CHAPTER TWO

VARIABLES CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has provided the background for the study, based on the variables contributing towards a culture of teaching and learning in three high schools in the North-West Province in the Makapanstad Area Project Office. The chapter also dealt with the statement of the problem to which answers were to be found. The investigation will firstly be undertaken through reviewing literature and other studies to provide relevant background information, as well as a framework for establishing the importance of the study (Rossman & MacGreggor, 1995:6). As Tuckman (1994:46) noted, "when you know what others have done, you are better prepared to attack the problem you have chosen to investigate with deeper insight and more complete knowledge."

A theoretical assessment conducted through a literature review will help in the selection and formation of variables to be used in this study of factors contributing towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in the three high schools in the North-West Province in the Moretele area project office. In this context, the development of variables impacting on a culture of teaching and learning was derived from the framework of Smith *et al.*, (1996), Scheerens' model (1990) and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), 2002. For example, the GDE (2002:192), during a conference in Warmbarths, stated that good leadership, good teaching by all who work in the school, and a vibrant community with learning as its focus, are believed to be factors that could promote a culture of teaching and learning in schools. On the same note, Smith, *et al.* (1996:163) argue that a culture of teaching and learning in schools is "… determined by factors in the family and immediate living environment, school related factors such as the classroom atmosphere, management, teachers and macro societal factors such as economical and political factors."

The above factors are, as this paper will argue, universal, integrated and found in any teaching and learning situation. This provides my point of departure, in presenting the impact of the following variables on the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in schools, namely teachers in the teaching and learning situation, classroom environment, teaching and learning resources, staff collaboration, teaching methods, lesson preparation and parental involvement. These factors form a framework for investigation, along with other variables, for the classrooms' physical aspects, such as "buildings, noise, lighting, ventilation, temperature, display, seating and class size" (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997:113).

However, before a detailed investigation is made into the factors above, it is imperative to give an overview of the origin of education in disadvantaged schools, as this will indicate why there is a need for the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

2.2   A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DETERIORATION OF A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS

In 1953, the Bantu Education Act was passed and implemented, leading to political instability in the country and struggles in schools. Characteristic of the above Act, according to Berkhout (1996:1-2), was racial discrimination, which included disparities in funding, for instance, the state spent 10 times more on a White child than a Black child; different curricula for whites and other racial groups; use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools; de-emphasis of English, Mathematics and Science; separate education departments for Blacks and Whites; African teachers not being permitted to criticise the government or school authorities; and a focus on vocationally and technically trained manpower. For Bunting (1994:224-227) meanwhile, injustices of the former regime included: unequal employment opportunities for those who were not White; unequal staffing resources in terms of student-teacher ratio; lack of responsiveness and democratic accountability; under-representation of women in certain professional programmes; inequitable success rates of students; and uneven access to

educational institutions. These characteristics of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (in Bunting 1994:224-227), show that the quality of education for Blacks was inferior, a claim borne out by the Department of Education (DoE) for all status reports (2002:5), when stating that "as late as 1986, the State spent nine times more on each white learner than it spent on learners in the worst-off Bantu …"

The inequalities were to lead to social and civil unrest, and as Louw (1991:15) noted, slogans such as "liberation now and education later" were began to be heard increasingly. Disruption of schools became synonymous with violence, as analysed by Fraser, Meier, Potter, Sekgobela and Poore (1996:244), in their South African study. They discovered that "the main causes of violence in schools stem from the former apartheid policies" which laid more emphasis on racial discrimination, social, ethnic conflicts and exclusions.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:11) write that "apartheid policies have left a legacy of severe disparities", leading, on a political level, to Fraser, *et al.* (1996) calling for "a New Education for Peace" and Hopkins and Stern (1996:12) for "education for liberation". Hartshorne (1992:68) meanwhile, mentions that "it is not only students who were not satisfied, the teachers were not pleased at all." As Fraser, *et al.* (1996:249) noted, "the role of teachers and principals was reduced to that of spectators" and Nxumalo (1993:58) discovered that teachers in Kwa-Mashu schools had also been dissatisfied because they believed it was the whole system of Bantu Education that was the core of all the problems facing the schools today. They feel that what is presently happening in the schools is the result of years of oppressive education.

The above arguments emphasise the unfair practice of the South African education system. There has been inequality of education between the White and Black schools in the past, and the evidence is brought forth when the political instability led to the disruptions of schools and centres for political indoctrination, leading to strikes and class boycotts, with the aim of demanding a change in the Black institutions. These disruptions led to school absenteeism and continued unrest in many disadvantaged schools where the already limited facilities, school buildings and equipment were damaged or stolen. In certain instances poor

people from the community had the opportunity to loot doors and corrugated iron sheets in order to erect shelters for their families, and all these events were caused by inferior education for Blacks and frustrations. Class boycotts thus became part of their culture of learning and continued to have an impact on the political and educational set up in South Africa up to the year 1994.

Whilst the class boycotts contributed to the successful struggle by the South African majority against racial oppression by the minority, they also had negative educational consequences for learners. The legacy of the disruption on the learning process and the teachers has impacted on the culture of teaching and learning to this day. As Fourie (1986:68) asserts: "pupils' grievances sometimes resulted in the burning of schools, books and stationary", while the Bureau for Information (1988:502) acknowledges the negative impact by adding: "17 schools were destroyed, 30 seriously damaged and 247 slightly damaged during 1985." It is further mentioned that in the same year, 250,000 out of two million black pupils were affected (Bureau for Information, 1988). This compelled the DoE to close down the seriously affected 33 schools, as it was a waste of time and resources to keep them open.

Nor did the situation improve greatly in schools which remained open. A Vista Study Manual, Education 7031 (2000:53), noted that the following were still inadequate amongst predominantly Black schools: "learning materials, teaching media, classrooms, desks, libraries, qualified teachers, limited hours for schooling and teaching methods … poor facilities adversely contribute to low standards in education, which culminate in high student drop-out and failure, shortage of qualified teachers and poor working conditions." Such conditions are not conducive to improvements in the culture of teaching and learning.

2.3   CONCEPTUALIZATION OF A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

While factors that play an important role in the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning may be either negative or positive, the manner in which a culture of teaching and learning is often viewed shows that no uniformity exists

about its actual meaning. As a starting point, I have opted for Chisholm's and Vally's (1996:2-3) definition of a culture of teaching as referring to "the bringing about of the conditions and disciplines of compulsory schooling to bear on teachers and students, regular attendance, punctuality and acceptance of authority." Similar emphasis on authority and respect is given by Pitout, Smith and Windell (1992:5), who argue that "authority and obedience are the essence of effective teaching", and Kyriacou (1989:130), for whom "mutual respect and rapport between the teacher and pupils is of fundamental importance to effective teaching."

The above authors agree that a culture of teaching and learning is built on discipline and rules laid down by both the educational authorities and the community at large. In schools where there is little acceptance of authority, irregular attendance and late-coming to school by teachers, management members and learners, a culture of teaching and learning might collapse. Teaching and learning is a continuous process and, therefore, needs competent and dedicated leaders, as well as a positive relationship between teachers and learners, delegation of roles and commitment.

However, such factors alone do not adequately clarify the concept of a culture of teaching and learning. I argue that two-way communication, planning ahead, hard working, dedication, mastery of the content of the Learning Area, participation by teachers, learners, parents and related stakeholders, are also important in reaching educational outcomes. More significantly, the term 'culture' itself is crucial, as it links closely to the wider community in which the process is taking place. This notion is summed up by Hollins (1996:2), for whome "a culture of teaching is brought about by cultural values and practices.

Exploring culture also brings forth negative and positive attributes of teachers and learners. For instance, that there are still some teachers and learners who dodge school classes all together, as evidenced by the former Gauteng Education MEC, Ignatius Jacobs (*Sowetan*, 12 February, 2000(c):22), when writing that 300 learners in the East-Rand "headed for a shebeen nearby the school, in school uniform, consuming liquor on the premises." It was also

reported in the *Sunday Times* (30 March 1997:5), that "even teachers lack professionalism, including lack of respect, sexual harassment of students, absenteeism, and drunkenness." Meintjies (1992:48) further mentions that "the national schooling situation is marked by an observable lack of interest and commitment to learning and teaching." The *City Press* (4 January, 2004:4) saw these as "schools with mal-administration, lawlessness, mismanagement, demotivation among teachers and pupils." This is supported by *City Press* (23 January, 2005:17) when writing that "residents say township schools have lost their grip on education and the culture of learning seems to have gone out of the window."

Whatever their accuracy, these news reports point to a perception of a poor culture of teaching and learning amongst the print media and, presumably, its readership. This perception is further tarnished by reports that there are still a large number of schools in the country which are characterised by a high failure rate, early school dropout, lack of discipline and low morale. As the NCES (1993:94) indicate: "in the schools, students' absenteeism and tardiness is higher than in low poverty public schools." NCES (1993:94) further states that "students arrive late or cut class, thus disrupting classes and they also interfere with lessons and with other students' opportunity to learn."

For some parents the solution is to turn their backs on the problem, and as the *City Press* (9 February, 2003:9) reported: "in their thousands, black children are fleeing to former white schools as education in black townships teeters on the brink of collapse." For those who remain, meanwhile, the low Grade 12 pass rate in certain schools also signalled this collapse of a culture of teaching and learning in 1995. This is evidenced by Strauss, *et al.* (2000:8) in table 2.1 below, of Grade 12 examination results of all high schools in Gauteng from 1995 to 2000.

TABLE 2.1:   GAUTENG EXAMINATION RESULTS: 1995-2000

	1995		1996		1997	
None wrote	79,215		69,525		71,757	
Total passes	45,940	57.99%	42,142	60.61%	40,936	51.62%
Exemption	14,893	18,80%	13,810	19.86%	11,479	16.00%
	1998		1999		2000	
None wrote	75,910		76,861		68,202	
Total passes	39,188	51.62%	42,700	55.55%	46,056	67.53%
Exemption	13,135	17.30%	12,498	16.26%	12,896	18.91%

None wrote = Learners who registered for examination, but did not write.
Exemption = Learners who passed Grade 12 examination.

It is relevant to include the Grade 12 examination results of all the South African provinces in order to give a clear picture of the decline or the improvement in the matric pass rate, thus the culture of teaching and learning. When looking at the global overall matric pass percentage from 1995 to 2001 in South Africa on table 2.2 (below), as tabulated by the DoE for all Status Report (2002:39), with the highest percentage of 61.7 in 2001, it is worth noting that the DoE is still faced with many challenges.

