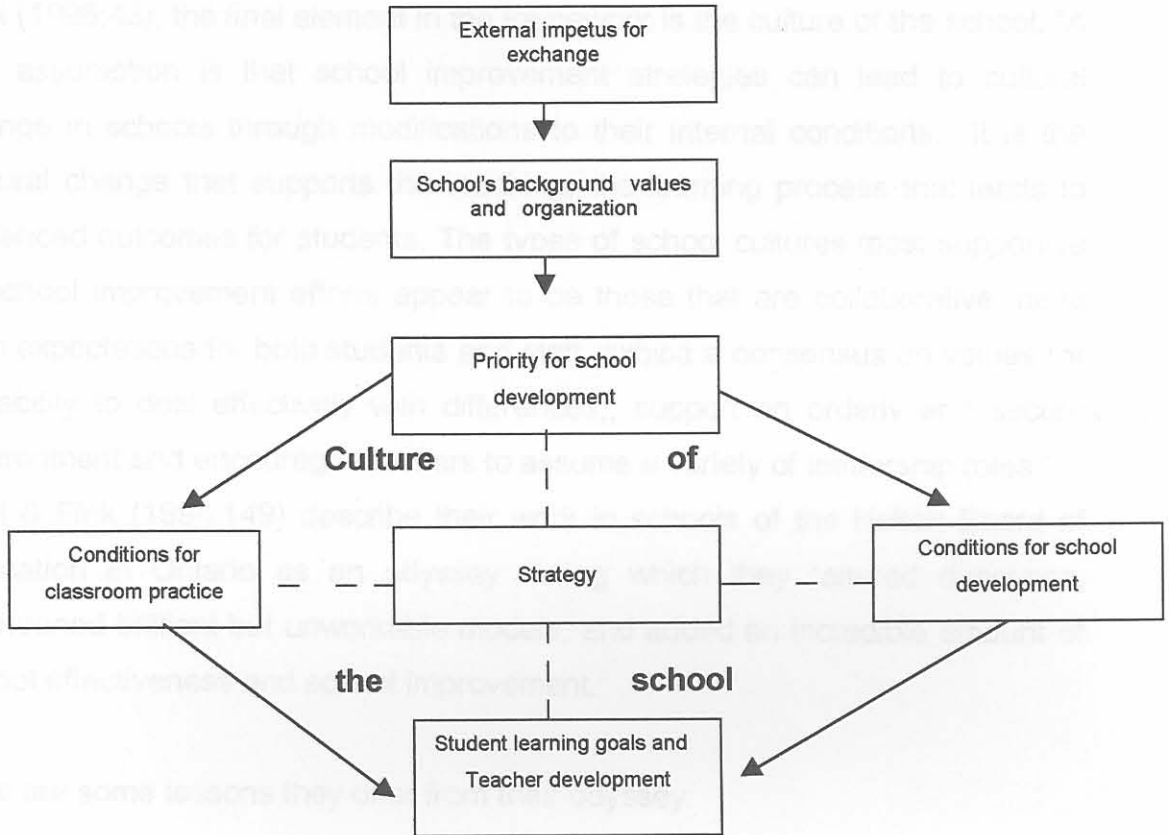


**A model for school improvement**

**Fig. 3.4**



The framework shown comprises of three major components: the “givens,” the “strategic dimension” and the “capacity building dimension.” As the name implies, the “givens” are aspects of the change process that are not readily amenable to manipulation, namely the external impetus for change and the school’s background, organization and values.

The “strategic dimension” reflects the vertical linkages in the diagram between priorities, strategies and outcomes. Hopkins notes that although the inherent logic of the sequence was from priorities, to strategies, to outcomes, the most successful schools map backwards from desired outcomes to strategies to priorities.

The “capacity building dimension” reflects the need to enhance the conditions at the level of the classroom and the school. As Hopkins (1996:43) notes, “Without an equal focus on conditions, even priorities that meet the above criteria can quickly become marginalized.” Echoing the afore-mentioned work of Stoll & Fink (1996:43), the final element in the framework is the culture of the school. “A key assumption is that school improvement strategies can lead to cultural change in schools through modifications to their internal conditions. It is the cultural change that supports the teaching; the learning process that leads to enhanced outcomes for students. The types of school cultures most supportive of school improvement efforts appear to be those that are collaborative, have high expectations for both students and staff, exhibit a consensus on values (or an ability to deal effectively with differences), support an orderly and secure environment and encourage teachers to assume a variety of leadership roles.” Stoll & Fink (1994:149) describe their work in schools of the Halton Board of Education in Ontario as an odyssey during which they “altered directions, abandoned brilliant but unworkable models, and added an incredible amount of school effectiveness and school improvement.”

