some or all members of the organisation. Newstrom and Davis (1997:39) argue that the notion collegiality relates to a body of people having a common purpose. In a collegial environment people feel needed and useful. They also feel that managers are contributing significantly to their well being and thus making it easy for them to accept and respect their roles in the organisation. Their subordinates see managers in such a collegial environment as joint contributors rather than bosses. Hughes (1994:1) argues in favour of collegiality in that it generates co-operation, collegial working styles, a high degree of interest and loyalty in the work being undertaken.

Cunningham and Gresso (1993:104) argue that in a school environment, collegiality helps to close the gap between the management and educators. Due to collegial management/leadership new lines of communication are opened and new perspectives are gained as a result of vertical networking. In this regard, Lomax (1996:20-23) maintains that the collegial approach allows staff to be involved in learning experiences everyday. The flexibility it offers fits the current

nature of education and makes it easier to meet new demands. Thus collegiality can be a tool for educators' empowerment and professional enhancement.

Newton and Tarrant (1992:92) argue that collegiality raises the interest of the staff for increased involvement; its relevance is in the whole school development and change. Logically, this greater involvement leads to greater ownership and commitment to decision-making policy development and other change processes.

According to Dimmock (1993:6), collegiality has the potential to benefit both experienced and beginner educators by ensuring:

- better educators' perception for the classroom;
- teaching which displays greater instructional range, depth and flexibility (managing cultural diversity in schools needs this);
- educators who are more influenced by the spirit of collegiality show respect for each other;
- a more rewarding and satisfying work environment for educators.

In addition, Dimmock (1993:7) states that collegiality benefits learners in at least four ways, namely:

- when educators talk about teaching, the complex relation between their actions and the learners' learning are clarified;
- educators' shared planning and preparation of programmes make for consistency and coordination of approaches throughout the school;
- educators are more willing to engage in classroom observation of each others' lessons and to provide feedback;
- educators are more likely to train together and to train one another.

In a collegial environment interest develops in educators as they have a voice in organisational decision-making. Due to collegiality the morale of educators is boosted and interpersonal relationships are improved (Short & Greer, 1997:11).

### 2.8.2 Collegial leadership

As earlier mentioned, managing cultural diversity effectively would be facilitated by a collegial type of leadership. In this regard, Bush (1995:64) argues that a collegial leadership ensures the policy is determined within a participative framework. In addition, Bush (ibid.) contends that a collegial leader is at most “a first among equals” in an academic organisation supposedly managed by professional experts. The basic idea of collegial leader is less to command than to listen, less to hear than go gather expert judgments, less to manage than to facilitate, less to order than to persuade and negotiate. The collegial leader is not so much a “star”, standing alone but a developer of consensus among professionals who must share the burden of the decision.

The vital ingredient to collegial leadership is that it allows constructive and congenial individual and group relations. In a collegial leadership relationship, staff learns to communicate with each other and appreciate that their contribution to the overall management of the school is being valued and appreciated (Dimmock, 1993:69).

Leithwood and Steinbach (1995:51) argue in support of collegial leadership in educational institutions as this is an advanced form of democratic leadership in education. Quite clearly, this is an alternative to the headmaster’s centralization of power. Lomax (1996:19/20) maintains that collegial leadership emphasizes collegiate values and those give a school a moral direction. In collegial leadership the senior management encourages unrestricted staff participation in both the school management and its active delivery.

Terrington and Weightman (1989:227) posit that collegial leadership allows flexibility, enables educators to meet new demands (that of managing learners from diverse cultural backgrounds) much more easily, and make educators feel valued members of the school, and the senior staff serves as mentors to the beginning educators.

Having made an exposition of the type of leadership demanded as an effective mechanism in managing cultural diversity; it is now expedient to focus on collaboration as an offshoot of collegial leadership.

### **2.8.3 Collaboration as a central factor in collegial leadership**

Cunningham and Gresso (1993:44) maintain that collaboration allows individuals to develop a common understanding and language out of which a common organisational culture can emerge. Collaboration stimulates dialogue and the sharing of values, knowledge, expertise, thoughts, aspiration, visions and difficulties in a positive and supportive environment. In addition, Cunningham and Gresso (1993:108) argue that collaborative relations greatly reduce tensions and help the group to come to equitable and optional decisions leading to synergy.