TABLE 2.2:   TRENDS IN THE PASS RATE (%) IN THE SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION: 1995-2001 IN SOUTH AFRICA

Area	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Eastern Cape	48.0	49.0	46.2	45.1	40.2	49.8	45.6
Free State	49.7	51.1	42.5	43.4	42.1	52.7	59.0
Gauteng	58.0	58.3	51.7	55.6	57.0	67.5	73.6
Kwa-Zulu Natal	69.3	61.8	53.7	50.3	50.7	57.2	62.8
Mpumalanga	38.2	47.4	46.0	52.7	48.3	53.2	46.9
Northern Cape	74.5	74.1	63.8	65.4	64.3	71.2	84.2
Limpopo	37.8	38.8	31.9	35.2	37.5	51.4	59.5
North West	66.3	69.6	50.0	54.6	52.1	58.3	62.5
Western Cape	82.7	80.2	76.2	79.0	78.8	80.6	82.7
South Africa	53.4	54.0	47.4	49.3	48.9	57.9	61.7

TABLE 2.3: **COMPARISON OF EXAMINATION RESULTS: 2000-2003 (PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL)**

Province	Year	Candidates	Total Passes	%	Pass with Endorsement	%	Total Failures	%
Eastern Cape	2000	74 563	37 118	50	5 332	7	37 387	50
	2001	63 204	28 825	46	4 133	7	34 350	54
	2002	64 257	33 286	52	5 189	8	30 968	48
	2003	62 457	37 468	60	5 953	10	24 985	40
Free State	2000	29 477	15 538	53	3 697	13	13 924	47
	2001	26 637	15 703	59	3 853	15	9 453	41
	2002	25 156	17 777	71	4 733	19	7 379	29
	2003	23 656	18 916	80	5 398	23	4 740	20
Gauteng	2000	68 202	46 056	68	12 896	19	22 140	32
	2001	64 339	47 368	74	13 697	21	16 970	26
	2002	65 260	50 941	78	14 172	22	14 271	22
	2003	68 285	55 621	81	15 922	23	12 664	19
KwaZulu-Natal	2000	96 423	55 128	57	15 655	16	41 264	43
	2001	93 340	58 620	63	15 697	17	34 718	37
	2002	97 489	68 973	71	17 636	18	28 514	29
	2003	97 367	75 077	77	19 887	21	22 133	23
Limpopo	2000	95 191	48 886	51	11 100	12	46 132	48
	2001	82 246	48 971	60	10 994	13	33 271	41
	2002	71 444	49 644	70	12 517	18	21 800	31
	2003	68 903	48 219	70	13 021	19	20 684	30
Mpumalanga	2000	41 115	21 694	53	4 762	12	19 062	47
	2001	38 693	18 136	47	3 701	10	20 555	53
	2002	39 843	22 222	56	4 317	11	17 621	44
	2003	39 032	22 700	58	4 840	12	16 330	42
North West	2000	40 098	23 366	58	5 057	13	16 731	42
	2001	36 734	22 963	63	5 279	14	13 770	38
	2002	36 348	24 637	68	5 285	15	11 708	32
	2003	35 567	25 055	71	5 439	15	10 505	30
Northern Cape	2000	7 054	5 019	71	892	13	2 035	29
	2001	6 619	5 571	84	975	15	1 048	16
	2002	5 907	5 309	90	1 081	18	598	10
	2003	6 250	5 667	91	1 227	20	582	9
Western Cape	2000	37 818	30 489	81	9 235	24	7 329	19

Province	Year	Candidates	Total Passes	%	Pass with Endorsement	%	Total Failures	%
	2001	37 559	31 049	83	9 378	25	6 510	17
	2002	37 117	32 985	87	10 118	27	5 132	14
	2003	38 750	33 769	87	10 323	27	4 981	13
National	2000	489 941	283 294	58	68 626	14	206 004	42
	2001	449 371	277 206	62	67 707	15	172 126	38
	2002	443 821	305 774	69	75 048	17	137 991	31
	2003	440 267	322 492	73	82 010	19	117 604	27

Candidates awaiting results are excluded in the calculation of the pass and failure rates.

The data exclude pending irregularities. Source: Department of Education, 2003.

[Source: EDUSOURCE DATA NEWS No. 43/May 2004]

TABLE 2.4   **A SUMMARY OF COMPARISON OF NATIONAL EXAMINATION GRADE 12 RESULTS EXCLUDING MPUMALANGA PROVINCE** (Speech of the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor on 29 December 2004)

Province	Results
Eastern Cape	53.5%
Free State	78.6%
Gauteng	76.8%
KwaZulu-Natal	74.0%
Limpopo	70.6%
North-West	64.9%
Northern Cape	83.4%
Western Cape	85.0%

When analysing the pass percentage of the Grade 12 results in the above provinces, North-West and Eastern Cape are seen to be falling below the pass rate benchmark of 70%, a concern which needs the employment of intervention strategies in order to understand and know which focus areas need to be improved in order to enhance the quality of education in schools.

Strauss, *et al*. (2000:7) add "out of 489.941 candidates who wrote Grade 12 examination in 2000, only 214,668 passed without exemption." It is further mentioned by Strauss, *et al*. (2000:7) that "for the year 2000, the total number of passes with exemption was 68,626 (14.0%)." Even though the Grade 12 results

are low, these young learners take a few years before re-entering or proceeding with the education system at high levels. The interpretation of the above is that some learners might have disappeared because of poverty or because of lack of motivation of pursuing their studies, and also the high unemployment rate and/or HIV/AIDS.

To add to the above statistics in table 2.2 and table 2.3, the recent matric pass rate of 2003 rose by 24.4% from 1999, as mentioned by the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal (in *Sowetan*, 5 January, 2004:3). This rise brought criticisms from the *City Press* (4 January 2004:4), *Pretoria News* (5 January 2004:1), and *Sunday World* (4 January 2004:4), for example:

- Schools with a reputation for good passes are not presenting enough candidates for university endorsements.
- Some learners were forced to take subjects on standard grade.
- Some learners were forced to register with Adult Basic Education and Training.
- Tertiary institutions have repeatedly complained about mediocre students with good matric marks, and this is evidenced by the University of Cape Town, in particular after conducting a study where more pupils achieved A and B aggregates in 2001 than in 1997, but that more first year students were struggling academically. Naledi Pandor, the new Minister of Education, support this statement by mentioning that "even though the demographics have changed in the formerly white universities, black students are still struggling to complete their studies (*City Press*, 26 September 2004:6).
- The number of pupils writing matric had declined e.g. out of the 804,150 pupils in Grade 10 in 2001, only 440,267 full-time candidates sat for the 2003 Grade 12 (matric) exams. This was alleged that "weak pupils had been held back to boost schools' pass rate." This is also a concern with South African higher education institutions as stated that the Department of Education aims to increase the participation rate of blacks and women in higher education of the 20-40 year cohort to 20% within the next 10 to 15 years (Higher Education Quality Committee, 2003:52).

- The quality of matric results was at an all-time low.
- In *Sunday Sun* (26 September, 2004:2) an Umalusi qualifications authority report found that "too many matriculants take subjects on the standard grade." This report supports what was echoed in *Sunday World* (4 January 2004:4) when stating that "some learners were forced to take subjects on standard grade."

Contrary to what happened in 2004, it was stated in the *City Press* (2 January 2005:9) that "the number of those who obtained university exemptions decreased from 19.2% a year ago to 18.7% in South Africa, excluding Mpumalanga matric candidates where 38 high schools are still under investigation of examination fraud." The DoE (1997:2) stated that "the rate of cheating during examinations has escalated in South Africa during recent years, matric examination papers are stolen year after year." There are clear indications here of a decline in the culture of teaching and learning.

Since there are concerns regarding the high matric pass rate, the culture of teaching and learning in high schools needs to be intensively improved in order to improve both the quality and quantity of the education system, and to help the higher education institutions receive better prepared and motivated students for tertiary education programmes. The *Sowetan* (24 March, 2004:8) adds that "South Africa will no longer produce any more second class matriculants when the distinction between higher grade and lower grade subjects is eliminated in 2006." This means that in 2006, the further education and training curriculum will be implemented at Grade 12 level, eliminating the discrepancy between Standard grade and Higher grade, and thus setting common standards.

Regarding the analysis of the overall pass rate of learners with exemption in the above table 2.1, it is evident that the quality of education in Gauteng schools is still very low, because the percentage is below 50, and in 2001 most of the schools in South Africa performed below the pass rate benchmark of 70%.

The figures in table 2.1 support the claim that the culture of teaching and learning is a serious concern in high schools, because even in the year 2000,

Government allocated Rl,2 billion in an attempt to restore a culture of teaching and learning in part of South African affected schools (Deacon & Parker, 1999:23). The SA Institute of Race Relations was quoted in the *Sowetan* (3 November, 2004:6) that "fewer pupils are passing matric, grades are lower and enrolment in Grade 12 had dropped by 12% between 1991 and 2003." It becomes clear that the above discussion denotes that not only punctuality, planning and teaching play a role in the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning, but also the routine work performed by the learners, teachers, parents and stakeholders at large.

In support of this argument, the DoE (2002:3) put forward the idea of "the notion of accountability." This implies that active participation by learners, teachers and parents in schools is important and can, to a certain extent, help in the restoration of a culture of teaching and learning. The South African Schools' Act, Act No. 84 (1996:31), emphasises the idea of active participation, by stating that "every parent must see to it that every learner for whom he/she is responsible attends a school from the first day of the year until the last school day." The *Sowetan* (12 February, 2000(b):7) is in line with this view by further adding that "classes should begin on the reopening day to promote effective teaching and learning from the first day." The *Pretoria News* (16 January, 2002:10), mentioned that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) suggested that gates in certain East-Rand schools should be closed during school hours in order to reduce the poor attendance by the learners after school break. Most learners do not return to school after break, therefore through this type of discipline, their attendance might improve. This idea of closing gates during school hours is also supported by the South African Schools' Act, Act No. 84 (1996:59).

The above views from different authors, researchers and newspapers revolve around the same concern that is, calling teachers and learners to be dedicated to the schoolwork. The DoE (2002:2), following a World Education forum Conference in Dakar on the 26-28 April 2000, adopted the following guidelines as a framework for action for achieving education goals:

- Expansion of quality early childhood education and development;

- increasing universal access to primary basic education,

- improvement in learning achievement, enhancement of the education of girls and women,

- reduction of adult illiteracy,

- putting in place HIV/AIDS education programme,

- improving management and governance,

- increasing budgetary allocation to education; and

- institutionalising the assessment and monitoring functions of the education for all.

To sum up, in order to restore a culture of teaching and learning, the most important element to be considered is constructive discipline, meaning that where there is a return to self-discipline and its acceptance, by both learners, teachers and other stakeholders, education will come into its own as a foundation for the future of the country.

2.4   THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING SITUATION

A conception of teaching is provided by Houlihan (1988:67), as "a vital aspect, the critical process and the process of assisting pupils to learn." Teaching can be seen as an activity of facilitating the process of learning by providing the desired information, skills and knowledge acquisition to the learner. In light of this, this section examines the teachers' role within the broader teaching and learning process.

Various authors have emphasised this role as crucial to the entire educational process, Cuban (2003:6) for instance, believing that "for creating more good schools, the role of the teacher is important." Meanwhile, Fraser and Gestwicki (2000:45) write that the role of the teacher is "to form a circle of relationships with parents and with the children to form a mutual community of learners among all protagonists."

The position of the teacher in the process is changing from one of dispenser of knowledge from a position of complete authority, to one of facilitator of the construction of knowledge by the learners themselves. As Pondoursky, Monroe and Watson (2004:3) argue: "teachers' roles are important in the learning process, as learning is a labour intensive process and teachers mediate this process."

Indeed, teachers play various roles in the teaching and learning process, from controlling their classes, to being flexible in managing them, being dedicated and well-prepared for every class activity, and providing motivation for their learners. Education of learners in any formal setting is in the hands of such teachers. The task is to attain fulfilment in the aim of formative education, namely the guidance of the child to lifelong learning and adulthood, so that critical and specific outcomes should be achieved. The *Government Gazette* (2000:9-14) lists seven integrated roles appropriate for any teaching and learning situation: teachers as learning mediators; interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials; leaders, administrators, managers, scholars; researchers and lifelong learners; community, citizenship and pastoral role; assessors; and learning area / subject / discipline / phase specialists.

Teachers should therefore be continual learners and be well organised for their lessons, in order to make their learners enjoy and love the subject content being taught, because a planned lesson improves the quality of teaching and learning, and decreases problems such as restlessness, truancy, absent-mindedness, high failure rate and drop-out. Teachers should also try to create a conducive atmosphere in their classrooms which can enable learners to freely form positive relationship and participate in the lessons with ease. This is supported by Johnson (1992:325): "(w)hen taking professional learning back to the classroom, a full creation of classroom environment is important so that students would enjoy learning." Sharp and Cowie (1998:133) write that: the teacher's role is to establish a strong pastoral system within the school, one which involve all staff in the development of student social and emotional welfare and enable students to feel overtly valued. This value can only be actualised when teachers themselves experience the educational process in which they participate as positive.

In their lesson presentation, methods used should be varied, taking into account the uniqueness of learners in order to absorb their interest and attention throughout the lesson phases and establishing a culture of teaching and learning.