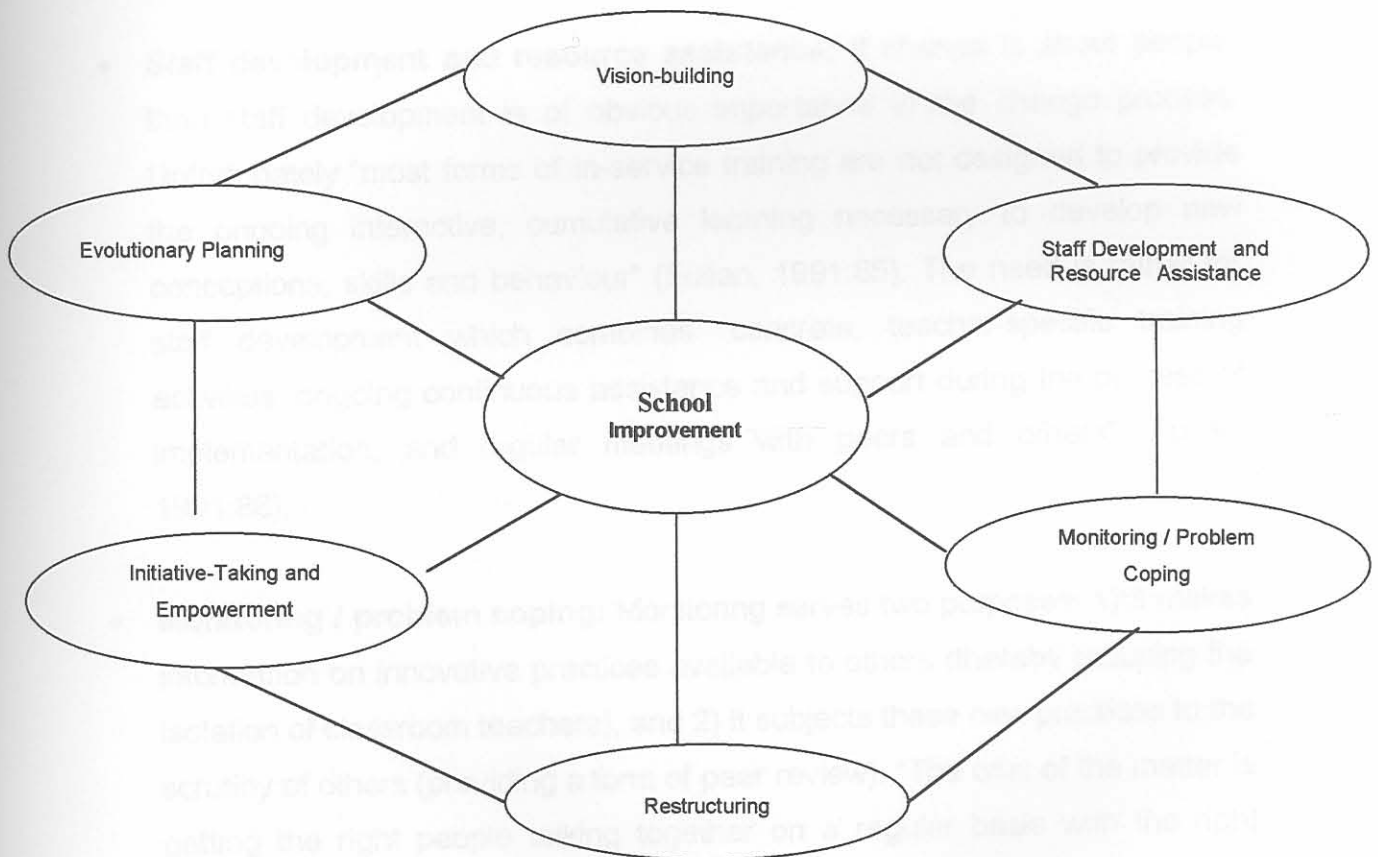
Here are some lessons they offer from their odyssey:

- School growth planning can effect significant change
- Fundamental conditions or school culture pervade the planning process
- The role of leadership is crucial to change
- Principal and teacher mobility can negatively affect change
- Support to schools is crucial to the change process
- Staff development is the key change strategy
- Ad hoc committees and pilot projects are effective ways to support change
- Change processes must integrate multiple innovations
- Goal setting in schools has changed from a wide focus to a classroom focus