Bush (1995:69) argues that educators require a measure of autonomy in the classroom but also need to collaborate in order to ensure a coherent approach to teaching and learning. Hughes (1994:27) posits that a collaborative context facilitates the development of a sustaining vision for which all are accountable. It also provides learners with positive examples of adult cooperation.

Bennett et al. (1992:61) maintain that due to the changes in the educational sphere especially since 1994 there is a growing need for a school-based collaborative development. These changes point towards a need for a collegial approach to school management as a sincere attempt to create effective schools. According to Bennett et al. (1992:67), a culture of collaboration was built on four interacting beliefs: individuals should be valued but, because they are inseparable from the group on which they are part, groups should also be fostered and valued; the most effective ways of promoting these values are through a sense of mutual security and consequent openness.

A principal, practicing collegiality would enable educators to collaborate. Such collaboration is characterised by mutual trust, mutual respect, shared work values, and ethics, co-operation and specific conversation about teaching and learning (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993:103).

The application of the principle of collaborative leadership is seen where principals structures the decision-making process in such a way that they allow appropriate staff, learner and parent participation such that a shared vision and agreed upon ways of implementing the direction, policies and programmes of the school can occur (Telford, 1997:69). Fullan (1991:84) contends that working together has a potential of raising morale and enthusiasm, opening the door to experimentation and an increased sense of efficacy. Contribution of ideas to others and the urge to seek better ideas, are the cornerstone of collaborative cultures.

Büchner (1997:41) asserts that collaborative management changes educators from being passive recipients of policy decisions given by an expert principal to active agents in the construction of such policy decision. Telford (1997:76) maintains that schools with a collaborative culture are noted for their healthy staff relationships. In a collaborative culture educators are empowered personally and collectively and acquire confidence, which enables them to respond critically to the demands of the workplace (organisation). Consequently, there is a strong correlation between collaborative leadership and effective educator development.

According to Telford (1997:76) the following are critical elements of collaboration:

- Democratic processes
- Leadership density
- Vision (direction)
- Shared goals
- Shared responsibility
- Roles
- Policy processes

The collegial factors that have been discussed so far are virtually the building blocks for school effectiveness.



## 2.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter literature review was done. Managing cultural diversity was dealt with to some detail. By so doing a conceptual understanding of the concept **managing cultural diversity** was made clear. This was done with the view to enable readers to understand succinctly what cultural diversity is all about and why the need for school managers (principals) to have the requisite skills for managing cultural diversity in schools. The underlying rationale was the fact that unless cultural diversity is managed efficiently and effectively, schools or any other organisation faced with cultural diversity cannot function effectively.

The concept diversity was explicated. Simply put, diversity does not only allude to different races, but to any aspects that differs between individuals. These aspects include race, gender, age, class, ability, size, gender preference, religion, education, and so forth (Smit & Morgan, 1996:325).

The focus of this chapter was on managing cultural diversity; hence managing an aspect of diversity was described as a planned, systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organizational environment in which all people with their similarities and differences can contribute to the strategic and competitive advantage of the organization. No one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to productivity (Thomas, 1996:10).

Valuing cultural diversity was considered crucial for any organisation to be successful. This was particularly so as the world has become a global village. Cox and Beale (1997:13) maintain that valuing cultural diversity should be regarded as an organisational resource that should be incorporated in the statements of vision and mission and values of today's organisation.

An exposition of an organisational culture was made. Apparently organisational culture is central in managing cultural diversity. It is this factor that largely influences every member of the organisation. Organisational culture represents the social glue that generates a we-feeling, thus counteracting processes of differentiation (Armstrong, 1999:161/162).

Skills on how to manage cultural conflict were given. This was important because in any organisation (school) characterised by cultural diversity conflict is inevitable. Any organisation riddled with conflict cannot function effectively. School effectiveness was dealt with as the crux of this research study was the management of cultural diversity in schools in order to render them effective educational organisations.