Clift and Waxman (1985:5) argue that, "a warm climate encourages pupils to focus on academic work." Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1997:12) indicate that "a teacher is effective when teaching takes place in a school where his knowledge and skills meet pupils in the classroom and accepts the responsibility for the creation of progress and results of the teaching and learning situation." Ndaba (1975:45) lends support to this view when saying that "no education system can succeed without competent teachers" while Malie (1973:23) states that "the teacher must prepare thoroughly and be always a learner to the extent that his own capacity for self-discovery is increased as he instructs others." Trumbull, Rothstein-Fish, Greenfield and Quiroz (2001:142) are of the opinion that "teachers' role began to shift from teacher-subject to collaborator and teacher-researcher." Knowles (2000:287) states that "the behaviour of the teacher probably influences the character of the learning climate more than any other single factor." This according to Marland (1993:34) means that "a classroom of one's own … where you can create an atmosphere that reflects your character." A teacher can use the classroom to influence learners to learn effectively. The *Sowetan* (13 October, 2000:3) is in support of the above opinion: "if teachers are not willing to deliver their services to the learners, the gates are opened for them to vacate the premises."

It is only through teachers' professional knowledge and personal character that a culture of teaching and learning can be maintained, because through these two factors, teachers are inwardly influenced in such a way that they successfully sum up situations in the classrooms, as well as making sound decisions with regard to a variety of matters in the classroom. Teachers should have that sense of caring, respect, trust, responsibility and friendship, because learners learn best when taught by teachers who treat them equally, without discrimination and favouritism. These views of my framework have in large part been informed by the following authors Flecknoe (2002:272) adds to the preceding views by stating that "teachers should know their learners' names in order to learn and cater for

their needs." Tauber (1995:228) and Flecknoe (2002) believe that "by learning the learners' names as quickly as possible, the teacher could enhance classroom management." McCloud (2005:47) adds that "when teachers greet students by name and chat with them respectfully, students feel the same and comfortable … even loved." Belvel and Jordan (2003:36) write that "there is a high correlation between a caring teacher-student relationship, academic achievement and cooperative student behaviour." This will promote learners' growth in self-concept, thus a positive culture of teaching and learning will be experienced. Sharp and Cowie (1998:133) write that "the teachers' role is to establish a strong pastoral system within the school." The Education Africa Forum (2003:7) state that "teachers have a number of personal issues that need to be addressed by the Department of Education such as payment of their salaries, benefit queries like housing subsidies and medical insurances etc." If these conditions are not addressed, I am of the opinion that they could affect how well learning and teaching occurs in a classroom, as these negative experiences discourage teachers from performing their roles up to the maximum.

On the basis of the above, it can be stated that teachers play important roles in the teaching and learning situation, where some have a much more limited repertoire than others and their role behaviour will be determined by the nature of their personality, experiences and the teaching situation in which they find themselves. If a teacher is unable to match his/her style to the situation, it is likely that s/he will be ineffective and unhappy, thus leading to a boring subject matter resulting in an eroded culture of teaching and learning.

Teachers are the main intermediaries between the real world and the ideal world, who lay the foundation for learners. Their task is regarded as that of preparing learners for proper adulthood. Brooks and Goldstein (2004:16) note that it is from adults that "learners gather strength" and with whom they identify. Teachers should be role models and also supportive. Such preparation can only succeed through teachers' effectiveness in teaching, and it takes place where teachers, according to Davis (1983:278):

> *are able to carry the following responsibilities: prepare and plan his*
> *lesson well, create a conducive atmosphere, use child-centred approach,*

> *reinforce desired behaviour, accept responsibility, maintain a warm and caring climate, respect, control and treat pupils equally, possesses a cheerful disposition, become a strong leader, be friendly and be emotionally stable.*

These responsibilities play an important role in the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning, and will, therefore, be reappearing frequently throughout this research.

Fontana (1986:43) writes that "the teacher who is fair, relaxed, patient and having a sense of humour as well as self-control, is seen as an effective teacher." Such a teacher has enough time for pupils, and gives everyone an equal opportunity, help and support in learning. This is seen in one of the high schools in Mpumalanga, as reported in a newspaper, where teachers and learners were sacrificing their holidays aiming at finishing the syllabus early so that they could have enough time to revise the work they had been doing during the year before the final examinations. On this story, the *Sowetan* (13 October, 2000:3) reported that "some pupils took time off to frolic on the beach during the two weeks of September holidays while matric learners and teachers at one high school in Mpumalanga used the period to catch up with the remaining schoolwork before the coming examinations." This shows that there are teachers who are dedicated to their work and who regard learners as their children and want to see them achieving better outcomes in life.

A teacher who has a sense of humour, as mentioned above, bridges the gap between him/herself and a class, and that helps learners to see teachers as friends and allies rather than as members of an opposing species. Fontana (1986:64) notes that "pupils are much more likely to co-operate with friends than with opponents thus reducing the number of incidents that can lead to class control problems." Clift and Waxman (1985:5) see a good teacher as one who strives to know each pupil's name, needs, weaknesses, strengths, show interest in pupils' work, accepts responsibility and maintain a warm atmosphere. On the other hand, Chisholm and Vally (1996:13) see bad teachers as characterised by

dodging classes, coming unprepared for school, abusing alcohol and lacking knowledge of their subject.

I support the criteria above, noting that, during my teaching years in one of the disadvantaged high schools, some teachers resorted to drinking alcohol during working hours, absenting themselves regularly without valid reasons, missing classes, coming late for school, failing to finish the syllabus and upgrading their own qualifications at the expense of learners, thus impacting negatively on a culture of teaching and learning. This implies that teachers are faced with multiple complex changes within the teaching and learning situation that impact on their school work.

Brophy (1987:18), meanwhile, sees an effective teacher as one "who possesses a cheerful disposition with good mental health and emotional security." Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1997:88) see the teacher, "as the conductor", who controls and influences all the other elements in the classroom in order to create a certain type of classroom climate. In this context, a teacher can, therefore, be seen as a parent who is full of love, appreciation and moral support.

The above qualities play an important role in establishing a culture teaching and learning, because in a research study of teachers' behaviour, Amos (1999:5) discovers that "commitment, co-ordination, consideration, affirming, informing, proficiency, punctuality, self-confidence and respect promote emotional and cognitive growth." This means that the teacher is viewed as someone who is charged with the complex responsibility of helping the young person to develop towards adulthood. In other words, s/he has to be a learner always, as mentioned before, in order to increase the capacity for self-discovery when instructing others in the fulfilment of establishing a culture of teaching and learning. This implies that a teacher should first and foremost be academically and educationally trained in such a way that the child entrusted to the education process will understand the subject matter well. Luthuli (1982:97) terms the above approach "in-depth-training." Such teachers come to have a passion about their calling and commitment. To support the idea above, a strategy is already in existence, aiming at upgrading the qualifications of those deemed to be under-qualified for

teaching, and that is "the introduction of a new qualification, the National Professional Diploma in Education" (Robinson, 2002:293).

Educationists regard a teacher as an adult, intellectual, moral and a political being. In other words, a teacher is perceived as the only person in the formal situation who lays the foundation of learners and in turn learners succeed through the teachers' effectiveness in teaching. A teacher is, therefore, expected to use the knowledge and experience available to the benefit of the learners, because education is a process of development of knowledge and skills that can be used to produce high quality goods and service in such a way as to enable the development of culture, society and economy. Based on the above argument, a teacher has to be, therefore, a learner always as mentioned above. Mwamwenda (1990:22) sums up the above statement by stating that "a teacher who is well-prepared exudes a sense of self-confidence and his pupils will perceive him as well-articulated by business." In other words, teachers have a role to play, because it is through them that a society changes or transforms. I, therefore, focus on the discussion of the first role, that is "learning mediator", and further research is anticipated to be conducted on the remaining ones.

It is evident from the above discussion that the teacher seems to play an important part in establishing a culture of teaching and learning, because s/he is the only person in the classroom with the attention of learners, who is able to establish a culture of teaching and learning. Through developing a positive interpersonal relationship between teachers and learners, stable emotional growth and warm social climate, with a high work output of learners' abilities, will be achieved. Teachers should, therefore, in all respect see to it that they exert an indirect influence on the teaching and learning situation, by accepting the feeling tone of their learners through praising and rewarding their positive behaviour in the classroom. In this manner, teachers will play an important role in establishing a culture of teaching and learning, because successful teachers work from the beginning of the year to build a positive classroom environment, characterised by warmth, understanding and a sense of shared meaning. Working together also means sharing, and this plays a vital role in shaping the school's quality and character, thus establishing a culture of teaching and learning where learners'

achievements will increase. Erasmus and Van der Westhuizen (1996:235) support the above views when stating that "principals should encourage teamwork among teachers so that they take part in the day-to-day decisions made in the school." This implies that collaborative approach should be encouraged in order to allow teachers to be better equipped to deal with promotion of schoolwork ethics.

2.4.1 THE TEACHER AS LEARNING MEDIATOR

According to a Vista Study Manual (2000:4), the concept "Learning mediator" is one who will "mediate", and form connecting links between something, or be the medium for bringing about a result. Mediation, according to MacDonald (2000:240), comprises "connotations of related terms such as moderate, negotiate, intervene, compromise, reconcile and settle." Feuerstein (1980:17) sees mediation as "the interactional process between the developing child and an experienced, intentional, cultural mediator who interposes himself by selecting, focussing and feeding back environmental experiences according to goals, to produce in the child the appropriate learning sets." In other words, mediation can be viewed as a critical term in schools, and has positive connotations, as it usually refers to the successful mastery of tasks jointly done by the teacher and the learners. Mediation, in this regard, therefore plays an important role in the current changing education system. According to the *Government Gazettte* (2000:13), "a learning mediator, therefore, has to mediate learning in a manner, which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, even including those with learning disabilities." Kozulin and Presseisen (1995:68) assert that "the process of mediation involves structuring activities to enable the learner to gradually gain conscious control over the real-life activities." This means that a teacher as a mediator for learning should show a sound knowledge of a learning area in which s/he specialises, as well as strategies and resources relevant to the content. S/he should also create a learning environment that is conducive to all and recognise the individual differences of other learners. According to my point of view, mediation is not standing in isolation for effective teaching and learning in schools, rather it is integrating with other roles, as postulated in the *Government Gazette* (2000:13) in the previous section.

To elaborate on the above views, it should be mentioned that the roles of teachers are very important and are integrated. For example, a teacher who specialises in a learning area is assumed to have acquired suitable qualifications, which, according to the *Government Gazette* (2000:13) develop competencies. This implies that teachers should be lifelong learners at all times in order to be competent, as this will help in the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning in schools. The teacher should, therefore, be an expert in the learning area he/she will be offering, i.e. knowledge of methods, resources and theories relevant to learners' stages of development, in order to successfully achieve the expected outcomes. Piaget (in Schwebel & Raph, 1973:212), supports the above idea by emphasising that "the teacher's role is not that of transmitting ready-made knowledge to children, but his function is to help the child construct his own knowledge by guiding his experiences." The constructivist school of development psychology supports the above role by viewing cognitive abilities as a product of the combination of the maturing of the central nervous system and one's exposure to early meaningful mediated learning experiences.

According to Du Toit (1993:117), "parents, parent substitutes and teachers are the necessary agents to provide the necessary mediation for the child." This in turn confirms the importance of adequate communication and intervention between the child and the world for optimum development, especially cognitive development. In other words, cognitive development, which is one of the main aspects to be achieved in a formal educational setting, has its origin in the positive interaction among teachers, experts and learners. I, therefore, feel that fulfilment of this role is necessary for the competent schoolwork, thus the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning. Does it mean that teachers in the North West Province also fulfil this role effectively in bringing about a culture of teaching and learning, with an aim of shaping the country's future, adopting a positive attitude, and creating the climate and conditions which will in turn bring about successful outcomes?

In attempting to answer this question, I am of the opinion that teachers should try by all means to select a variety of learning content in accordance with the learners' stages of development, with an aim of mediating the learning process,

make a clear connection between a current learning experience and the previous one. In other words, they should recognise learners' prior learning and entry situation, and ask questions based on "why?" and "how?" rather than informative "what?" questions.

Based on the above role, I am convinced that education of learners at school is solely in the hands of teachers. The level of learners' achievement depends largely on the teachers' teaching, therefore, the quality of teaching is important. Steyn (1999:9) supports this opinion by claiming that "pupils' achievement is considered to be the acid test of effective teaching." Smit, Naidoo and Le Roux (1996:4), also indicate that "the culture of teaching is on attitude, commitment, preparedness and determination the teachers and learners have towards teaching."