Louis (1994:18-24) reinforces the point, namely that change cannot be managed in the conventional meaning of the term. In the earlier work of Louis & Miles (1990:15) school improvement has been imaged as “ a braid in which a collection of reform programs and plans becomes melded with the existing political and cultural setting; at best, changes are based on steady and patient efforts to work within the school as it exists, while maintaining a vision of what can be”. Fullan (1991:84) has build on their work by enumerating six key themes in the development of a holistic approach to school improvement as shown below:

**Key Improvement Themes**

**Fig. 3.5**



- **Vision-building:** It is one thing to have a vision, even to be able to articulate it. It is another to build with others a shared vision, both of what the school could look like and the process of getting there.
- **Evolutionary planning:** Successful planning involves “improving the fit” between the desired change and conditions prevailing in the school. Rather than pursuing a fixed course, one adjusts the course as one goes, learning by mistake. In this process calculated risk-taking is essential.
- **Initiative-taking and empowerment:** Developing collaborative work cultures encourage both self-initiative and ownership. “Constant communication and joint work provide the continuous pressure and support necessary to get things done” (Fullan, 1991:84).
- **Staff development and resource assistance:** If change is about people, then staff development is of obvious importance to the change process. Unfortunately “most forms of in-service training are not designed to provide the ongoing interactive, cumulative learning necessary to develop new conceptions, skills and behaviour” (Fullan, 1991:85). The need is rather for staff development which combines “concrete, teacher-specific training activities, ongoing continuous assistance and support during the process of implementation, and regular meetings with peers and others” (Fullan, 1991:86).
- **Monitoring / problem coping:** Monitoring serves two purposes: 1) it makes information on innovative practices available to others (thereby reducing the isolation of classroom teachers), and 2) it subjects these new practices to the scrutiny of others (providing a form of peer review). “The crux of the matter is getting the right people talking together on a regular basis with the right information at their disposal” (Fullan, 1991:87).

- **Restructuring:** Much of the foregoing can only occur if the work place is organized in such a way as to provide for individual and team planning and for new roles for staff members. It is these arrangements that are the subject of the contemporary restructuring of schools.

Throughout the literature on change, the issue of leadership is emphasized as crucial in transforming schools from low performing to high performing institutions.

Based on the urban school study of Louis & Miles (1990), Louis (1994:6) identifies the following images of effective leaders in promoting change:

- **Stimulators** – people who get things started, but turn the action over to others.
- **Story-tellers** – people who help others in the schools to discuss and understand meaning and larger significance of what they are doing as they work on school improvement. The story then becomes the “braid” referred to above.
- **Networkers** – people who spend their time co-ordinating and creating opportunities to get people and programs together in ways that contribute to the emerging school effort.
- **Copers** – people who focus daily on problem scavenging, and who develop a wide variety of coping styles to address the unending, yet largely unpredictable stream of barriers to change.

Louis (1994:24) further identifies six characteristics of effective leaders in promoting change:

1. Providing consistent policies to delegate and empower
2. Spending time on the details of life in the school
3. Modelling risk-taking
4. Providing leadership about values
5. Emphasizing caring for students
6. Actively using knowledge and ideas

As the title of Louis' (1994) article, "Beyond Managed Change" implies, we are just beginning to understand the complexities of change and the myriad of conditions that is required to support change.

It would be useful to consider the following "do" and "don't" assumptions about change (Fullan, 1991:105-107):

- do not assume that your vision of what the change should be, is the one that should or could be implemented;
- assume that any significant innovation, if it is to result in change, requires individual implementers to work out their own meaning;
- assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable, but also fundamental to successful change;
- assume that people need pressure to change (even in directions they desire), but it will be effective only under conditions that allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers and to obtain technical assistance;
- assume that effective change takes time; it is a process of "development in use";
- do not assume that the reason for lack of implementation is an outright rejection of the values embodied in the change, or a hard-core resistance to all change;

- do not expect individuals, or even groups, to change;
- assume that you will need a plan that is based on the above assumptions and that addresses the factors known to affect implementation;
- assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what actions should be taken;
- assume that changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not the implementation of single innovations.

We should remember that change is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. South Africa's education system is currently going through a change process. Outcomes Based Education has been introduced to South African schools. Outcomes Based Education has moved from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach. We have moved from an old education system to a new education dispensation.

Much of the change in education had a reform element inherent in it. In all of this there seems to be reluctance to grasp the essential fact that the world is different today than to what it was, and it is changing fast.

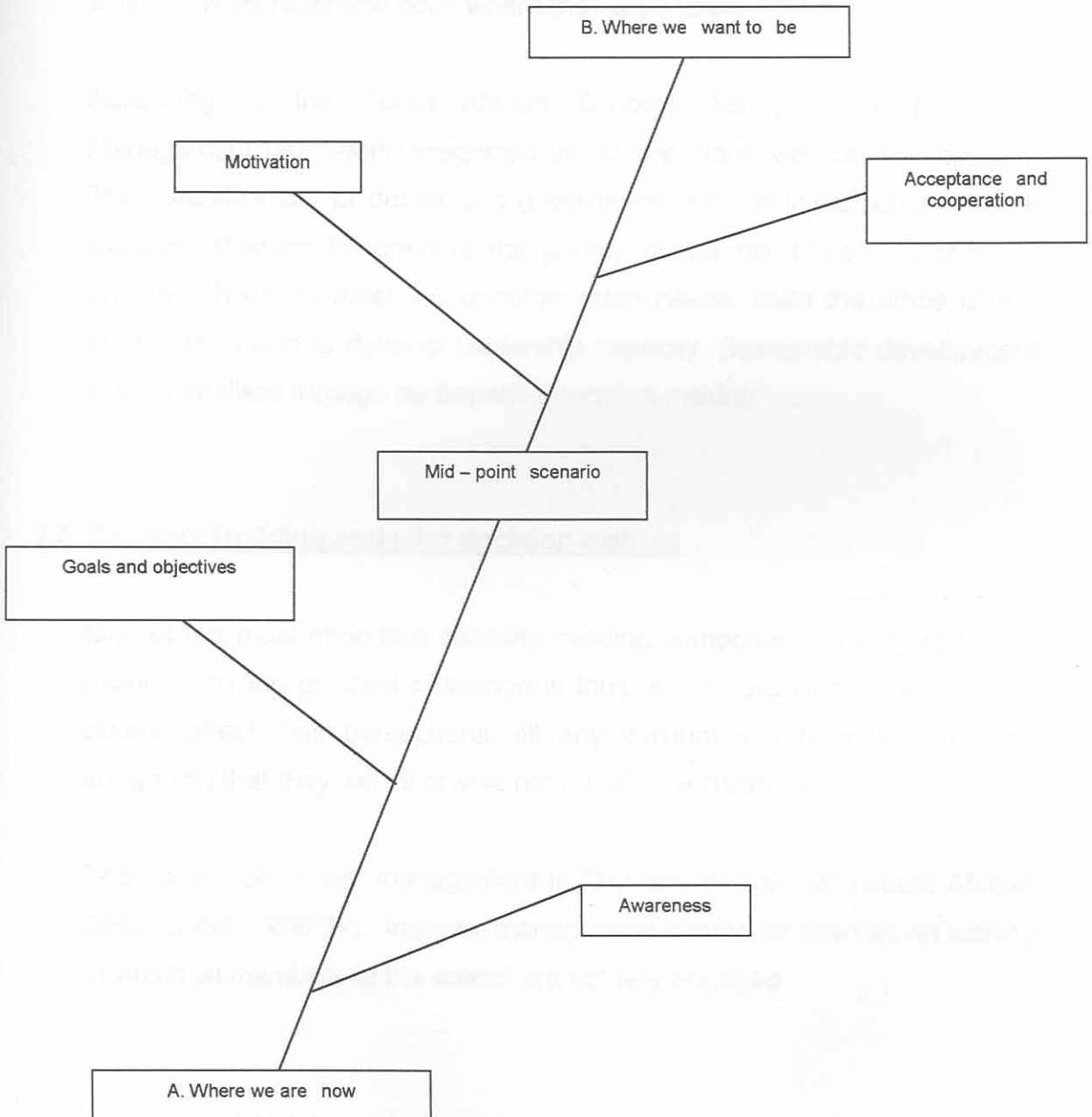
This fast changing education system leads to much resistance and avoidance from teachers who do not want to change, and do not see the need for change. When surrounded by reform or change, school leaders develop a new set of skills, some of them quite radical from traditional ones. They usually engage in three distinct levels of change behaviour:

- intervention – to return to equilibrium
- restructuring work – to improve system performance
- major re-organization – in response to serious internal flow defects or new external problems ( Sayels, 1979:152).