Research conducted in Gauteng schools by Masitsa (1995:79) adds to the above view by showing that "the positive attitude that teachers have towards teaching and willingness to teach can lead to a healthy and desirable culture of teaching." Amos (1999:10), also in his research study of teachers' behaviour, contends that "learners' emotional and cognitive growth is promoted by teachers' commitment, respect and being academically trained." It is further elaborated by Phelan and Reynolds (1996:14) that "pupils are more likely to view their school experiences favourably and see themselves as successful learners when taught by a caring and friendly teacher." The above idea is strengthened by Tauber (1995:225) when believing that "teachers should be friendly … but not to be the learners' friends." Stronge (1991:43) adds that "the teacher is seen as the prime player in defining schools' mission and establishing related goals." Former President Nelson Mandela, reported in the *Sunday Times* (30 March, 1997:5), called on teachers to "show commitment to education by being punctual and behaving professionally."

From the above discussion, I have discovered that researchers support each other in the description of the role of teachers in the teaching and learning situation, and am, therefore, of the opinion that for effective teaching to take place, teachers should be well prepared, committed, qualified and organised, as

these would make learners feel secure and eager to learn, thus promoting a culture of teaching and learning, because teachers will have that confidence in improving the quality of teaching based on this scenario. Teachers' roles are multidimensional, and there is a positive relationship between their prominent role in teaching and learning and the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning.

There are still certain factors, such as teacher/pupil ratio, where the ratio is above the norm of 1:35, and school atmosphere that are not yet adequately addressed. For example, according to Chisholm and Vally (1996:19), "teacher/ pupil ratio in Gauteng province in 1996 was 1:35 in certain schools." This shows that there is still a high imbalance between teacher/pupil ratio in certain schools, especially in rural areas, where learners are taught even under the trees, thus hampering a culture of teaching and learning in schools. There are still such instances in certain schools where teachers are few, overloaded with work and often teaching learning areas they are not specialising in. In view of the above, the need for employing more teachers is urgent, in order to improve the quality of teaching, and it should also be noted that the Government is trying hard to curb this problem, even though it will not be overnight. Grey (1998:5) reported that "teachers admit partly the responsibility for the collapse of a culture of teaching, saying that the conditions they are forced to work in – and the government's failure to address some of these conditions – is largely the reason for failure of both students and teachers." This can be seen through a large number of poverty-stricken communities in most rural schools, where many parents are unemployed and all their money is spent on survival. The above views are in contrast with what is happening in the United States where, according to NCES (1993:94), "the average class size was similar across all levels of schools at a ratio of 1:40." This means that in the United States, learners receive more individual attention from the teachers than those in most of the schools in South Africa.

The above discussion is related to the conditions mentioned in the previous paragraphs and seems to be the stepping stone towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning that will strengthen the relationship between the

teachers' role in the teaching situation and the establishment of a culture of teaching. Therefore, good teachers can manage the disciplinary problems easily, even though there might be exceptional cases that lead to an establishment of a culture of teaching and learning. However, it should be noted that there are instances where teachers are attempting to improve their qualifications and this might interfere with the restoration of a culture of teaching and learning.

In addition to the above discussion, I argue that in order to establish a culture of teaching and learning among teachers and learners, one has to work hard and attempt to direct activities of learners towards the achievement of the set goal, even if s/he lacks some basic resources for teaching and learning. From this statement, it can be deduced that the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning has got little to do with teachers' luck or fortune, and more to do with knowledge, expertise, creativity and dedication. Based on the above, it is clear that there is the relationship between the role of teachers in the teaching situation and the establishment of a culture of teaching. Stronge (1991:43) maintains that "the teacher is seen as the prime player in defining school's mission and establishing related goals", a point that reveals that teachers should at all times attempt to share ideas with other staff members, learners and parents in the community. This will build a harmonious working relationship which will be discussed in the next section, in which I will also discuss staff collaboration, as it strengthens and supports consultation and sharing of ideas, thus improving a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

2.4.2   STAFF COLLABORATION

Staff collaboration in schools is of importance for the establishment of a culture of teaching because it deals with co-operation and unity at school and in the community at large, thus promoting growth. Staff collaboration means teamwork and, without it, very little of significance can be achieved. As indicated by Dowling (1994:14): "a joint school-family approach focuses on the addressing of any problem in a dual context." Fullan (2001:5) notes that "leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups."

Stronge (1991:43) elaborates that "Staff collaboration and its value are fostered by communication." This is in line with Heckman (1993:129), when stating that "instead of emphasising the quiet solitary performance, a greater emphasis should be on interactive communications linked to group problems and opinions." Ruggiero (1988:19) notes that "co-operative efforts result in effective instruction" while Chrisman (2005:17) mentions that "working together … create a continual improvement cycle for instruction. From www.thejournal.com (2005:12), it is stated that "collaborative interpersonal and communication skills are highly valued in today's workplace." Brudrett and Terrell (2004:44) note that working with the subject team as a whole has been shown to be more effective in leading to improvement." Lewis and Allan (2005:132) write that "cooperative working includes sharing resources, exchanging information." Olson (2005:40) also mentions that "teachers work together to realign how they… a subject … before the next level."

The authors above are emphasising working together, which shows that staff collaboration is important in the school setting. Teachers should, in this context, be paid class visits on a weekly or monthly basis by management members, in order to assess their teaching and control their work, and also strengthen collaboration among the teachers, learners and management. This technique was once practised in the North West Province, before the democratic changes in South Africa, and yielded good results on the side of learners. It would seem the improved technique would soon be implemented in schools, as advocated by the *Sowetan* (10 May, 2002:13): "to ensure the maintenance of good standards, the solution is to introduce full external examinations for Grades 6, 9, 10 to 12." This can, to a certain extent, encourage hard work both in learners and teachers, thus improving quality in the teaching and learning situation.

In most of the provinces, a new intervention strategy of 'whole school evaluation', unpopular with many teachers, has been adopted. Schools are randomly evaluated by neutral experienced teachers, of which I was one. The results of this strategy are promising to improve the culture of teaching and learning because schools which were evaluated previously have improved in their academic performance. Other intervention strategies, e.g. one under the banner

of the 'Tirisano programme', may be helping to improve the culture of teaching and learning, even though not used countrywide. Amongst others are the Joint Education Trust (JET), Monitoring System, HIV/AIDS interventions, life skills programmes, Dinaledi (Star) projects for Mathematics and Science and Technology, Integrated Nutrition Programme and Adult Education Interventions.

In this context I tend to support the opinions above, by seeing collaboration and co-operation of staff members as a general framework for conceptualising problems and, through this, a culture of teaching and learning can be actualised. The information above reveals that there is correlation between staff collaboration in a teaching and learning situation, and a culture of teaching and learning. It needs to be emphasised once more that teamwork and togetherness in performing school activities enhance teachers' motivation, which would yield good relationship among staff members. Without consultative communication, quality teaching and learning might not be achieved.

It can be concluded that, in order to improve a culture of teaching and learning in schools, teachers should employ supportive culture of teaching, such as workshops, mentoring programs, management support, shared values about the importance of teaching, expanded views of scholarship, teacher development programs or staff development, greater administrative commitment to teaching, and in-service training. It should also be borne in mind that extraneous variables, such as drinking alcohol during school hours, smoking dagga and committing sexual offences, further damage the culture of teaching and learning.

2.4.3   LEARNERS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING SITUATION

In view of the discussion above, I am of the opinion that learners must not be seen as passive partners in the educational setting. They should take part in the decision making of the school matters where ideas such as code of conduct, meetings and the quality of education are discussed. This will, to a certain extend, make learners feel accepted, thus helping to improve a culture of teaching and learning, and they will be motivated to work hard. Learners should

therefore be members of the Learner Representative Council (LRC) and Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA).

If learners are in such councils or associations they can discuss matters pertaining to the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning with management and passing over the results and recommendations to all other learners. Contrary to the above statement, most learners, especially in the disadvantaged schools, are demotivated and lack morale, failing even to take part in any of learners' organisations. One reason might be that the language used in teaching and learning inhibits their ability to express themselves well and they sometimes misunderstand questions in the examination. This has a negative impact on a culture of teaching and learning, as it leads to a high failure rate. The very same learners also lack self-discipline, knowledge and skills of how to study and how to write examinations, and they resort to cheating. This idea is a continuous negative culture of learning and is evidenced even in the year 2005, when it was reported in the *City Press* (2 January, 2005:9) that "Mpumalanga matric candidates … are still under investigation of examination fraud." This cheating process is a symptom of a decline in the culture of teaching and learning in schools, and I see it as problematic to the teaching fraternity.

In modern society, learners in most high schools often identify themselves with the world outside the school. Some researchers in the field of teaching and learning even go as far as describing modern learners as "the sceptical generation" (Van der Stoep & Louw, 1984:161). This indicates that learners are sceptical about the established order and actively attempt to replace this order with their own views. They are often closely related to the general circumstances of life, which create widespread social crises, radical realistic views as well as anti-traditional opinions. Learners see schools as irrelevant to their life as prospective adults, forgetting that they are still guided towards adulthood by adults. That teachers are aware of this state of affair does not mean that they as teachers are entitled to surrender their responsibility. They should continue re-interpreting and rededicating their contributions to teaching and learning, meaning that the difficult circumstances of learners' situatedness should not exonerate them from their education responsibilities concerning the personal

needs of their learners and the society's problems. Teachers should attempt as much as possible to acquaint themselves with the learners, in spheres outside the formal school situation, and should try to determine the relationship between the school and other social institutions, such as churches, sporting associations, political parties and the media in order to promote excellent education.

Teachers should, therefore, not only orientate the learners to establish the relationship with reality, but also lead them to choose valuable values and norms of the society they are living in. If this were actualised, then teachers would be seen as effective managers in their classrooms, thus restoring a culture of teaching and learning. Pacheco (1996:163) adds to the above idea by stating that, "a culture of learning is determined by factors in the immediate environment." This is also supported by the White Paper no 2. of 1996, which indicates that "a new structure of school organisation should create the conditions for developing a coherent integrated, flexible national education system which redress the equitable use of public resources." If this can be implemented, there will be hope for the enhancement of a culture of teaching and learning. There should be that partnership in the learning situation where teachers and learners are participating actively in order to achieve the anticipated outcomes.

2.4.4   SOCIO ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF LEARNERS

Poverty is another factor that might contribute towards the decline of a culture of teaching and learning in schools. Poverty is a major concern in the country of late, especially in the disadvantaged areas where people do not even have money to pay for basic resources like electricity and water. This is supported by Pretorius and Machet (2004:129), who write that "it is not easy to educate children from poor environments." In such home environments, learners fail to study and do homework, for example as there is no light. Chisholm and Vally (1996:41) by mention that "pupils bring problems with them to school on a daily basis because they lack basic necessities such as food, parental love and, in some cases, even shelter – some children live alone in shacks."

The United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census (1995:210) recorded that "students from low socio-economic status families are more likely to experience school failure than those from higher socio-economic status families." This substantiated the claim of Dalin (1993:149) that "research over many years has shown that the socio-economic factors e.g. home, the peer group etc. have a major influence on student learning." Borich (1996:65) states that:

> *students from middle and upper class, through greater access to books, magazines, social networks and cultural events develop their reading and speaking abilities more rapidly than in disadvantaged schools, called low poverty public schools, there is a serious problem of a lack of parental involvement than their counterparts, i.e. high poverty public schools (disadvantaged) schools.*

This type of behaviour also happens in schools in South Africa where disadvantaged poor schools experience low parental involvement. The authors have similar views of how the culture of teaching and learning is deteriorating due to poor family conditions.

It can, therefore, be deduced that in such conditions, a culture of teaching and learning in schools will decline. When learners are hungry, this tends to make them perform poorly in their academic endeavours, as they lack concentration and motivation. Such learners tend to turn into artful school dodgers, drug dealers, thieves and street children. Even in the middle-class families, parents fail to help and monitor their children with schoolwork as they are busy with business matters. The lack of parental support has a negative impact on the teaching and learning situation. As Le Roux (1993:37) writes, "for many African families, the struggle to keep the family ties is hindered by economic and social factors." This reinforces the notion that the economic status of a family of learners has a direct bearing on school effectiveness, destroying or building a culture of teaching and learning.