In order to manage change in education, one can introduce the Fishbone theory taken from Nolan & Nolan (1995:46) as a way to manage change:

**The Fishbone theory**

**Fig 3.6**



At first there is an **awareness** of change and that things have to change. School management sets some **goals** and **objectives**. From the **mid-point scenario** management can look back from where they were and have started, and they are also able to look forward to where they want to be.

Through **motivation**, they as management, then motivate their staff members to **co-operate** and **accept** the change they have gone through – and ultimately reach the point where they want to be.

According to the South African Schools Act (1996:1), Education Management has been recognized as an important area of development. The establishment of democratic governance and the implementation of a Capacity Building Program is the priority of the department in order to enable schools to meet the transformation needs, build the ethos of the organization and to develop leadership capacity. Sustainable development is more realistic through participative decision-making.

### 3.5 Capacity Building and joint decision-making

One of the most important capacity building components is joint decision-making and the greatest challenge is thus how to exercise influence over others, affect their perceptions, fill any vacuum and to make them do something that they will otherwise not do (Kinlaw, 1995:61).

The perception is that management is “the task of the few” (South African Schools Act, 1996:27). Instead, management should be seen as an activity in which all members in the school are actively engaged.

Joint decision-making promises to meet the challenge as it provides decisions with more technical quality. This means that decisions are taken by people who are involved with the implementation thereof (Kinlaw, 1995:61). If collective responsibility is sought, no individual will be blamed if anything goes wrong. With inputs from all the stakeholders it is impossible to make blunders. Therefore it is important to tap from teachers' expertise and experience in order to facilitate enlightened decisions and build better education programs. A huge challenge is how to transform and develop management from the long and nefarious legacy of autocratic control whereby the teachers were not seen by school managers as active agents who should be encouraged to innovate and seek to bring change (Van den Berg in De Wee, 1994:11).

Power should be utilized in decision-making in order to influence management outcomes such as:

- the capacity to deliver: to create an environment conducive to quality education; to organize, plan, co-ordinate, systematize and structure; to facilitate, guide, support and enable and to provide effective leadership in achieving educational goals by getting things done;
- the capacity to learn and reflect: to assess and monitor systems and processes and to learn from that evaluation;
- the capacity to mobilize and use resources efficiently: to harness new resources while at the same time making best use of existing physical, financial and human resources and to work in partnership in so doing;
- the capacity to innovate: to work effectively towards paradigm shifts and to organize the process of transformation and change (South African Schools Act, 1996:4).

Therefore joint decision-making is an element which steers empowerment and capacity building. When reflecting on the above outcomes the following premises of decisions become conspicuous:

- Organizational constraints
- Assumptions
- Conscious manipulations
- Values and beliefs
- Practices about “who we are”
- How we do things “round here” (Newton & Tarrant, 1992:96)

Decision-making involves processes that are ground rules that guide decision-makers. These rules or principles directly answer questions such as:

- How a decision should be made and who should be involved
- When the decision will be made and when it should be discussed
- At what point on the agenda the decision should be discussed

Answers to these questions are embodied in specific decision-making techniques. Joint decision-making starts with value development that is founded on relationships with parents, teachers, learners and other stakeholders.

Mc Evan (1997:4) identifies three phases of value development:

- I. Acceptance – the individual is willing to identify with the value, but can quickly reassess its worth if more desirable options present themselves.
- II. Preferences – the individual is committed enough to the value to pursue it.

(Reddy, 1992:5). The main thrust of this section will be to discuss the various decision-making and other related issues.

III. Commitment – the individual has such a degree of certainty about it that he or she will always act upon it with firm conviction and certainty.

Values are motivational factors that serve as reference points for self-reflection, they are standards on which to judge decisions of others and they trigger creativity among partners or among the team members. The hallmark of joint decision-making lies in creativity which offer practical ideas to get the job done (Mc Evan, 1997:65).

### **3.6 Capacity Building Program**

Capacity building should be associated with the notion of utility in education, whereby the main concern is usefulness, but not knowledge for the sake of knowledge (Maile, 2000:226). In terms of this predisposition teachers should rather be regarded as worthy resources than merely a means to quality education. Utilitarianism should govern capacity building and permeate education in general.