In contrast to the above, I see both the poor and middle-class families having a negative impact on the culture of teaching and learning. Therefore, both families'

problems can be alleviated by dedicated teachers who do supervision of schoolwork on behalf of parents after school hours. It can also be stated that after-school centres should be built in every high school, as it is the place where teachers help learners with schoolwork and other related school matters. All stakeholders could be encouraged to commit themselves and work as a team with an aim of improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools.

2.5   TEACHING IN POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The quality of school education is to a large extent dependent on the quality of teachers, i.e. their professional skills and good moral character, as well as on physical facilities such as classrooms, staff-rooms, laboratories and libraries. For effective teaching and learning to take place, learners and teachers should be accommodated in a homely classroom; that is one that is characterised by a warm environment, which is attractive, pleasant with enough fresh air and adequate lighting. Chisholm and Vally (1996:13) note that "the morale of learners and teachers alike is deeply influenced by the physical environment." Pretorius, *et al*. (2004:128) write that "the learning environment within the African context in general is framed by poverty and disadvantage, and characterised by inadequate physical resources and overcrowding." Kniker and Naylor (1986:118) share the above view when stating that, "instruction will be better in a modern well-equipped school than in an old poorly furnished facility."

These acknowledgments of the importance of the physical environment of the school are important to my view of the culture of teaching and learning as they contribute to good student behaviour by encouraging them to feel ownership in the classroom, and by organising the physical space to minimise disruptions. Kyriacou's (1989:130) noting of the importance of environment in the classroom incorporates an element of interactivity between the learners: "classroom climate deals with how teachers and pupils feel about each other and the learning activities in hand." Such interaction can operate on several levels, as Hansen (2001:83) contends, when a "conducive environment spurs participants to formulate, cultivate, and to heed ideas, interpretations, knowledge, emotion, insight, questions, and more." This, to Fraser (1994:1), made the classroom "a

focal point for student interpersonal educational development", that is, a learning environment as the determinant variable that contributes towards the culture of teaching and learning. De Corte, *et al.* (1999:310) made the comment that "there is a clear trend towards creating learning environments in which learners do not receive ready-made, directly consumable knowledge, but have to create their own knowledge."

This widely held belief that "successful learning and development is dependent on the environment in which it takes place" (Donald *et al.,* 1997:82) reinforces my argument that a peaceful environment will promote competences in learners' thinking and emotional stability. Knowles (2000:287) maintains that "furniture and equipment should be comfortable", whilst Mabogoane (2005:6) points to positive educational advantages that will arise: "better resourced schools have an advantage in how they implement the intended curriculum compared with those that are poorly resourced." Dryden and Fraser (1996:1) draw on their research evidence to show that "students' perceptions of their learning environments are significantly associated with their school environment." From these observations, it is evident that learners tend to feel more comfortable in an atmosphere that is friendly, with the existence of a spirit of mutuality, acceptance, respect and support between teachers and learners. This type of environment can yield freedom of expression without fear of ridicule, thus enhancing a culture of teaching and learning. Teachers should therefore attempt to create a more relaxed atmosphere for learners with an aim of establishing a positive environment, as this could enhance a culture of teaching and learning. As Harlen and Osborne (1985:266) argue, "the improvement of classroom environment is influenced by linking the learners' learning to the factors such as materials, activities, encouragement and interaction in the classroom, which influence learning." In this context, De Corte, *et al.* (1999:310) add that the "learning environment is created under the perspective of conversation and participation." This means that in a learning environment, learners should converse about the content investigated and should also argue, thus participating in the learning process.

Based on the above explanation, it can be acknowledged that the concept "teaching in powerful learning environment" has received considerable attention and it is evident that teaching and learning do not take place in the dark where there is a teacher on one hand and learners on the other. It only takes place where a climate of mutual concern and respect prevails with the inventive and innovative teacher as a prominent figure. An inventive and innovative teacher is one who changes with situations and always adopts a democratic approach in his/her teaching-learning situation, in which s/he aims to facilitate rather than to impose his/her personality on learners and force them to carry out his/her wishes.

Furthermore, a teacher takes the necessary steps to ascertain learners' needs and organise the work of the class in such a way that each learner is made to feel that s/he is making a useful contribution to her/his own as well as the group's well being. A teacher is able to generate an atmosphere of activity and co-operation as stated in the previous paragraph by Amos (1999:5), when maintaining that "commitment and co-operation promote emotional and cognitive growth." Through commitment, a culture of teaching and learning is maintained because, where there is a dictator, an atmosphere of frustration is created with the ignorance of learners' needs, resulting in the erosion of a culture of learning and teaching. Ferron (1986) maintains that "if one adopts a truly democratic approach in the classroom, disciplinary problems will be minimal or non-existent", whilst for Nathan (1995:113), "communicating in the classroom is about kindling the pupils' imagination by the way that you present ideas, your voice, tone and facial expression." Teachers should avail themselves and make frequent contacts with learners as this will build up their confidence and make them accept learners for what they are. Such teachers show concern for all learners and convey appreciation, sincerity and interest in their learners' ideas and experience. This will, therefore, build up a strong positive culture of learning and teaching in classrooms.

I believe that the more time teachers spend per individual learner, the better the learners will perform academically. This is particularly true if variables, such as smaller classes, well-prepared teachers and the use of more recent books, are taken into consideration, even though these factors are still a problem to

disadvantaged schools. This problem is evidenced by the School Register of Needs Survey (1997:172), which found that "in the Northern Province (Limpopo) alone there is a shortage 13,670 classrooms, 41% of the existing buildings are in weak conditions." In 2000, the School Register of Needs Survey conducted another survey to update the data and it was discovered that "the number of learners to each classroom improved nationally between 1996 and 2000 from 43 to 38, with this ratio falling in every province except Mpumalanga, where it rose from 45 to 48 learners per classroom" (Education Africa Forum, 2003:140). There is an improvement of facilities nationally but the progress is slow and imbalanced. This unbalancing of distribution of facilities is supported by the Education Africa Forum (2003:134), which states that "the impact of the government's policy on school funding norms revealed that inequality between schools remains". Mwamwenda stated in the *Sunday Times* (2 January, 2005:18) that "the Department of Education has set aside R600 million as an incentive for science and math teachers wiling to teach in under resourced schools." The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, noted that "English teachers who opt to teach in under-resourced schools will receive hefty salary increases from next year, i.e. 2006" (*Sunday Times*, 2 January 2005:13). The Minister further stated that the reason for such incentives was the drop in the matric pass rate in English from 97% the previous year (2003), to 92.1% the following year (2004). Based on this, I am of the opinion that second language learning seems to be a barrier to learning and teaching in some of the disadvantaged schools, thus contributing to a poor culture of teaching and learning.

2.6   TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Resources refer to equipment, facilities and structures that make it possible or easier for the school to perform its functions. Resources include apparatus, furniture, laboratories, references and classrooms, and are essential for the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning. As Mwamwenda (1990:225) notes in his local research, "pupils in developing countries perform below those in developed countries because of inadequate and poor facilities." This means that schools cannot function effectively without resources such as laboratories, libraries, toilets, books and computers. The Department of Education has a

responsibility to supply adequate resources available to all schools, in order to enhance a culture of teaching and learning, and where possible schools should also improvise by, for example, increasingly volunteer to be involved in Saturday schools, where teachers will put more effort into improving the culture of teaching and learning, perhaps by fundraising which will help in paying for some facilities that the Department of Education is still failing to fund.

For maintaining a culture of teaching and learning, learners should, therefore, be accommodated in decent ventilated spacious and electrified classrooms, as these may create a situation which might enhance a culture of teaching and learning. To support this statement, Cross (1999:4) states that "children cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in a place where they are not safe." Campbell (1991:37) argues that "inadequate or poor physical facilities have a negative effect on learners because poor equipment, space restrictions and lack of personnel are all obstacles to hands-on-education in the classroom." Czerniewics, Murray and Probyn (2000:99) write that "the average former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools are under-resourced." Mabogoane (2005:6) states that "the differences on how learners learn in the classroom are not only a function of differing teaching abilities but also of resources available for teaching." Colglough, Al-Samarrai, Rose and Tembon (2003:111) argue that "the availability of adequate learning materials is an extremely important condition for the achievement of good-quality education." A report published by the Palestinian Journal in 1994 is in line with what is mentioned above, for example that a "boys' school in Dei-al Balah has only two functioning taps for over 1,000 pupils, and no lavatories in Nusseirat, even though it accommodates over 900 boys."

In the South African context, this argument is further strengthened by Education Africa Forum (2003:98) when reporting that "there is no running water in the Ndukende area, the area is arid, especially in winter. Fortunately the school was supplied in July 2001 with two water tanks, however, the school needs at least three more to see it through the winter months." Czerniewics, *et al*. (2000:99) noted that "the average former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools are under-resourced and teacher-centred." Again in their research paper,

Czerniewics, *et al.* (2000:99) discovered that "52% of schools have adequate supply of textbooks", which raises the question of the remaining 48%. Does this percentage reflect a poor culture of teaching and learning? Robinson (2002:290) adds to the above statistics by stating that, out of 4,155 schools in the Northern Province, 78% were without electricity and almost half (49%) were without water. Three-quarters of the schools in the Eastern Cape were without electricity and 33% without water. Altogether 5,528 Eastern Cape schools, 93%, did not have the use of a library and 94% did not have a science laboratory. A quarter of the Eastern Cape Province's state schools did not have toilets for pupils. Thousands of teachers were found to be without appropriate qualifications.

All the authors above emphasise the importance of the teaching and learning resources, therefore, it is evident that for school chores and activities to run smoothly and progress, learners should have enough textbooks, stationary and computers, in order to get valuable information on a particular learning area and also to revise for the preparation of various assessments. Where resources are inadequate, especially in most rural areas, a culture of teaching and learning may decline because of lack of references, and the only source of information received will be that of teachers which are not enough for learners.

In such conditions, how can learners be critical thinkers, researchers and explorers, as advocated by outcomes-based education (OBE)? How can they be expected to achieve both specific and critical outcomes? OBE is a good approach for life long learning, where knowledge is the foundation against which the skills and competencies are performed, yet it still raises problems in disadvantaged schools, especially in the rural areas where learners do not even know what a television, radio, video or computer is. In such areas, learners and teachers are faced with the problems of both insufficient resources and absence of the implementation of OBE. The inadequate teaching and learning resources therefore have an impact on teaching and learning, contributing to a decline in a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

I, therefore, feel that whatever information is received from teachers should be supplemented by other resources even though there are certain communities

where stealing and burglary is so rife that the supply of teaching and learning resources will be just a waste of government's funds.

Based on the above explanation, it is clear that there is a positive relationship between teaching, learning resources and the establishment of a strong culture of teaching and learning. For this reason, the former MEC of Gauteng Education, Ignatius Jacobs, said on the television that "10 million Rand will be allocated to Heidelberg schools", with an aim of improving the quality of education (SABC, 16 January, 2002).

The money to be allocated to some of those schools is not enough, but it does not mean that other schools should relax and wait for the time when the Government will be ready. Instead, such schools should look for strategies to generate more funds. However, the fewer the resources the schools have, the more intensive they should be used as a means of self-help. Where possible, school fees should also be used to buy some of the basic school facilities. It should also be noted that there are some of the prominent members of Parliament, scientists and researchers, who studied under undesirable and unconducive conditions, without electricity and facilities, who nevertheless managed to achieve their desired goals. Learners can still do well without teaching and learning resources, but that should not be seen as a stepping-stone towards the enhancement of a culture of teaching and learning. The above idea is in contrast with the view of Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda (1987:225) that "pupils in developing countries perform below those in developed countries because of inadequate and poor facilities." Du Toit (1996:10) noted: "black pupils drop out from school because of over-crowded classrooms, poor teaching and underqualified teachers."

The views of the above authors who support those resources in schools are of importance in the teaching and learning situation, and I therefore note a positive relationship between resources and a strong culture of teaching and learning. It can be assumed that a culture of teaching and learning can be established where there is better equipment and adequate facilities, with more classrooms in which there will be individual attention and optimum interaction with the learners. It is

through a manageable teacher/learner ratio that a positive teacher/learner relationship is formed. If the opposite occurs, i.e. where classrooms are small and dirty, with no co-operation amongst staff members, a negative culture of teaching and learning will be the result. This section can be summed up by assuming that where there is poorly managed classroom with overcrowding, poor ventilation, discomfort, heavy teaching loads of teachers and undesirable atmosphere where teachers are rigid, drunk and improperly dressed, there will be an erosion of a culture of teaching and learning.

Nxumalo (1993:59) confirms that "a number of teachers have developed negative attitudes over the years and have low morale because of severe material deprivation in schools." This is supported by *Daily* Sun (13 February, 2004:7) when reporting that "some of the rural schools in the Vuwani region have still not received their exercise books and textbooks, and some pupils are borrowing exercise books from students in other schools who received books as early as January … [and that] in Vuwani area some schools were writing their final exams last year without Venda handbooks." Wood, Nicholson and Findley (1985:67) add that, "the difficulties these teachers were operating; under high teacher-pupil ratio, low morale, examination dominated curriculum, scarcity of resources and so forth, were grim circumstances." Bacharach and Mundell (1995:223) note that "work conditions affect teachers' attendance … teacher morale and job satis-faction." These stressful circumstances and conditions experienced by teachers cripple effective teaching and learning and contribute towards the collapse of culture of teaching and learning. Based on the above opinion, how can outcomes-based education effectively be implemented in these conditions? Much of the approach is discussed in the next section. Jacobson (1996:213) feels that "the classrooms should be attractive, comfortable with proper arrangement of seating as emphasised by the outcomes-based education approach." I support Jacobson (1996:213) by emphasising that the classrooms should be clean, tidy, with comfortable furniture, enough fresh air, variation in flower arrangement and book exhibits. There should be a certain degree of calm and certainty from day-to-day for learners and teachers in order to establish a positive culture of teaching and learning in schools.

When investigating the above, the question arises as to whether such facilities are available in most disadvantaged schools, because there are still those learners in remote areas who are taught under the trees. This evidence suggests that the promise of redistribution of resources has not yet materialised. Vakalisa (2000:24) notes that: "Schools in the townships and rural areas where learners are blacks, conditions still remain very much the same as they were in the apartheid era." Therefore, the lack of learning and teaching resources is still a problem, even though in certain areas, financially able parents solve this problem by opting for what Vakalisa (2000:24) calls "voluntary-bussing", where learners are transported on daily basis to better learning opportunities in pursuit of better education. To curb this problem globally, I am of the opinion that the five-year plan of Tirisano, meaning "working together to improve education in schools" (*Sunday Times*, 2002:2), be speeded up in order to restore the culture of teaching and learning in schools, failing which the quality of education in disadvantaged schools will remain a problem, and thus an extreme challenge to South Africans.

2.7   CLASSROOM TEACHING WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO LESSON PREPARATION AND TEACHING METHODS

According to Preedy (1993:13), an inviting classroom is characterised by work-centred environment and challenging lessons with high level of pupil industry. This implies that a work-centred environment is characterised by task-oriented lessons where learners are eager to commence tasks. Teachers who prepare their lessons thoroughly are able to use time profitably while those who are unprepared bring confusion and retard progress at school. In this context, I am of the opinion that facilitative classroom climates, coupled with teachers who respond empathically to their learners, who treat their learners equally and who present lessons in an able manner, enhance learners' achievement, thus creating a culture of teaching and learning. Teachers must prepare their lessons thoroughly, enter the classroom having already laid the foundation of conduciveness, and make it clear what the outcomes of their lessons are, so that learners can approach them in a way of achieving such outcomes.

The work given to learners should always suit their level of development, as postulated by Mwamwenda (1995:101), when writing that "teachers should use as concrete orientated approach in the concrete operational stage in order to promote formal operations", since the child's thinking is tied to concrete operations. In other words, tasks given to learners should be sequenced into levels of complexity, ranging from close-ended questions to open-ended questions. One should start from lower-order to higher-order when asking questions, and this will make teaching effective and interesting to learners. Teachers should try to guard against too easy and too difficult work, as this will be considered a waste of time and a frustrating exercise, respectively. This can only be done by a teacher who prepares his or her work thoroughly.

I see the proper preparation of teachers' lessons being to a certain extent that which may lead to a positive culture of teaching and learning, because it is through it that a sense of self-confidence, control, interest as well as active participation in the lesson is experienced. In addition to this, teachers should give learners an ample time to engage in-group work, role-play, conduct experiments and research projects, undertake field trips, ask questions during lesson presentation, correct their errors, and give immediate feedback on daily, weekly and monthly work. Feedback should be seen as an important measure of assessment because it can help learners know what they have learnt and what they still have to learn, thus motivating them to work harder. For effective teaching and learning to take place, teachers should, therefore, encourage learners to speak and practice listening skills, because it is through these that learners' problems in certain areas of subject-matter are discovered. Davies and Galloway (1996:51) argue that listening to children is a fundamental component of good teaching. What follows is based on some of the teaching methods employed in the classroom.

2.7.1 THE SELECTION AND APPLICATION OF TEACHING STRATEGIES, APPROACHES AND METHODS

The most important task of the teacher is to impart knowledge and to facilitate the development of knowledge, values and skills to learners. This is done by following a well-planned procedure step-by-step, from the beginning to the end of the lesson. In these lessons, such skills as questioning, communication, stimulus variation, entry situation, mediation, clarifying concepts and illustration with example should be points of departure, even if there are still other relevant skills not mentioned, and they should be on the level of learners' development.

To encourage learning, opportunities have to be created by the teachers so that learners can actively participate in teaching and learning activities. This can only be actualised through a well-planned lesson, with clear teaching methods and specific outcomes, as mentioned in the previous sections. The method selected should therefore allow maximum participation by the learners, as seen in the new approach of outcomes-based education, which has brought a major paradigm shift in the South African education. According to Malan (1997:22), "outcomes-based education offers an alternative to current fragmented education in which teachers are creative, responsible, accountable and professional – a challenge which South Africa will just have to overcome." On the basis of this opinion, all participative methods are important, because learners are accompanied and assisted by teachers to seek solutions, solve problems, find answers, wander, manipulate and explore information at their disposal. Jacobs and Gawe (1996:209) see participative methods as methods, "leading to productive interaction between the teacher and the pupil." Learners can actively and systematically be assisted to acquire skills needed to create and organise the knowledge available to them.

The previous sections concluded that the roles of teachers play an important part in facilitating teaching and learning at schools. Roles serve as a cornerstone for effective teaching and learning, because teachers, who are displaying such roles, seem to be effective in their teaching methods since they will be able to mediate, interpret, lead, research and specialise in their learning area. Such teachers will

also be able to use skills such as questioning, communication, variations and illustrations with ease in every lesson presentation.

It is very important to encourage and expose learners to opportunities of fieldwork, exploration, experimentation and research, as mentioned previously, so that they can actively participate in teaching and learning. Within this context, it should be noted that there are those schools, especially in the disadvantaged areas, where teachers are unable to implement any of the teaching methods because of lack of facilities listed above. In such instances, an itinerant approach should be used, consisting of qualified skilled teachers who, with their possessed knowledge, will be able to link methods and strategies to the relevant learning content of the learning area. For example, in Natural Sciences a teacher will apply an investigation approach, encouraging learners to be explorative and constructive in their thinking.

An intensive pre-service and in-service training programme on outcomes-based education could also be applied in all the schools, as has been done in certain districts in Gauteng schools since 2000. In the years 2002, 2003 and 2005, the OBE training was too refined, with the involvement of more Higher Education Institutions (HEIS), such as the University of Witwatersrand, Vista University, the University of South Africa (Unisa) and the University of Johannesburg (then the Rand Afrikaans University {RAU}). Through this training, every teacher will be empowered with greater competence and effectiveness, thus enhancing a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

Malan (1997:22) also states that outcomes-based education is seen as "a new approach that offers an alternative to current fragmented education in which teachers are creative, responsible, accountable and professional, a challenge which South Africa will just have to overcome." I am also in line with the idea and views of participative methods, e.g. group work, experiments, project and research, as important methods of enhancing a culture of teaching and learning, because learners seem to be accompanied and assisted by teachers when seeking solutions, solving problems, finding answers, wandering, manipulating and exploring information at their disposal. Jacobs and Gawe (1996:209) state

that "participative methods lead to productive interaction between the teacher and the pupil." Learners can actively and systematically be assisted to acquire the skills needed to create and organise the knowledge available to them.

In the light of the above discussion, it is worth mentioning that teachers are responsible for the selection and use of methods which will enable learners to be innovative members of the changing society. It can, therefore, be stated that there is a relationship between teaching methods and the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning. Gone are the days where learners used to be passive listeners and where teachers were expected to do most of the learners' schoolwork. However, it should not be forgotten that in some of the disadvantaged schools, the following old practices, postulated by Taylor and Vinjevold (1999:143), are the point of departure in their teaching and learning situations: Lessons are dominated by teachers-talk, learners sit in groups but work as individuals and learners do little reading and writing.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of teachers to select and use methods which will enhance the development of perceptual, motor, affective, cognitive and social skills of learners so that they can be able to become active innovative members of society and be lifelong learners. Teachers should always try to select participative methods which they feel will help to reveal both mediation strategies and the learning content effectively. These methods are, among others: discussion, question and answer, project, simulation games, role play, problem solving and experimentation. These seven methods of teaching and learning have been seen as leading to meaningful learning, since the learners' perception and mastery of content is improved through direct observation and active involvement in the teaching and learning situation, where a teacher is just a facilitator. Based on the above it is necessary to state that the strategy of constructivism plays an important role.

2.7.1.1 Constructivism as underpinning paradigm of learning in an outcomes-based environment

According to De Corte (1990:3), "constructivism is an approach of creating learning environment that facilitates autonomous and ground knowledge construction." I found it worth including it in this study as it integrates with outcomes-based education (OBE), based as it is on notions of learner-centred-ness and outcomes, i.e. what the learner becomes and understands. In this context, focus is on construction and transfer of knowledge embedded in the culture of any teaching and learning.

Constructivism is therefore not just listening and writing, but active learning, with a variety or experiences being used to encourage learners to understand, reflect, apply and restructure phenomena. Ducret (2001:165) states that "constructivism deals with the creation of concepts and reflection", while Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy and Muth (2003:245) see constructivism as "where students are encouraged to develop a capacity for critical thinking and reflection." Kruger *et al* (2002:73) write that "a central idea of knowledge construction is that learners develop their own understanding that makes sense to them, they do not merely receive knowledge from outside source. Coutts (1996:183) adds some weight to the ideas above by further saying that "constructivist classroom is seen as a place where pupils are involved in sharing, invention, evaluation, negotiation, explanation and social interaction." This is evidenced in Liben (1987:20) when stating that "skilled performers do not do exactly what they have been taught, instead they construct new procedural forms in the course of practicing", that is in recognition of connections that can be made by mental operations. The argument above is acknowledged by Coutts (1996:177), when elaborating that active learning is for the learner, not active performing by the teacher. Ideas are constructed or are made meaningful when children integrate them into existing structures of knowledge, learning is a social process, children are not passive recipients of transferred knowledge and children "see" what they understand.