Utility in education has three aspects, namely:

- learning undertaken for use in further learning
- education regarded as primarily profitable to oneself
- and education intended to fit one in order to serve others

Capacity Building should be seen as a sub-model of empowerment in that it also addresses the issue of improving the teacher's professionalism by focussing on the teacher's academic development, professional and career development, management skills and coping with changes in education (Reddy, 1992:5). The main thrust of this section will be equity considerations and other related issues.

### 3.6.1 Anti-discrimination program

Historically South Africa emerges from an apartheid era whereby development of skills, knowledge and expertise were afforded certain groups while the large section of the population was sidelined. The misconception of competence is associated with certain groups. The education system should refrain from withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits and advantages that are available to other members of society (Maile, 2000:226-227). It means that discrimination should be rooted out in education. Education cannot afford:

*“The practice or act of making distinction between people based on such characteristics as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, faith, gender, disability or sexual orientation, which leads to the inequitable treatment of individuals or groups” (Mitchell & Correa, 1997:84).*

Practices of discrimination in Education Management reflect broader discriminatory tendencies against women. Women remain invisible in management positions even though they are a majority in the society. Central Statistical Services (1996), shows that women constitute 51% of the population and also in the profession (Department of Education, 1997:198). Even though only 36% of all the teachers in South Africa are male, they hold 58% of principal posts, 69% of deputy principal posts and 50% of head of department posts. These statistics reveal a glaring discrimination against women. As such capacity building should be seen as a critical intervention to normalize the situation and enhance the capacity of women in order to assure them leadership positions in schools. The brief of capacity building will be to level the playing field in such a way that equality for all is achieved.

### 3.6.2 Equality for all

The notion of equality is invoked in education as a result of changes effected in education policies so as to resonate with constitutional requirement. Hence Ramphele (1995:6) said that:

*“Equality is non-negotiable with respect to rights of citizens before the law. All citizens ... have to be treated equally.”*

Although equality is laced with paradoxes and often seem difficult to practice, human resources managers are countenanced to persist in implementing it. Bray & Maile (1998:8) defines two different types of equality, that is substantive equality and procedural equality.

#### 3.6.2.1 Substantive equality

Substantive equality refers to contextual or purposive endeavours to equality. Substantive equality requires examination of the actual social and economic conditions of groups and individuals to determine whether the Constitution’s commitment to equality is being upheld. Consequently one has to consider the unique circumstances of persons. Therefore, to realize the ideal of equality in education, it may be necessary to differentiate. Differentiation in this instance does not constitute discrimination.

#### 3.6.2.2 Procedural equality

Procedural equality is often referred to as formal equality. This form of equality requires that all persons are equal bearers of rights, irrespective of the actual social and economic disparities between groups and

individuals. Procedural equality therefore promotes sameness of treatment.

### 3.6.3 Equity

What has been noted above is that equal treatment in all cases, especially in the education system, is very important. Equity incorporates both equal treatment and preferential treatment. For instance, women as bearers of children have certain demands made on their time and bodies (Ramphela, 1995:6). Women cannot attend over-extended meetings because they have to look after children and have to breastfeed their children. These teachers thus need preferential treatment that will allow them to cope with their biological demands. They are in need of flexible career advancements.

Equity also concerns the need to set standards and to reorganize the nature of workplace environments that imply, for instance, baby-sitting areas as well as ramps in education buildings for proper functioning of the disabled.

It can finally be concluded that equity do not prevent education managers from making classifications and from treating some people differently to others. Managers may therefore classify people for a variety of legitimate reasons, including recognition of competence. Legitimate differentiation is based on identifiable criteria, which then is unfair discrimination. In other words, differentiation is permissible if it does not amount to unfair discrimination. More differentiation should, therefore, not deny equal protection or benefit of the law (De Waal, et al. 1999:197).

### 3.6.4 Affirmative action

Affirmative action can be described as a systematic, planned process whereby the effects of racial discrimination are being reversed in all areas of life (Quanta, 1995:1).

Affirmative action is a program of capacity building which branches from equality to address the legacies of apartheid in the labour market. In the labour market the disparity in the distribution of jobs, occupation and income reveals the effects of discrimination against the disadvantaged groups, namely women (both black and white) and people with disabilities. These disparities cannot be remedied simply by eliminating discrimination. Policies, programs and positive action designed to redress the imbalance of the past, are therefore critical.

According to Mandela, affirmative action does not entail giving handouts, nor privileging skin pigmentation as it was the case in the past. It does not aim to do away with qualifications and standards in education, but it is premised on justice and equality. These aims are clearly stated in the Employment Equity Act (1998):

- I. To promote the constitutional right to equality and the exercise of true democracy
- II. To eliminate unfair discrimination in employment
- III. To ensure the implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of discrimination
- IV. To achieve a diverse workforce that is broadly representative of our people
- V. To promote economic development and efficiency in the workforce

When evaluating the program of affirmative action, the following criticisms come to the fore:

- It constitutes reverse discrimination
- It lowers standards as the affirmative action appointees under perform
- It leads to incompetence
- It increases tension in the workplace
- It is equal to nepotism and cronyism (Quanta, 1995:17-28)

### 3.6.5 Diversity management

Broadly speaking diversity management refers to the process whereby organizations, with a diverse workforce, employ mechanisms to enable everyone to perform at their peak and to contribute their own special skills and expertise. Diversity management does not seek to acculturate the minority or different racial groups into the culture of the dominant group within the organization, but rather to harmonize the different cultures to the advantage of the organization (Quanta, 1995:41).

In reality schools, as organizations, not only enroll learners from diverse cultures, but employ educators from different cultures as well. Diversity management should therefore be a program which schools should pursue in order to assure quality in education. To ensure effective management of the system, diversity managers are needed to assess the constraints and possibilities of diverse groups in the population in terms of access, as well as assessment and quality assurance through NQF (National Qualification Forum). According to the Department of Education (1997:204) the education system is obliged to recognize the contribution which men and women with different skills, attitudes, knowledge and cultures can make in improving education quality. It is thus important to focus on anti-discrimination, equality, equity and affirmative action programs to meet the diverse needs of the system and organizations.

Quality education is attained when friction from cultural and racial stereotyping and conditioning are erased and all forms of victimization are reduced. Diversity management aims not to ignore racial, cultural and gender differences, but to prevent it from making a section of the workforce unhappy and unproductive and in the process harming the organization's business. Therefore diversity management is a program that complements the others.

### **3.7 Capacity building quality contributors**

In the South African context, the commitment to quality education requires capacity building in schools. This entails that managers must seek ways to encourage, identify and develop individual human talent. As schools strive to retain excellent teachers in the classrooms, potential quality assurance mechanisms become critical. According to Fourie & Bitzer (1998:29) an appropriate system of quality assurance must embrace a transformative notion of quality and it should facilitate and ensure a process of continuous quality improvement. When relating quality to capacity building the following aspects are relevant: accountability, professional capital, well-behaved teachers and nation building. Each will be discussed individually.

#### **3.7.1 Accountability**

Accountability is a set of commitments, policies and practices that are designed to heighten the probability that good practices will occur for students. It reduces the probability that harmful practices will occur and it provides redress and internal self-correctiveness in the system in order to identify, diagnose and change courses of action that do not promote good practices for students (Urbanski, 1998:452).

A large number of South African schools lack in accountability which is founded on elements such as planning, reporting, monitoring, assessment, communication and responsiveness.

The challenge of improving the culture of learning and teaching requires motivational and developmental approaches to accountability because:

*“What impedes effective teaching and learning is not that teachers are the problem; it is that teachers work within outmoded, unprofessional systems” (Urbanski, 1998:449).*

By taking responsibility for redesigning schools and abandoning unexamined practices and policies, we can restructure the teaching profession in ways that promise more productive teaching. Accountability is the shared responsibility that is driven by the quality of purpose among all stakeholders. That is to say if all members of the school are driven by the same common vision (Fourie & Bitzer, 1998:29).

There is therefore a need for school management to sell their vision and mission. Thereafter they need to choose the right and achievable objectives. School managers should be clear on what the institution's plans are; how they are developed and approved; how they are implemented and how their effectiveness is assessed. Also on how they are reviewed and revised in the light of changed circumstances and evaluation of performance. Accountability, with the purpose of transforming schools democratically, should be based on Capacity Building Programs and those programs related to empowerment.

These programs encourage participative management.

The involvement of teachers is necessary because in terms of Ramusi (1998:7):

*“Teachers in particular are not content to be mere followers of top-down instructions but want to be involved in decision-making processes. They are people with current feelings and desires, who feel excluded or undervalued if their views are silenced or ignored.”*

Therefore accountability should be premised on democratic management to minimize resistance and effect change smoothly. The fruits of accountability are wide ranging and can be summarized as a sound culture of teaching and learning.