These factors are further acknowledged by Hagar (http://hagar.up.ac.za), who states that "constructivist learning is learner-centred." The learner's active

participation in the process is essential, not only in evaluation but also in explanation and invention. This results in no longer seeing a teacher as a primary source of knowledge, but as a guider and facilitator. Therefore, social constructivism is a point of departure in the teaching and learning situation as it yields a social product. People's beliefs are human constructs, from the meaningful experience, what Robinson (2001:104) refers to as: "a way to change and improve society." To Prawat and Floden (1994:37) "knowledge is a social product", while Gruender (1996:2) emphasises that "knowledge and meanings are constructed by the interplay of many minds and contexts." This implies that there should be shared meanings between learners, teachers and parents. For example, if learners are given a task in technology as learning area on the topic *'construct an ideal bridge for the school premise'*, they would show how it differs from the ordinary existing bridges. Learners are expected to construct an innovative bridge from the knowledge acquired, thus thinking critically and creatively. In other words, in order to enhance a culture of teaching and learning in schools, learners should be given tasks and opportunities to think and construct new solutions. If this strategy can be encouraged and applied in schools, there is a likelihood that they will become critical thinkers, problem solvers and physicists, thus achieving the critical outcomes as postulated in the outcomes-based education. Leonard and Gerace (1996:80) also applied a constructivist approach in the University of Massachusetts, and it yielded good results in Physics. Piaget (in Ducret, 2001:154) acknowledges that "the child can be helped in construction of the numerical series by the acquisition of spoken numeration imposed by the social circle well before, as a rule, spontaneous operative constructions make complete assimilation possible." If such supports are given to learners, I am convinced that a culture of teaching and learning will be improved.

This constructivist view of learning and teaching is summed up by Bradbury (2000:72), when stating that "The task for mediation is to represent tasks to students in such a way that their epistemic character which is usually implicit or covert is heightened or made salient …" In terms of this approach the focus of the problem which must be overcome, is neither the learner nor the teacher. Rather, our attention should be focused on innovation within the curriculum and

the mediated interaction which occurs between learner and task. The teaching-learning process needs to be constructed in such a way as to modify and change, not just the content of what the learner knows, but rather, to create conditions for restructuring and reorganising information that will produce a new of cognising reality.

The above discussion, I believe, denotes that learners should be given a chance to interact with other learners, teachers and stakeholders, and their performance be continually reassessed in order to enable their learning to be improved. Learners who have improved their learning in this manner are able to construct their own meanings and are independent in monitoring their progress in learning. Johnston (1992:37) notes that such learners are "able to reflect metacognitively and metaconstructively", with Anderson and Landreth (1998:6) dividing them into "incremental students than normative ones." Based on the above discussion, I have observed that the different researchers favour constructivism in the teaching and learning situation, and therefore teachers should perceive themselves as active agents who are imaginative, creative and innovative. Such teachers will in turn be seen as being reflective and this will make learners learn, thus enhancing the culture of teaching and learning. This is supported by Steyn, Du Plessis and De Klerk (1998:90), when encouraging the method of teaching to move from "a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach." Kinsler sums up the above statement by emphasising that constructivism is "the methodological approach that provides students with opportunities to construct their own knowledge." An emphasis is placed on learning in the context of the real world and there is no longer the direct impartation of information. Gone are the days where learners were passive and where teachers were expected to do 95% of the work. Teachers, inspectors, principals, parents and learners should co-operate in order to attain a quality education.

Constructivism therefore encompasses diverse truths and ideologies of individual people, and such ideologies are constructed from what they perceive in life. The construction of people's knowledge depends on what happens in the surrounding world. This acknowledges the importance of a conducive atmosphere from which people can be motivated to develop critical thinking, thus enhancing a culture of

teaching and learning. However, the question arises as to whether learners in disadvantaged schools can construct their knowledge effectively from the uninviting environment in which they find themselves, as this could inhibit them from actively building new knowledge, thus ending up being passive, leading towards a collapse in a culture of teaching and learning. I oppose seeing learners as passive individuals in the classroom, arguing instead that teachers should give presentations and demonstrations that encourage learners to think about their predetermined ideas. Teachers should guide and allow active participation by learners in the classroom, as this enhances co-operative learning and diverse responses. Teachers should first be familiar with the learners' eco-systems and their experiences, as these can enable them to provide guidance to learners.

2.8   MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A discussion of the management of schools will be followed by one of classroom management, the two being closely connected.

In every school, the principal is the manager responsible for the control of it. In other words, the principal is an accountable manager for everything at school. In order to be a successful manager in such an environment, an atmosphere of trust and respect should prevail between the principal, heads of department, teachers, learners and the community at large, as mentioned in the previous sections. The principal should emphasise teamwork, co-operation, warm and two-way communication, as well as consultation among staff members in order to enhance the culture of teaching and learning. This is supported by the research of Stiggins and Conklin (1992:31) that argued "shared decision making amongst teachers at school should prevail." Hargreaves (1989:55) contends that "the success of any educational institution depends on the quality of the leadership and the dedication of the staff working towards a shared vision in a happy environment characterised by teamwork and pride." Greer and Plunkett (2000:9) arrive at the point that "for teamwork to succeed in a school, the principal must know his responsibilities to sub-ordinates", and further see principals as "team leaders and team facilitators." Masitsa (1995:386) points out that "where decision making is shared, teachers of such schools feel highly motivated to do their

work." This opinion can be further elaborated by saying that a principal who has necessary qualities will be the one to assist the school to be effective. It is therefore important to note that it is rare to find a good school without an effective principal.

The above discussion can be summed up in the framework below, adapted from Bellamy, *et al*. (2003:244), which emphasises that the school influences students learning through four of the accomplishments clustered as: defining learning goals, providing instruction, maintaining climate for students, providing support services to students learning, and strengthening the school's partnership with families and the community. The following diagram, by Bellamy, *et al*. (2003:244), clarifies these above-mentioned points:
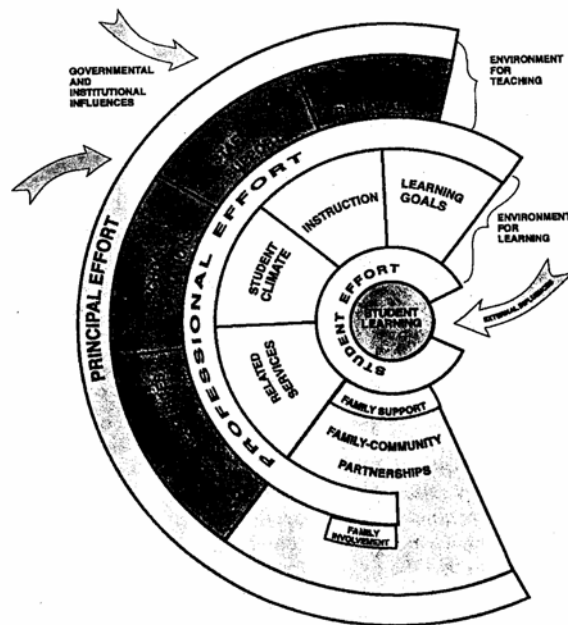

FIGURE 2.1: THE FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS (adapted from Bellamy, 1999; copyright G.T. Bellamy, 2003)

2.8.1 THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN SCHOOLS

The success of every school in most cases depends on the effective management approach that is based on the flexibility, with an aim of adapting to any environmental changes. It is therefore the responsibility of the entire staff

members to work together with the management team of the school in order to successfully increase the culture of teaching and learning in schools. Chrisman (2005:17) mentions that "improved student achievement seems to be the product of how well a school operates…" The Department of Education (2000:20) support the above statement by stating that "it is the duty of the school management teams (SMTs) to provide training for teachers regarding teaching and learning. Staff collaboration and teamwork should be emphasised as they promote co-operation, trust and commitment in schools, as stated previously in this research. Where there is sharing of decisions, according to my opinion, teachers are able to enrich their own ideas and learners in turn are likely to increase their co-operation towards the achievement of the culture of teaching and learning in schools. Masitsa (1995:386) states that "teachers of such schools feel good about themselves and are often highly motivated to do their work." If teachers and school management teams are always in conflict, with a negative relationship, there is that likelihood that a culture of teaching and learning will be affected negatively. It should always be borne in mind that even if the principal of the school delegates certain tasks to the SMTs and teachers, he/she is still bearing the accountability for everything happening in the school.

Both the authors above are in support of consultative process and sharing of ideas. I believe principals who share decisions with teachers enable them to feel good about themselves and in turn learners are also more likely to be motivated to learn, thus co-operation that might lead towards the establishment of the culture of teaching and learning.

2.8.2 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom management is a challenge for all teachers because it is in it that teachers have to establish dynamics that can lead to effective teaching and learning to take place. I speak of "dynamics" because there is no specific approach to follow in order to be effective in managing the classroom. Teachers who are good managers in most cases experience fewer behavioural problems in the classrooms. Mabogoane (2005:6) writes that "school characteristics such as leadership, disciplined staff and learner expectations contribute to the quality of

learning." A good teacher is able to manage classroom problems with ease as he is disciplined, thus using classroom time for teaching efficiently. Such teachers with good classroom management are full of positive attitudes towards learners, are able to tolerate, motivate, impart knowledge, communicate, dedicate and hold learners' interest in any school setting, thus a better culture of teaching and learning. A classroom managed by such teachers possessing characteristics mentioned above could lead to cooperation and positive attitudes towards learning and teaching in schools, because learners will be eager to learn, live up to the expectations of teachers, thus achieving better results in their schoolwork. On the same note, principals as managers should also create a positive school climate which will allow teachers and learners to be productive, thus enhancing a culture of teaching and learning in schools. In other words, if the principal's management is effective, effective teaching and learning is expected in most cases to be the outcomes.

Lemmer (2000:14) argues that "teachers who have positive feelings about their students build positive student-teacher relationships." Good social relationships in schools lead to effective teaching, thus an establishment of a culture of teaching and learning. I, therefore, deduce that this section emphasises that the nature of classroom practices has a powerful influence on learners' achievement in class, thus a positive culture of teaching and learning because learners will have a reason to commit themselves to teaching, learning and academic process. But it should not be forgotten that in most of the disadvantaged schools, classroom management is still a problem because classroom overcrowding is still experienced where such classes are characterised by a lack of individualisation of learners, thus a decline in a culture of teaching and learning. Schools in such areas still have poor infrastructures such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and other resources. As Chisholm, *et al.* (1996:13) write: "the morale of learners and teachers is influenced by the physical environment." The physical environment in this context refers to the classroom. Kersey and Malley (2005:58) add that "creating positive school environment in which every child feels special … will help all children to achieve success and emerge as healthy, contributing members of society."

From the above it can be argued that a classroom which is mismanaged and unorganised could lead to poor teaching and learning situation because working conditions of both teachers and learners are unconducive to learning, and discouraging them to perform duties effectively. I further feel that the classroom needs to be arranged in a way that it meets basic needs such as adequate space, enough lighting and ventilation in order to bring about effective teaching and learning. In other words, learners and teachers have to be active in the classroom if maximum teaching and learning is to occur, thus improving a culture of teaching and learning. Active participation by both teachers and learners can only take place if the social environment, e.g. group dynamics (gender, race and social interaction of learners) and instructing, environments. What is taught and how is taught are both positive.

2.9 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT / SUPPORT

In the past, disadvantaged parents did not play a role in the education of their children as compared to the advantaged parents. This idea is evidenced by the South African Schools Act, Section 16(2) (1996:23), which came into effect in January 1997, placing increasing emphasis on creating schools which are responsible to those who are linked to them from outside. The statement means that parents and external professionals were not very often involved in the work of the institutions, nor even considered an integral part of community. Today things have changed; parental involvement in education has been almost a catchword as official documents stress the role of parents in the new educational world of the 1990's. This opinion is supported by Docking (in Morgan, 1996:11) when pointing that "parental involvement means parents and teachers are working in a close partnership for the benefit of the child." Takanishi (1993:111) writes that "parental involvement in the school forms a critical factor in a learner's educational success in all the school grades." Kinsler (2001:43) recognises the importance of parental involvement when saying that "when parents are involved with their children's learning … they do better in schools." Borich (1996:83) writes that "when parents and teachers become partners, not only can student achievement increase but also parents learn about you and your school." This had also been observed by Squelch (1994:92): "nowadays parents are regarded

as equal partners in education and are beginning to play an increasingly role in the school."