### 3.7.2 Building professional capital

The decline in the culture of teaching and learning has been accompanied by many teachers losing a sense of the distinctive kind of service they should be offering in schools. This is a serious impoverishment of the understanding of the constituting responsibilities of teachers (Morrow, 1994:28).

There is a need to articulate and operationalize the work ethic (Sibson, 1994:28).

This entails that the set views, values, attitudes and norms that induces teachers to do their best at work, should be transformed. Deploying human capital is not enough. Professional capital is a precondition for capacity building. Professional capital includes things like honesty, trustworthiness, dedication and determination. The education system cannot afford a situation whereby:

*“Everybody is bent on trying to cheat everybody else, everybody steals whatever they can wherever they can” (Mokaba, 1998:17).*

No matter how huge the resources that are made available, as long as the professional capital is lacking, no sound teaching and learning culture can be built. If teachers disregard timetables and are absent without reason, and learners dodge lessons and cheat in examinations (as was the case in Mpumalanga), our education system will crumble. Therefore professional capital is needed across the board.

However, with the promulgation of the Employment of Educators Act (1998), teaching is moving towards professionalism because the Act entrenches and envisages a professional organ that will regulate teaching,

namely the South African Council for Educators (SACE). These changes thus mark a new era in teaching whereby standards and norms will be regulated and teachers' conduct will be monitored.

### 3.7.3 Managing teachers' behaviour

Managing behaviour can be quite a problem. People judge others mainly by observing their behaviour and then reaching conclusions. Such an approach is somewhat akin to judging the extent of an iceberg by its tip. Keetan (1996:5) avers that 90% of behaviour is hidden beneath the surface. No one knows exactly what is lurking in the ocean depths. The behaviour that is worth managing for capacity building, is the problem behaviour. When people are behaving well, there is no necessity to explore the reasons for their behaviour. But when they are not, it becomes critical to manage them. This is not to suggest that managers must become fathers and mothers to teachers, but they should be aware of the extent of a teacher's problem behaviour and then introduce management strategies that will remedy or improve the teacher's circumstances. Managers need to observe behaviour objectively, must not confuse personality with behaviour and must circumvent misinterpretations of the teacher's actions.

It can be concluded that if managers make the effort to understand behaviour, they will find it much easier to manage their own organizations and get on better with teachers. Knowing more about the origins of behaviour allows the manager to understand that, when teachers do not behave like themselves, there is probably a very good reason.

### 3.7.4 Education for nation building

The transformation discourse in the South African education system has set education on the course of nation building. The imperative of capacity

building invokes nation building in education. According to Higgs (1998:41) nation building is a strategy used to create unity from diversity. Support for the education process for nation building is based on the contention that, in order to deal with the problem of reconciling cultural diversity with national unity, there needs to be commitment towards development, as well as a sense of nationalism and a common culture committed to nation building.

In this project it is argued that the recognition of competence with the element of transformation, represents an empowerment program which is driven by a sense of utility (section 3.6 of this chapter). This means that education should be such as to serve the needs of the state and the economy. It is mentioned in the previous sections that education should be concerned primarily with the self-empowerment of the individual. This will then permeate the needs of the state policy and the vocational interests of commerce and industry.

The pace of change, and the need to be adaptable and responsible to local circumstances, requires that education leaders and managers develop new skills and styles of thinking and working.

If South Africans want to break decisively with their past and implement their vision for a new education system, which has the improvement of teaching and learning at its heart, it will be necessary to draw on aspects of the following three resources:

- at first they need to develop structures and systems that are appropriate in order to develop decision-making within the content of new policy legislation
- secondly they need to develop the leadership skills needed to manage people, lead change and support the process of transformation

- thirdly they need to develop individual and team competencies – the understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes – appropriate to the day-to-day management of education (Calitz, 1998:17-18)

### 3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has outlined suitable components for capacity building, as well as the mutual relationship between empowerment and capacity building. The new approach to Education Management and Education Management Development, as was recommended in recent education policy papers and legislation, was discussed.

If this approach is to be realized, we cannot continue “business as usual”. The meaning of change and the change process is very important in the changing education system of South Africa. To manage change is one of the important competencies that principals should have. Joint decision-making is an element that steers empowerment and capacity building. Power should be utilized in decision-making to influence management outcomes.

In the next chapter the researcher will provide more information on how principals and school management view the current change in South African schools. How do they cope? What do they feel need to be done? What would they as managers see as a need for their own further training and development in the rapid changing environment of education?