To Ryna (1994:43-44), "parents are now being invited to take part in assessing their children's progress at school." Dekker and Lemmer (1993:169) state that "parents should provide reading materials which are suitable to the developmental stage of their children." Teachers and parents realise that their partnership can make an important contribution to the creation of a culture of teaching and learning at school. According to the *Sowetan* (12 February, 2000(a):3), KwaZulu-Natal women school governors held their first conference with the aim of identifying the role they can play in restoring the culture of learning and teaching in schools. It was further stated that parents could play their role by supporting the school through discussing their children's problems with teachers and also trying to avoid intense clashes. Teachers, on the other hand, should also try to be approachable, positive, calm, allow parents to express their feelings, address parents by their names, never talk down to parents and explain the details of the problem to parents. Amundson (1990:12) notes that "parental involvement means showing interest in the child's learning and holding high expectations for him." Parental involvement is the important sign towards the child's academic success and also has a positive impact, thus enhancing a culture of teaching and learning. Literature on teaching culture portrays that a positive culture of teaching and learning in schools is characterised by laying an emphasis on "mobilising all stakeholders in education in order to turn our schools from dysfunctional states into centres of excellence" (Mushwana, 2000:1).

In addition to the above views, the European Network of Health Promoting Schools (1995:17) reported that "involvement of parents in the functioning of the school holds great benefit for the school, the students, the parents and their mutual relationships." Lemmer (2000:61) writes: "good school, family and community partnership lead to improved academic learner achievement, and school attendance." For Chavkin (1993:2): "parental involvement in education helped produce increases in student attendance, decreases the dropout rate, positive parent-child communication … and improvement of student behaviour." Delgado-Gaitan (1991:21) highlight that "parents need to be involved in the

schooling of their children in a pro-active manner." If this role is accomplished, there is that likelihood that learners will reach the ultimate success of schooling. This is supported by NCES (1995:95) in the United States when reporting that "parents' education level and involvement is strongly associated with students' achievements." Ferguson (2000:79) writes that "caring adults who demonstrate respect, tolerance and empathy are a positive source of strength to students." In other words, illiterate parents, mostly in the disadvantaged communities, are unable to check their children's books to see if the schoolwork is done and this manifest a lack of intellectual stimulation from home, thus contributing towards the decline in a culture of teaching and learning.

Faskett (1992:10) reported that "the coming of comprehensive schools has encouraged schools to become associated more closely with their community, i.e. to involve parents in the work of the institution." These ideas are in line with the South African Schools' Act, Section 23(2) (1996:24) which states that "parents form part of the membership of the governing body." Olson (2005:45) continues states that "parent support is a key element in increasing student achievement throughout the school." Parents are now allowed to participate freely in developing and improving a culture of teaching and learning especially with this move of South Africa towards a democratic society that influence their lives, e.g. voting for the governing body at schools and having a say in every day working circumstances. The governing body in terms of Sections 23, 29 and 32 of the South African Schools Act (1996) is important as it focuses on the participation of parents in South African schools, thus contributing towards creating an optimum educational setting at home, school and in the community, as stated earlier in the previous section. A brief discussion on community, i.e. the governing body involvement will be unfolded in the next section.

Smith, *et al*. (1996:12) indicate that "learners in such a situation are likely to manifest a lack of intellectual stimulation from home." In this type of a situation, teachers should attempt to create a positive environment where such children's work is done and supervised at school with an aim of improving a culture of teaching and learning, in other words teachers should act *in loco parentis*.

2.9.1   THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN

Based on the discussion above on parental involvement, I am convinced that parents extend their responsibilities and relationships beyond the basic teacher/parent level, because most of them take an active part in the activities such as parent councils, raise funds for the school and act as teacher-helpers in the classroom. In these ways, the focus of their relationship with the schools widens from that of the parent concerned with his child's education *per se* to a more global concern with the school as a totality.

If parents get involved in school matters with maximum dedication, a positive relationship with a culture of teaching will prevail. Contrary to the above views, it should not be forgotten that establishing a culture of teaching and learning in many schools is still a problem, and one the government is also aware of, as President Thabo Mbeki (in *Sowetan,* 9 April, 1998:10) was reported as saying: "we cannot lay all blame for our failure on society and past occurrences while we ignore our own responsibilities to learn and teach." Three years after President Thabo Mbeki (in *Sowetan*, 19 March, 2001:6), during the African National Congress's 90th anniversary, repeated that "we should engage ourselves in voluntary community service in order to improve our education standards." There is, therefore, a relationship between parental involvement and a culture of teaching and learning. This is also substantiated by the research findings obtained from Munn (1993:1), when claiming "children whose parents are involved in their educational matters are more successful." Maden (2001:292) further states that "if only parents and children could work closely together and if parents could support children and knew how to do so, then this would help to raise their achievement." The statement implies that parental involvement has a positive effect on learners' attainment of their goals, thus a cornerstone of the success of the school. Ryna (1994:43-44) adds that "parents are now being invited to take part in assessing their children's growth and progress." If parents are involved in their children's schoolwork, this may help in promoting the culture of teaching and learning in schools. This, according to my view, appears to be a positive shared decision-making, partnership and involvement in schools, meaning that schools have moved away from what is described as the monastic

tradition of pre-war education where the concept of external relations was hardly relevant.

In support of the discussion above, Meintjies (1992:60) maintains that "parents should contribute to creating an optimum educational environment at home, at school and in the community." Parents are an integral part to schooling and their parental dimension is central to the teacher's professional performance. Therefore, parents are responsible for home learning whilst teachers are responsible for school learning. It should also be noted that there are parents who due to occupational demands are always away from home or due to marital problems create an inhibiting educational climate causing a feeling of insecurity and anxiety to their children. This is also portrayed by an incident in the *City Press* (in 13 January, 2005:1) where an employee of the North-West Department of Education "… held staff members hostage at school and threatened to blow up the buildings." This raises the question as to where the responsibility is on the side of the parent, and safety on the premises of our schools. Can effective teaching and learning take place in such a traumatic environment? I am of the opinion that all the learners and staff members who saw that incident should first receive trauma counselling and this already will be a day wasted, thus affecting teaching and learning. This behaviour might cause some stumbling blocks that can lead to poor performance at school thus declining the culture of teaching and learning.

It is apparent from the above statement that the positive relationship between the school and parents also plays an important role in establishing a culture of teaching and learning and a discussion on community will follow in the next section. Therefore, there should be that mutual trust, love and co-operation between the school, home and community. The school should consult with the parents through the governing body, as mentioned above, informing them about any values and norms of the teaching and learning in the school setting. Kelly (1990:1) argues that "parental involvement in schools has long been heralded as an important ingredient in children's academic success. This means that children are presented with united and uniform skill of learning when teachers and parents work together and this will foster a positive culture of teaching and learning."

Meintjies (1992:60) suggests the following areas of involvement, namely that parents should participate in school governance, attend classes and school meetings, keep up to date with their children's progress, monitor homework and instil discipline, look after textbooks and other school resources in their care, and participate in building an effective parent organisation.

In supporting the ideas of the above researchers, it can be stated that parental involvement in education are crucial, a claim supported by the South African Schools' Act, Section 20 (1996:31) when advocating that parents serve as elected members of governing bodies, see to it that learners attend school from the first school day of the year in which learners reach the age of seven years, until the last day of the year in which learners reach the age of fifteen or Grade 9 or whichever occurs first and must see to it that a high standard of education is provided by schools.

2.9.2   COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

Schools are part of a community as they do not exist in isolation, and on the other hand community includes people and families, so it is very important that teachers, learners, parents and principals as members of a community relate well within the school and community in order to enhance the culture of teaching and learning, as this would develop stronger ties or links with the community, and this in turn will bring into the picture community participation in the school setting.

As stated above that a brief discussion will be unfolded in this section regarding community involvement in schools, I started by mentioning that the School Governing Bodies (SGBs), as part of the community, play an important role in the establishment of the culture of teaching and learning in schools. Munn (1993:73) sees an SGB "as a special channel between the school and parents." The Department of Education and Training (1997:2) state that "the South African Schools Act gives certain powers and responsibilities to governing bodies." The South African Schools' Act, Section 20 (1996:31-32) lists the following as functions of the SGB, namely to start and administer a school fund, open and maintain a bank account for the school, prepare an annual budget, submit the

budget to parents, ensure that school fees to be paid are collected according to decisions made by stakeholders, keep the financial records of the school, buy textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school, add to the funds supplied by the State, and improve the quality of education in the school.

Regarding the above functions of the SGB, I am of the opinion that the South African Schools' Act of 1996 gives the SGB certain responsibilities which, when supported also by the entire staff members together with the SMT of the school, a culture of teaching and learning will prevail in the school. But it should not be ignored that in certain disadvantaged schools, community involvement is still a problem in the sense that there is still that vast gap between the school and the community due to the fact that there is still a high rate of illiteracy, scarce resources and poor physical structures, even though the government has tried and is still trying its best.

2.9.2.1 The role of the community in improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools

The preceding section serves as the introduction to this section, which deals with what the community should do in order to improve the culture of teaching and learning in schools. As argued above, members of the community should be involved willingly in becoming part of School Governing Bodies (SGB), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Association (PA) and Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) at all levels, as that will attempt to improve the culture of teaching and learning in schools. Through these bodies, I am convinced that the community involvement in school activities will improve and maintain effective teaching and learning, thus an enhancement of a culture of teaching and learning. In support of the role of the community in improving the quality of teaching and learning, Pitout, *et al.* (1992:39) add that a school and community should aim at achieving three goals, which are to educate the child to become a useful and efficient citizen who will be able to take his/her place in society, assist the child to develop into a person with an educated mind and good moral character, and prepare the child for an independent and successful life in the work s/he will eventually do.

The above opinions are good for the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in schools, but they are ideal in most of disadvantaged schools, for example, some parents as members of the community are not educated enough to be able to check and help with homework, and in some of the communities basic resources such as water and electricity are still lacking. This means that learners in such communities could not be able to do schoolwork and study effectively with the lack of such resources.

2.10   CONCLUSION

In recent years schools have become aware of the negative impact of excessive stress upon the performance and well being of their teaching staff. The many pressures of teaching are well documented, e.g. student discipline and apathy, a lack of personal support, poor financial rewards, lack of community support, low status of the profession, continual criticisms by the media, parents, community organisations and even politicians. What this criticism fails to acknowledge is the increasing complexity and responsibility of educating the learners.

Other unavoidable conditions that put the teaching profession at risk, leading to low moral and a high level of drop-out, are teachers working with large groups of learners – something that is not advocated by the new system of outcomes-based education. At the same time the government should be sensitive to the background, needs, abilities and interests of each individual in that group with never-ending workload, e.g. daily tasks supplemented by extra-demands such as extra-curricular duties.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that this research aims at investigating variables contributing towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in schools; this means that conditions and disciplines of compulsory schooling, regular attendance, punctuality and acceptance of authority should be emphasised and carried out by teachers and learners at schools even though many schools are faced with the problem of learners abusing the schools' act which emphasised human rights. So, most learners do not comply by being

punctual at school, saying that it is their right to be late and absent, thus eroding a culture of teaching and learning.

As a result of the above points, more schools fail to establish a positive culture of teaching and learning. Teachers should therefore try to deal away with these frustrations by planning collaboratively through co-operation, shared decision, teamwork and two-way communication because communication is of importance for the staff development. This means that if schools are to be successful in the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning, teachers should try to work together positively with other staff members and parents in order to create a respectful climate where learning is encouraged in every action, because learners are able to learn more where all parties work as a team. The principal should always emphasise co-operation and consultation among his staff members and should discourage unnecessary misunderstandings and disagreements so that a positive culture of teaching and learning is experienced.

The government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), on the other hand, should also continue improving social conditions necessary for schooling, since now of late it seems it is no more practised as it used to be. Parents, teachers and learners should always work together as partners in education as mentioned in the previous section, because education is a social phenomenon. The involvement of these stakeholders can help in the enhancement of a culture of teaching and learning and it can, therefore, be clearly stated once more that there is a relationship between the teachers' role, parental involvement, staff collaboration, teaching and learning resources and the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

Based on the above views, it can be summed up by stating that this chapter is solely focusing on the variables contributing towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools where teachers as professionals, learners, parents and community have the responsibility to create a desirable atmosphere for every learner to learning as well as how variables integrate and impact upon one another with a sense of creating ownership, dedication, commitment, pride and identity among learners, teachers and parents with the

school. Therefore, teachers, all stakeholders and learners should be dedicated and committed to teaching and learning situation in order to enhance the culture of teaching and learning in any school setting.

The next chapter deals with research methodology used in investigating variables contributing towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools as well as data analysis.

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